**COMPLETE NATIONAL OVERVIEW ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**FRANCE, FINLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC AND SPAIN**

**Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education**

**COMPLETE NATIONAL OVERVIEW – FRANCE**

<http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/france/national-overview/complete-national-overview>

**LEGAL SYSTEM**

According to the French Constitution, "The State has the responsibility to organise free and secular public education at all levels."

The State's mission is:

- To define the training routes, national programmes, organisation and content of curricula. The framework and programme law for the future of the School of April 23, 2005, creates a common base of knowledge and competence, which defines the cultural and civil benchmarks for the content of compulsory education. Schooling is essentially dispensed through public educational institutions, in which eighty percent of all students are registered. However, the principle of freedom of education is one of the fundamental principles of the laws of the Republic, allowing for the existence of a certain number of private institutions. Having signed contracts with the Ministry of Education, the vast majority of these institutions also support the public education programme.

- To define and issue national diplomas and grant university degrees and academic titles.

- To recruit and manage the personnel under its authority.

- To attribute the means assigned to education in order to ensure, in particular, the equality of access to public service. Concerning the schooling of disabled students, the law of February 11, 2005 on the equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of disabled persons states the right of disabled students to education and the responsibility of the educational system in guaranteeing the continuity of their individual schooling routes.

- To control and evaluate educational policies in order to ensure overall consistency of the educational system. Since the 1980s, the State has implemented measures to decentralise responsibility and reinforce the power of local authorities.

Thus the regions are responsible for:

- Building and maintaining high schools for general, technical and professional education

- Funding their equipment and operations budgets

- Recruiting and managing high-school administrative, technical, school care and health personnel

- Organising educational, sports and cultural activities on school premises

- Partially financing university infrastructure

- Defining the regional vocational and professional training policies for adolescent and adults in search of employment or redirecting their professional orientation

The departments are responsible for:

- Building and maintaining secondary schools and funding equipment and operation of these schools

- Recruiting and managing secondary-school administrative, technical, maintenance and school care personnel

- Organising educational, sports and cultural activities on school premises

- Organising and operating school transportation

The municipalities are responsible for:

- Appropriately locating, building, equipping, operating and maintaining nursery and elementary schools

- Managing the schools' equipment and operating subsidies

- Organising educational, sports and cultural activities on school premises

Municipalities have authority to modify school schedules. For example, they can apply a four-day week.

**IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**Identification procedures**

Primary level students with severe and persistent learning difficulties are identified by their teacher, who implements a personalised educational success programme (PPRE) with the help of specialised educators from the assistance networks for students with learning difficulties.

When these students reach secondary school age and if their learning difficulties persist, they are registered by the departmental orientation commission, which will refer them to the adapted general and professional schooling sections (SEGPA).

**Disabled students**

Law no. 75-534 of June 30, 1975 on the orientation of disabled persons introduced the legal concept of the disabled person.

**The law of February 11, 2005 on the equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of disabled persons, provided a definition of disability:**

**"According to the present law, a disability is the limitation of activity or restriction in participation in the social environment suffered by a person due to a substantial, enduring or definitive alteration of one or several physical, sensorial, mental, cognitive or psychic functions, a multiple disability or a disabling health disorder."**

The evaluation of needs, to which every disabled child is entitled according to the law, is performed by a multidisciplinary evaluation team appointed by the commission for rights and autonomy (CDA) of the departmental house of disabled persons (MDPH), which decides upon the applicable legal measure(s) of assistance;

- Assistance available to families:

* Education benefit for disabled children (AEEH)
* Invalidity certificate
* Specialised transportation

- Educational, therapeutic or orientation measures, either in specialised classes or units in ordinary schools, or through placement in specialised schools under the authority of the Ministry of Education or of the medico-educational sector.

- The law of February 11 creates the obligation to ensure that the student is offered school attendance in an ordinary school environment close to home whenever possible.

In order for the family to be able to benefit from financial assistance or other services, the child's degree of disability must be officially assessed on the basis of the reference scale created by decree no. 93-1216 (04/11/1993).

Moreover, in order to select the educational or therapeutic measures adapted to the child's individual situation, the CDA will refer to the nomenclature of deficiencies, incapacities and disadvantages (order of 09/01/1989), which is the French version of the WHO nomenclature.

**Children and adolescents in medical care:**

The decision to admit or release children and adolescents to/from medical institutions is made on medical authority.

**Special Needs Education within the Education System**

In France, we do not have a dedicated term for the child population in need of specific measures adapted to their special educational needs. The current terminology (disabled children, unadapted children, school adaptation and integration, administrative or legal protection of youth, specialised education, adapted education, etc.) comes with particular references and connotations and is weighted with historical context. There is no expression in use today, which signifies that children or adolescents with special schooling and educational needs require particular care and monitoring in well-defined options, distinct from the ordinary educational system.

The education of children and adolescents with serious difficulties, either through disability or illness, is based on an infrastructure, which has slowly grown into a very dense network.

This network includes four sectors: the public education system under the authority of the Ministry of Education, the medico-educational sector, under the authority of the Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports, the socio-educational sector, under the authority either of the Ministry of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity or the Ministry of Justice, and the health sector.

**The Public Education Sector**

This sector of adapted schooling comprises the infrastructures and facilities provided by the Ministry of Education and were created together with the first special classes for mentally disabled children in 1909. The sector has evolved following the school integration policy laid down in framework Law no. 75-534 (30/06/1975) in favour of disabled persons and was reinforced by framework Law no. 89-486 (10/071989) on education. The actions in favour of schooling of disabled children undertaken by the Ministry of Education were reinforced by the Law of February 11, 2005 on the equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of disabled people. The law affirms disabled children's right to education and the responsibility of the educational system to guarantee the continuity of individual schooling careers. This law, which took effect of January 1, 2006, institutes the obligation to:

- provide the student, whenever possible, with ordinary school access as close as possible to his home;

- closely associate parents in the decision process of orienting their child and in all phases of the definition of his personal schooling project (PPS);

- guarantee the continuity of the schooling career, adapted to the capacities and needs of the student;

- guarantee the equality of opportunities for disabled and other candidates, by ensuring a legal basis for the adjustment of examination conditions.

The Law of February 11, 2005 created a number of new authorities:

The Departmental House of Disabled Persons (MDPH): placed under the authority of the Chairman of the General Council, this is a one-stop office which improves efficiency of reception, information and assistance to disabled students and their families (see Decree no. 2005-1587 of December 19, 2005).

The Rights and Autonomy Commission (CDA, see Decree no. 2005-1589 of December 19, 2005): it decides on orientation in the fields of schooling and education and proposes conciliatory procedures in the event of disagreement. It closely associates the parents in the orientation decision process concerning their child and in all phases of defining his personal schooling project according to the permanent incapacity ratio attributed by this Commission, which sees the child regularly in order to monitor its development.

The adapted schooling sector can be divided into three large areas:

**1- Prevention mechanisms for students with serious schooling difficulties**

*First degree*

These specialised assistance networks (RASED) are exclusively for the primary level and were created by Circular no. 90-082 (09/04/1990) as a substitution of previously existing services. Their objective is to prevent schooling difficulties which may be encountered by certain students in ordinary educational establishments. Circular no. 2002-113 of April 30, 2002, defines the complementarity of the Rased and school integration class (CLIS) mechanisms, as well as the duties of educators involved.

*Second degree*

Adapted general and professional schooling programmes, defined in 1990 and implemented by Circulars no. 98-129 (19/06/1998) and no. 2006-139 (29/08/2006), are available to students with serious and persisting schooling difficulties. These programs, which are designed to provide professional qualifications, are implemented in two types of institution:

a) The adapted general and professional schooling sections (SEGPA), successors to the specialised education sections created by Circular no. IV-67-530 (27/12/1967). Integrated into ordinary colleges, the purpose of these sections was redefined after 1989, leading to significant reinforcement of schooling programmes.

b) The regional adapted schooling establishments (EREA) replace the national further education schools created by Law no. 51-1487 (31/12/1951). Circular no. 95-127 (17/05/1995) required the EREA to become adapted learning high schools (LEA), but was never implemented. Most of the EREA provide boarding and host adolescents who evidence serious learning and social difficulties. However, some establishments also provide tuition to sensory or motor disabled youths capable of following secondary level classes.

After finishing schooling, these students are entitled to training leading to level V qualifications (certificate of professional competence), which most of them will accomplish within the ordinary curriculum.

c) Relay classes were created by Circular no. 98-120 (12/06/1998) for intermediate students who have entered the school rejection cycle, some of whom are legally bound to accept educational assistance. The objective of this measure is to facilitate the students' re-socialisation and re-entry into the school system through temporary guidance. Under the authority of the Ministry of Education, these classes can be organised in partnership with the territorial authorities, departmental directorates of legal protection for youths and various specialised associations.

**2- Ways of schooling for disabled students**

The student's schooling takes place mainly in an ordinary educational environment. Actual schooling can be complemented by the specialist team of a specialised education and home care service (SESSAD), which can combine access to care and the right to schooling within the school environment, from the primary to the secondary level.

*In June 2006, 104,500 disabled students are integrated at the primary level, 45,000 at the secondary level.*

*a) Individual schooling at the primary and secondary levels*

*This consists of enrolling one or more disabled students in an ordinary class. Individual schooling is the primary goal at all levels. Regardless of whether it is implemented on a part-time or full-time bases, hosting conditions must be adapted within the framework of the personalised schooling project (integral part of the personalised compensation plan), thus accounting for the specific educational needs of each disabled child.*

The personal schooling project (PPS) provides the framework for the schooling of the disabled child. It ensures the coherence and the quality of accompanying measures and the necessary assistance, based on a global evaluation of the situation and the student's needs: therapeutic or re-educational accompaniment, assignment of a school carer or appropriate teaching materials, assistance to the teaching team via a school assistance post.

Each schooling career should be closely monitored, especially during the transitional phases between education levels: nursery school, elementary school, intermediate, high school and vocational training school. The same applies for baccalaureate access and preparing for higher education.

All disabled students are assigned a reference teacher who will follow the student's progress throughout his schooling career. All of those involved in the education process (parents, teachers, various other partners) must be able to clearly identify the reference teacher and be able to contact him.

Students can be accompanied by a school carer, one of the compensation tools provided for by the Rights and Autonomy Commission (Circular no. 2003-093 of June 11, 2003, on the accompaniment by a school carer for children or adolescents evidencing a disability or disabling health problem).

*The number of students taking advantage of accompaniment by a school carer has increased from 18,589 in 2006 (15,132 at the primary level, 3457 at the secondary level), compared to 7400 at the end of the 2002–2003 school year.*

During the 2006 school year, there were 6078 active school carers (AVS) in all schools. Of these, 4640 operated individually with more than 13,500 students.

*b) Group schooling*

*Group facilities were created for students (in general 10 to 12) who cannot follow – full-time – ordinary schooling.*

**Primary level**

In elementary schools, the school integration classes (CLIS) created by Circular no. 91-304 (18/11/1991) regroup children with a mental, hearing, visual or motor disability who are not capable to follow – full-time – ordinary schooling and who can benefit from integration into an ordinary school environment. Students in the CLIS are dispensed adapted schooling and they share a number of activities with the other students. In 2005, the majority of CLIS students were able to participate in individual periods of integration in another class in the school.

There are different types of CLIS:

- CLIS 1: school integration classes for children with a mental disability,

- CLIS 2: school integration classes for children with a hearing disability

- CLIS 3: school integration classes for children with a visual disability,

- CLIS 4: school integration classes for children with a motor disability.

*In 2005–2006, at the primary level, 64,994 out of 104,824 students were following full-time or part-time individual schooling, while 39,830 were in school integration classes (CLIS).*

**Secondary level**

At the secondary level, when the demands of individual schooling become excessively taxing, disabled students can join the integrated learning units (UPI). This measure is designed for children aged 12 to 16, who although at the intermediate (lower secondary) level, cannot take advantage of ordinary intermediate schooling. With the assistance of a specialised teacher, they can however benefit from adapted schooling, harmonised with the objectives set by their personalised schooling project and including, whenever possible, shared time in class activities of their reference class, selected among the school's classes attended by children of the same age.

The UPI was created by Circular no. 95-125 (17/05/1995) for the inclusion of children with mental disabilities. Circular no. 2000-009 (13/01/2000) extended the competence of UPIs to all disabilities or illnesses. Circular no. 2001-035 of February 21, 2001 on schooling of disabled students in secondary schools and the development of UPIs, replaces previous circulars and defines the framework for schooling of disabled students with serious cognitive function disorders in secondary schools, extending inclusion in the programme to students with sensory or motor disabilities and advocating the development of UPIs at the secondary level, including vocational training schools.

At the beginning of the 2006 school year, 200 UPIs were created in intermediate and high schools. The implementation of these integration units was planned in such a manner as to cover the entire national territory and taking into consideration transportation constraints.

*In 2005–2006, nearly 46,700 students attended the secondary level (38,914 in individual schooling and 7785 in the UPI group format.*

**3- Distance learning**

*The National Centre for Distance Learning (CNED) is a public institution which proposes school and vocational curricula for all students who are not able to physically attend an educational establishment. The centre proposes school curricula adapted to part-time learning. Students can register at any time throughout the year. Home learning assistance by a CNED-employed teacher is part of the offer.*

In 1997, a "Handicap Platform" was created in the centre of Toulouse in order to provide adapted solutions for children and adolescents whose disability or illness prevents them from attending ordinary school facilities.

**The medico-educational sector**

When school attendance in the ordinary school environment is not possible, disabled students (generally between the ages of 6 and 20) are oriented toward medico-social facilities which offer balanced schooling, educational and therapeutic care.

This sector, which is under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity, plays an important role in the specialised education network. It was largely developed in the period from 1950 to 1975, in order to respond to the urgent demands of disabled children's parents' associations.

Thanks to the initiative of non-profit associations and to a lesser extent of public authorities (10 %), an impressive tool was created. The schooling dispensed within this framework remains under the control of the Ministry of Education.

The sector is characterized by two types of facilities, ruled by modified Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956):

Care facilities

Care facilities, known as medico-educational centres, are regulated by appendix XXIV of the above decree and they are intended for children, adolescents and sometimes young adults, for whom attendance of an ordinary school is impossible or counter-indicated by the special education committee, authorise to recommend their orientation.

These facilities are generally organised around a particular disability:

- Medico-educational institutes (IME), regulated by Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 89-798 (27/10/1989), include the medico-pedagogic institutes (IMP) and the medico-professional institutes (IMPRO). They represent the vast majority of specialised educational facilities. They take care of children or adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

- Institutes for re-education (IR), regulated by appendix XXIV bis of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 89-798 (27/10/1989), take care of children or adolescents who evidence behavioural disorders. Decree no. 2005-11 of January 6, 2005, defines the conditions for the technical organisation and operation of therapeutic, educational and pedagogic institutes (ITEP). The text defines the targeted clientele of these institutes, who are to replace the institutes for re-education: children, adolescents or young adults who evidence psychological difficulties, whose expression, namely the intensity of behavioural disorders, seriously impedes their socialisation and access to training and/or apprenticeship. This text lays out the duties of these institutes in detail, their organisation and operation, as well as the composition of their multi-disciplinary teams. The institutes for re-education have until September 1, 2008, to comply with these regulations.

- Establishments which take care of children or adolescents with a motor disability, regulated by appendix XXIV bis of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 89-798 (27/10/1989), are divided into motor education institutes (IEM) and re-education institutes.

- Establishments which take care of poly-handicapped children or adolescents are regulated by appendix XXIV ter of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 89-798 (27/10/1989).

- Establishments which take care of children with a serious hearing disability, are regulated by appendix XXIV quater of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 88-423 (22/04/1988).

- Establishments which take care of children or adolescents with serious visual disabilities or suffering from blindness, are regulated by appendix XXIV quater of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), modified by Decree no. 88-423 (22/04/1988).

The medico-social facilities currently care for 104,268 disabled youths. Of these, 70,249 attend school full-time, 1494 attend school part-time and 10,061 receive their schooling outside these institutions (data for 2006).

**Prevention, treatment and home care services**

- Specialised education and home care services, regulated by each section of appendix XXIV of modified Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), are generally attached to the medico-educational establishments and target the same population as the latter. Their activities address the child's entire environment, namely the family, and in particular the school environment, in such a manner as to guide the schooling experience.

- Medico-psycho-pedagogic centres (CMPP), regulated by Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), added to Decree no. 63-146 (18/02/1963), ensure diagnosis and treatment of children with neuro-psychic or behavioural disorders.

- Preventive medico-social action centres (CAMPS), regulated by appendix XXIV bis of Decree no. 56-284 (09/03/1956), added to Decree no. 76-389 (15/04/1976), handle testing, day therapy and re-education of disabled children from birth to the age of six.

**The socio-educational sector**

This sector, which is mainly under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity, has a two-fold responsibility:

- Social protection of the child, for the benefit of youths temporarily deprived of family support: this mission is performed by social services, in particular Social Assistance for the Child, under the authority of the chairman of the General council.

- Legal protection of youths, with regard to endangered or delinquent youths who have been sentenced to educational assistance measures: this mission is carried out by the Juvenile Court judge.

In order to respond to either of these missions, a comprehensive mechanism was implemented, which offers varied care solutions:

- Keeping the child in the family environment is the preferred solution; if necessary, it can be accompanied by educational assistance measures.

- In other cases, the institutions and services judged to be the most appropriate to respond to the youth's needs are solicited, regardless of the sector they belong to: socio-educational, medico-educational or institutions and services of the Ministry of Education.

The socio-educational sector offers two types of facilities:

**Care centres under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity**

Generally regulated by Law no. 75-535 (30/06/1975) concerning social and medico-social institutions, they can take care of children and adolescents by virtue of article 375 of the Civil Code and article 40 of the Family and Social Action Code.

- Childhood Centres, created a long time ago, answer directly to the Social Assistance Service for Children and ensure emergency care at the departmental level as well as observation and orientation of children and adolescents under protective measures. In principle, the length of stay is limited. These centres can be managed directly by the department or they can function as autonomous institutions.

- Children's social houses (MECSO), which succeeded the former orphanages, ensure lodging and educational care for youths. They are generally managed by non-profit associations.

- Foster homes, more precisely care offered at the home of a child-minder, whose status has been reinforced by Law no. 92-642 (12/07/1992).

**Establishments and services under the authority of the Ministry of Justice**

If legal measures are taken concerning delinquent or endangered youths, facilities under the control of the directorate for Legal Youth Protection (PJJ), defined by Ordinance no. 45-174 (02/02/1945), can be requested to respond:

Court educational services (SEAT) were created by the Order of July 30, 1987 and organised by the Circular no. ES K387-65 (28/09/1987). Their mission is to evaluate the situation of the incarcerated minor, to propose alternative solutions to incarceration, to monitor the incarcerated minor and prepare is exit from the institution, to ensure on probation measures and legal control.

Educational action centres perform educational activities for delinquent or endangered youths who are taken into boarding. Sometimes they also have a day centre, whose purpose is to monitor professional training or insertion of these youths, following varying modalities.

Open educational action centres (AEMO) perform observation and educational orientation duties as well as carrying out educational activities directed at delinquent or endangered minors who stay with their families. AEMO services are organised by Decree no. 85-936 of August 23, 1985. Measures implemented can be either administrative (under the competence of youth social prevention services) or legal (youth legal prevention).

The educational consultation, orientation and action services (COAE), created by Decree no. 90-166 of February 21, 1990, have been implemented in all departments.

The reinforced educational facilities implemented by Circular no. NOR JUS9950035C (24/02/1999) have supplanted the reinforced educational counselling units (UEER), organised by Circular no. NOR JUS9650047C (07/06/1996). Their purpose is to care for delinquent or seriously endangered minors for whom the traditional care facilities have proven to be inadequate (in this case six educators monitor a group of eight youths at a maximum for a limited period of time).

Education of children and adolescents in the socio-educational sector remains under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Certain youths who are subjected to educational assistance measures, may be accepted in relay classes created by the Ministry of Education and organised in partnership with territorial authorities and the departmental directorates for legal protection of youths.

**Closed educational centers**

The law n° 2002-1138 of September 9, 2002 has created closed educational centers (CEF). These centers are defined in Article 22 of this law as institutions in which minors are placed in application of judicial control, a suspended sentence with probation, or release on probation. Inside these centers minors are subjected to measures of supervision and control ensuring a strengthened educational and pedagogical monitoring adapted to their personality. The duration of the stay in these centers is fixed at six months, a period renewable once for another six months. Each CEF simultaneously accommodates 10 to 12 young persons. Their arrivals are spread over the entire year.

In the framework of a decision to place a young person in a center of this type, the obligation to provide education for young people under the age of 16 must be abided by scrupulously. The Code of Education also provides for access to professional skills to young people over 16 who have no such skills. Whatever their age, the young people placed in these centers must be put into a situation in which they can acquire knowledge and know-how allowing personal development and further training.

The objective for young people under the age of 16 is to return to a school, and for the older people in this group to begin vocational training, unless the pursuit of studies in a general or technical lycée (higher secondary school) can be considered.

**Institutions for minors**

Institutions for minors (EPM) were created by the General Policy and Program Law for the judicial organisation of September 9, 2002. The objective of these institutions is to give priority to the reintegration of young persons in custody between the ages of 13 and 18 outside the adult prison system. These mixed institutions accommodate a maximum of 60 inmates. Each of them benefits from a personalised educative project based on a possibility of 27 hours of teaching every week, in the hope that this schooling will encourage their reintegration. A large number of personnel participate in this project, personnel in the Penitentiary Administration and the Judicial Protection of Youth service for the Ministry of Justice, specialised primary and secondary school teachers for the Ministry of National Education. Other minors can also be held in custody in sections for minors inside penitentiary centers for adults, the main reason being to avoid isolation from families: only 7 EPMs will be opened this year in all of France.

The health sector

According to Circular no. 99-181 (10/11/1999), which organises the care for children or adolescent in ordinary school facilities, schooling is a priority.

However, if the child's health does not allow this solution, schooling may be dispensed in a health sector facility under the control of the Ministry of Education.

**Teacher training – basic and specialist training**

**Initial teacher training**

Teachers are recruited via two competitive examinations: the examination for school teachers and the examination for secondary and high school teachers.

These examinations are open to candidates who have passed a diploma after three years of studies following high school graduation (A.levels). Candidates can prepare during a one-year training course for their career of choice: school teacher or secondary and high school teacher. Those who pass the examination successfully will then enter one year of professional training. Teacher training is organised by the university institutes for teacher training (IUFM). The IUFM are due to change status; in the future, teacher training will take place in the university proper (beginning with the 2007 academic year).

At the moment and in spite of institutional incentives, information about the care for students with learning difficulties, disabled or health-impaired students often takes up little time and space during initial teacher training.

Essentially, training of non-specialised personnel is reserved for continuous training courses.

**Training of specialised teaching personnel**

The certification for adapted teaching methods and schooling of disabled students are now open to all fully appointed teachers at all levels, for all disciplines and ranks. These certifications are only for teachers, they are not accessible to other personnel categories.

**Certifications**

- The certification for primary school teachers is the CAPA-SH: a certificate of professional competence in specialised assistance, adapted teaching and schooling of disabled students (decree no. 2004-13 of 5/1/2004). The CAPA-SH entitles to full appointment to the position of specialised teacher for the selected specialisation.

- The certification for secondary and high-school teachers is the 2CA-SH: a complementary certificate for adapted teaching and schooling of disabled students (decree no. 2004-13 of 5/1/2004, circular 2004-026 of 10/02/2004 and circular 2004-103 of 24/6/2004). The 2CA-SH does not correspond to any specific position. Its purpose is to certify the special capacities of a secondary level teacher, appointed to an ordinary position, whose class is attended by disabled students and who assists in the schooling of these students with the support, in some cases, of an institutional facility known as an integrated learning unit (UPI).

**The specialties**

These certifications for adapted learning and schooling of disabled students continue to be defined by the specialties which correspond to different types of disability.

The familiar organisation of these specialities will not be changed. Specialties E and G are not offered at the 2CA-SH level because there are no specialised assistance networks for students with learning difficulties (RASED) at the secondary level. The other specialities are similarly defined for both certifications.

**CAPA-SH specialties:**

- Specialty A: teachers specialised in schooling and providing learning assistance to deaf or hearing impaired students.

- Specialty B: teachers specialised in schooling and providing learning assistance to blind or visually impaired students.

- Specialty C: teachers specialised in schooling and providing learning assistance to students with a serious motor deficiency or a developing/invalidating health disorder.

- Specialty D: teachers specialised in schooling and providing learning assistance to students with major cognitive function disorders.

- Specialty E: teachers specialised in specific learning focussed assistance.

- Specialty F: teachers specialised in schooling and providing learning assistance to students in adapted general and professional schooling institutions and departments.

- Specialty G: teachers specialised in assistance focussed on re-education.

**2CA-SH specialties:**

- Specialty A: schooling and learning assistance for deaf or hearing impaired students.

- Specialty B: schooling and learning assistance for blind or visually impaired students.

- Specialty C: schooling and learning assistance for students with serious motor deficiency or a developing/invalidating health disorder.

- Specialty D: schooling and learning assistance for students with serious cognitive function disorders.

- Specialty F: schooling and learning assistance for students in regional adapted schooling centres and adapted general and professional schooling departments.

These training courses are organised on an alternating basis: the primary and secondary level teachers taking the courses perform their function (in the classes and special arrangements which correspond to the specialty they are preparing at the primary level) and are convened to the training centre for the various training sessions. The training course is split into several sessions during the first two quarters of the school year. During their in-class training with students, the teachers are monitored and assisted by the qualified inspectors and the training centres (*order of January 5, 2004*).

The training is organised by the National higher institute for training and research on the education of young disabled persons and adapted schooling (INS HEA) or by the regional ASH (School adaptation and disabled pupils schooling) centres integrated in certain IUFMs, as well as by certain universities.

**National initiative training modules (MFIN)**

The national initiative training modules are complementary training courses enabled by the second paragraphs of articles 4 and 9 of decree no. 2004-13 of January 5 on the creation of CAPA-SH and 2CA-SH.

Thanks to a national initiative, these modules with a duration of 25 to 50 hours are organised within the framework of continuous training for teachers and target teachers who have obtained the CAPA-SH or 2CA-SH. Their objective is to more thoroughly develop and reinforce their knowledge and professional capacities and/or assist their capacity to adapt to given professional circumstances.

The contents of the training courses respond to emerging problems and support the implementation of national policy orientations in the area of adapted learning, alternatively focussing on different aspects.

Consequently, the themes vary from year to year, depending on the needs and priorities.

Some of these modules are also available to non-specialised teachers who encounter particular types of integration problems, as well as to psychologists who work in orientation counselling or educational counsellors.

**School psychologists**

Within the framework of specialised assistance networks for students with learning difficulties, school psychologists contribute their capacities in supporting the prevention of learning difficulties, in developing an educational project for the school, in designing, implementing and evaluating assistance to students with difficulties (c*ircular no. 90-083 of April 10, 1990  circular no. 2002-113 of April 30, 2002*).

School psychologists, who are recruited from primary level teaching ranks, must have a bachelor's degree in psychology and must have worked in teaching for three years before beginning training, which is capped by a school psychology diploma (DEPS). Training courses are held in a number of approved IUFMs.

**Educational assistants/school carers (AVS) and assistant educators**

Since the beginning of the 2003 school year, students with severely restricted autonomy are supported either on an individual basis in ordinary school classes, or collectively in a CLIS or a UPI. In both cases they receive the assistance of educational assistants/school carers (AVS). (*Circular no. 2003-093 of June 11, 2003 concerning the role of AVS in assisting schooling for children and adolescents with a disability or an invalidating health disorder, and decree no. 2003-484 of June 6, 2003 concerning recruiting conditions and employment of educational assistants, modified by decree no. 2005-1194 of September 22, 2005*.) The latter are paid in full on the Ministry of Education payroll and this arrangement is gradually replacing the previously operative youth employment mechanism. This measure is designed to consolidate the AVS functions and to progressively eliminate discrepancies between individual local situations, but also to increase the numbers of specialised personnel. Candidates will be offered adaptive training and an additional training module.

**Directors of adapted and specialised educational institutions**

Two diplomas prepare candidates for the position of director of an institution, a section or a department:

- The diploma for director of an adapted and specialised educational institution (DDEEAS), organised by the Ministry of Education (order of February 19, 1988, modified by order of January 9, 1995, regarding the creation of the diploma for director of an adapted and specialised educational institution). Candidates must belong to the ranks of schooling, education, orientation or management personnel under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Candidates can participate in a one-year training course wherein instruction modules alternate with in-class training at the National higher institute for training and research on the education of young disabled persons and adapted schooling (INS HEA) in Suresnes.

- The certificate of professional competence for the position of director of an institution or service for social intervention (CAFDES) organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs (decree no. 2002-401 of March 25, 2002 on the creation of the certificate of professional competence for the position of director of an institution or service for social intervention). This diploma can be obtained by certain staff categories with prior experience namely in medico-educational and socio-educational institutions. Compulsory training for candidates for the CAFDES exam is provided in the inter-regional centres approved by the National school for public health (ENSP) in Rennes, which is also responsible for organising the exam. There is also an examination for access to the position of director of a social institution organised under the authority of the public hospital service.

**Inspectors of the Ministry of Education in charge of ASH, IEN ASH (School adaptation and disabled pupils schooling)**

The inspectors of the Ministry of Education, recruited from the ranks of primary level teachers, can be in charge of the management of disabled pupils schooling on a specific area.

An eight-week training course is organised by the National higher institute for training and research on the education of young disabled persons and adapted schooling (INS HEA) in Suresnes.

The IEN-ASH training is designed primarily for inspectors in charge of a departmental or academic mission in the area of ASH (compulsory training) and, depending on the number of training positions available, inspectors who wish to work in a position of this type in the future.

This training course focuses on seven different missions:

**Mission 1** : Technical advisor to the director of the Academy

**Mission 2** : Advisor to the district inspectors, in the field of ASH

**Mission 3** : Primary contact for partners in the ASH sector

**Mission 4** : Coordinator of the departmental orientation commission

**Mission 5** : Inspector of the teachers in ASH facilities or operative units

**Mission 6** : Manager or instructor of a specific district

**Mission 7** : Promoter of innovative and transformative action in the field of ASH

**Development of inclusion**

**School integration of disabled students**

Actions supporting the school integration of disabled students undertaken by the Ministry of Education are reinforced by the law of February 11, 2005 on the equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of disabled persons. The law states disabled students' rights to education as well as the responsibility of the educational system in guaranteeing the continuity of the individual's schooling and training route. This law has been enforced since January 1, 2006. It creates the obligation to:

- Ensure that the student has access to schooling in an ordinary educational environment close to home whenever possible

- Closely associate parents in the orientation decisions concerning their child and in all phases of the definition of his personal schooling project (PPS)

- Guarantee the continuity of the educational route, adapted to the student's capacities and needs

- Guarantee the equality of opportunities for disabled and ordinary candidates by providing a legal framework for appropriate adaptation of exam conditions

In the future, the student's schooling route will therefore mainly take place within an ordinary educational environment. The modalities of his schooling route are defined in his PPS. Since the begin of the 2006 school year, all disabled students are forthwith assigned a reference teacher, who will monitor the student throughout his time in the educational system.

Although some difficulties persist, namely in the form of budgetary constraints and training of all actors involved (teachers, management personnel, school personnel), school attendance of disabled students has progressed significantly. Thus, the number of disabled students in the public education system has increased by more than 12 % compared to 2004. At the beginning of the 2006 school year, 200 additional integrated learning units (UPI) were created in secondary and high schools. The implementation of the UPI was planned in such manner as to eliminate all geographical access problems, taking into account reasonable transportation constraints. During the 2006 school year, there were 6078 active school carers (AVS) in the school system and 4640 of these worked on an individual basis with over 13,500 students.

Info

**COMPLETE NATIONAL OVERVIEW - CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Legal System**

The Parliament enacts laws on education and decides on the general principles of education policy. The Government and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports implement these principles into the national policy at the central government level. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is in charge of the administration of education, youth issues and sports.

In matters related to comprehensive, secondary, higher education, vocational training and adult education, the Ministry is assisted by expert institutions – Research Pedagogical Institute, Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling, National Institute of Vocational Training, National Pedagogical Institute, Institute for Information in Education, Institute for Evaluation in Education.

The right for all children to be educated is enshrined in the Constitution of the Czech Republic (Ústava České republiky No 1/1993). The Constitution states that everybody is equal in accessing the law and according to the law. Everyone has the equal opportunity to receive education.  Everyone also has the right to basic and secondary education free of charge.

One of the most important documents of a comprehensive character related to persons with a disability is the National Plan of Integration and Support of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2006 – 2008. The [new document](http://www.vlada.cz/) for the next period will follow.

The above mentioned important document contains the main aims, tasks and principles for implementing the inclusion policy into practice concerning health, culture, social and educational policy.

A central document on education is the Long-term National Strategy of Development in Education which is discussed and approved by the government and then approved by the Parliament. The approved document is revised every two years.

Education of children, pupils and pupils with special needs is a standard part of the mentioned strategic document.

Based on the Long Term National Strategy on Development in Education,   each of the 14 regions in the Czech Republic are obliged to formulate their own Long-term Regional Strategy of development in Education for the particular region.

Due to the Act on Sign Language that was approved in 1998 and with the amendments approved in 2008, the importance of sign language for the education of pupils with a hearing impairment as well as the use of other alternative communication systems including specific systems of communication for deaf-and-blind persons,  was legally recognised and stressed. The Act guarantees the right to education for deaf children by means of sign language, guarantees the access to sign language interpretation for upper secondary level pupils, as well as the access to courses in sign language for parents of deaf children. Needless to say , using sign language in the education of pupils a  with hearing impairment was already a practice enshrined by the previous Act on Education No 29/1984 and its amendments.

The new Act on Education regulating the whole system of education in the Czech Republic was approved in September 2004 (which came in force in January 2005). This Act presents the definition of pupils with special educational needs and individual target groups - pupils with mental, sensory or physical disabilities, pupils with speech and language impairments, pupils with multiple disabilities, autism, pupils with specific learning and behavioural difficulties, chronically ill and socially disadvantaged pupils. There is also focus on the education of gifted and talented pupils.

The Act on Education guarantees that the support provisions and services required in supporting the access to education of pupils with special needs  are to be available to children, pupils and/or pupils at all levels of education. Pupils with special needs have the right to be provided with adapted text books, with specific teaching materials, compensatory and rehabilitation equipment and tools as well as with support and counselling services, free of charge. The Act on Education guarantees that alternative communication and/or sign language will be available for those pupils who cannot profit from using oral language.  Braille print is available for pupils who cannot read regular print.  Additional staff are available, as well as individual educational plans which describe the conditions necessary for successful learning when dealing with a pupil with special needs. The process of the education of pupils with special needs has the features of differentiation, individualisation and adaptation tailored to meet the needs of pupils and their diversity.

The School Act reinforces the trend towards integration and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools. It is recognised that pupils with special needs attend their local school unless their parents choose another school. The role of parents in the decision-making concerning the education of their child is crucial.

**Legal System in Mainstream Education**

According to the Act on Education, the content of education must comply with [The Frame Educational Programmes](http://www.vuppraha.cz/) . The process of education has to be organised taking into consideration the age level and abilities of the pupils and to promote pupils’ healthy growth and development.

The Frame Educational Programme for Basic Education is a national document covering both mainstream and special education and  is used as the basis for compiling the “school curricula”. Each school is responsible for the development of this school level document that also has to include a description of the provision for pupils with special needs. The school educational programme also emphasises the learning environment and operational culture of the school, the conception of learning, cross-curricular themes in teaching, individual support and guidance and pupils welfare.

The curricular reform was implemented by the Act on Education. Since September 2007, all schools in the Czech Republic have been implementing their own School Educational Programmes. The process started with first grades. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is supporting schools in this implementation process by training teachers and school head teachers, providing guidance and counselling and providing the required resources. The co-ordinators of the implementation process at the school level are receiving training, in training programmes, and schools are provided with guidance and support.

Also the convergence of ordinary and special education is supported through the Frame Educational Programmes. The national programme for compulsory education is also tailored to cover the education of pupils with special needs.

Pupils with severe and profound mental disabilities, autism and complex needs are given the opportunity to follow the Frame Educational Programme for Special Needs Education tailored to meet their needs and built upon the principles of the national programme for compulsory education, reflecting the pupils´ special needs.

The Act on Education codifies teaching of pupils with special needs by additional provisions and supportive measures that may be described in the individual educational plan in favour of the pupils. The supportive measures are e.g. additional teaching staff, additional teaching hours covering also specific subjects such as sign language, speech therapy, reading and writing in Braille print, mobility and orientation training, guidance and counselling, availability of specific teaching materials, books, compensatory aid, specific assessment arrangements etc.

At the same time, the Act on Education leaves open the possibility to establish independent schools or classes for pupils with disabilities.  
The Act on Education explicitly stresses support toward the development of the individual abilities of pupils as for instance, pupils receiving extended education in certain subjects or enabling gifted pupils to skip a grade.

Increased attention is paid to the education of Roma children who represent a substantial part of socially disadvantaged pupils. The programmes "The support of Roma pupils at upper secondary schools", "The support of Roma community integration", "Schools with a full day programme" are still in progress, a network of preparatory classes has grown. Within this programme a special training programme has been developed for pedagogical assistants from the Roma community. Through their supportive work in the classroom, these assistants are functioning as a school - family link.

In the area of the integration of foreigners the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has developed a programme to support integration policy. Within its framework, projects for the  multicultural education of children and youths, Czech language courses with the Czech language as a foreign language, and the education of migrant foreigners are supported.

The legal provisions governing the pre-school education of children with special needs are also stated in the Act on Education. Among other issues the Act guarantees that pre-school education is free of charge in the year prior to compulsory education.   
The Frame Educational Programme reflects the needs of the target group. Playing games is the most important method in pre-school education. Pre-school education is not compulsory.

Compulsory education in the Czech Republic means an obligation to participate in the education provided by schools. All schools follow the approved Frame Educational Programme.    
Each school has to implement the Frame Educational Programme into its School Educational Programme.

The School Educational Programme reflects the special needs of pupils and besides the regular subjects the programme consists of subjects such as speech therapy, mobility orientation, sign language, rehabilitation etc.

The basic schools provide nine years of compulsory education. Compulsory education is divided into two levels:

* First level (year 1-5) corresponds to the primary level
* Second level (year 6-9) corresponds to the lower secondary level.

Starting compulsory education can be postponed according to the child’s needs until the child is 8 or turns 8 during the school year.The compulsory education of pupils with special needs can be up to 10 years.  Children, who need to repeat a year for some reason i.e. illness, may attend basic school for one extra year.    
Pupils with profound special needs are allowed to continue their basic education until the age of 26.  
Pupils generally receive support concerning their choice of further education and professional career by means of special guidance and counselling. The head teacher at each school (mainstream as well as special school) appoints a school consultant, who is responsible (beside his/her teaching duties) for such counselling. This consultant helps pupils with educational, vocational and labour market orientation and is also in contact with parents and social partners. Special attention is given to the pupils with special needs. Pupils can also use the special counselling services outside the school. These services (more in the section Special Needs Education within the Education System) enable the pupil to draw up his/her action plan by focusing on his/her notions and strengths.

**Financing**

Basic and secondary education is free of charge at schools registered by the conditions described in the Act on Education.  The expenditure in connection with education is covered by the national budget. Also additional special needs of pupils are covered by the national budget.

The financial resources are disseminated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to the regions according to the actual number of pupils – ‘financial units’.

Regions are obliged to re-distribute the resources including additional budget resources to support education of pupils with special needs to individual schools.

The same principles for financing apply for both special needs and mainstream education.     
Capitation grants are stipulated for individual schools and their activities. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports specifies capitation grants as recommended for the calculation of subsidies. The regions receive this recommended amount of funding and are permitted to disseminate these grants to the schools. Financial flows are determined by the responsibilities of the relevant organising bodies. These responsibilities were changed in 2001. Transfer of responsibilities from the state to regions was a gradual one.

**Identification of special educational needs**

The decision as to whether a child's development requires special consideration or support is dependent on the concrete assessment of the individual child. The principle of the assessment is the pedagogical one. The assessment of a pupil can only be done with the parent’s approval. It is important to provide the needed support and special pedagogical assistance as early as possible in order to prevent the pupil’s academic failure and other negative developmental consequences.

As a rule, it is the teacher who deals with the special needs of a pupil, in co-operation with resource centres (special schools) and counselling services. The responsibility of parents is to make the decision for their child to undergo the assessment of special needs. The experts from the special educational and/or educational – psychological counselling centres look into the nature of the need of a child and make proposals for special support and provisions. The head teacher of the school decides which form of special education support will be implemented. Parents have the right to approach this decision-making process and their opinion is crucial.  
The professionals from the health sector are responsible for medical diagnoses and medical recommendation to support education.

The assessment of educational needs is carried out by pedagogical-psychological advice centres, special pedagogical centres, centres of educational care and diagnostic institutes within the educational sector.

There is a network of counselling institutions in the Czech educational system providing psychological and special pedagogical support and other services. The assessment concerning the special needs of a child is based upon the use of psychological and special pedagogical tools. A large majority of pupils with special needs have specific learning and behavioural disorders. Special pedagogical centres are part of the resource centres and deal with expert assessment of special needs and support services for certain groups of pupils with regard to the kind of impairment that they have. Most of these centres are now developing more complex areas of support provisions.

Centres of educational care are responsible for assessing and dealing with support for children with severe behavioural problems and/or children endangered by drug abuse or criminal delinquency. These centres provide counselling to parents and teachers.

Diagnostic Institutions deal with the assessment of children sent to the protective educational regime by a Court decision and also with youngsters whose parents or guardians have asked for their placement into a diagnostic Institution due to behavioural problems, and/or due to a dysfunctional family.  Diagnostic institutions are the part of the system of education in the Czech Republic.

**Process of assessment of special educational needs**

A Pupil’s assessment focused on his/her special educational needs is based on a multidisciplinary and holistic approach. The procedure is carried out by the Educational Psychological Counselling Centres and/or at Special Education Centres by professionals - special pedagogues and/or psychologists – both at schools and/or at the centres.    
The recommendation for undergoing the assessment is given by the class teacher, parent, the pupil him/herself and physician or by another person who is in contact with the pupil.   
The assessment as well as special educational support cannot be done without the parent’s approval.

The assessment of the pupil consists of a detailed description of individual needs, the way the needs are to be met, the professional contact person as a consultant, the recommendation concerning the process of education and its organisation including assessment of the pupils school performance, placement and additional necessary support (personal, technological, professional, teaching materials, special text books, etc). These recommendations are embodied into the individual educational plan of the individual pupil with special needs.

According to the Act on Education the parent must approve the placement of the child into special education and/or his/her placement into the special school and/or special class/unit. The parent can, however, object to the placement decision. The school headmaster is obliged to initiate the change of the placement or educational programme of the child whenever the situation of the pupil concerning his/her special needs changes. There is a “free track” from special school into mainstream and vice versa.

**Special Needs Education within the Education System**

Since 1989 there has been a progressive process of changes in the Czech educational system. All these changes have opened the gap to a wider differentiation and individualisation of educational possibilities. The most important changes deal with the group of children with special educational needs, who had a narrow or even restrictive access to education before. New educational philosophy, which responded to the tendency and trends of the society’s democratic development and orientation, was formulated in the National Programme of Education Development in the Czech Republic (White Book) by The Ministry of Education in 2001.

The main changes concerning the access conditions for pupils with special educational needs to education are as follows:

* Mainstream schools were opened for pupils with special educational needs;
* Education was made available for pupils with even the most serious complex needs;
* Diverse forms of individualisation of education were established to meet the needs of pupils with special education needs;
* A counselling system has been developed for pupils with special educational needs to support their integration and inclusion into mainstream schools and for pupils who are educated at home;
* A counselling system for pupils with behaviour difficulties (disorders) has been set up;
* A broad range of support provisions have been implemented to increase participation of pupils with special needs into mainstream education;
* The role of parents was stressed;
* Special schools have been developing into resource centres.

Two-track system, where special education had a strong position, has been changed into a multi-track system. Pupils with special educational needs are educated preferably in mainstream classes, but there is another choice of placement available – special classes within mainstream schools or they can attend schools (‘special schools’) founded for those pupils with special needs whose parents prefer this kind of school.

If health conditions do not allow a pupil to attend school regularly, the regional authority has to organise an educational process which enables the pupil to reach the same level of education as regular compulsory school attendance.

Special schools are a part of the overall educational system but the number of them is decreasing. These schools provide education to pupils with mental, sensory or physical disabilities, pupils with communication difficulties, pupils with complex needs, pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Pupils who are ill or pupils with a health risk are temporarily placed in hospitals and/or other health care institutions and can attend schools in these institutions.

The aim of special education is to provide education, tailored according to the needs of the pupil and which supports the pupils´ social inclusion.    
All pupils follow national school curricula, pupils with a mental problem follow the reduced school curricula (see the Legal System section).

Special schools are offering education for pre-school children, for pupils at the age of compulsory school attendance and at upper secondary level, including vocational schools. They mostly serve children whose special needs can not be met in mainstream settings and for those pupils whose parents prefer this kind of placement.

The process of education is modified according to the special needs of the pupils.   
The aim is to provide quality education for all of the pupils in a class.

The main characteristics of special education:

* Specific teacher-training for teachers working with pupils with special needs is required;
* Additional pedagogical staff available in a class;
* Special equipment, tools and educational methods are used;
* Lower number of pupils per class;
* Adaptation of the organisation of the process of education and of the educational programme.
* School attendance may be prolonged – (at the compulsory level of education till the age of 26, at the level of upper secondary education for 2 years; Pupils with complex needs have the right to continue their basic education till the age of 26. Other pupils with special needs can continue their compulsory education for one more school year, i.e. 10 years instead of 9 years. Pupils in upper secondary education can profit from 2 additional school years in order to fulfil the standard curricula. The individual needs of the pupil are the rationale behind the decision concerning this particular topic.
* Close co-operation between the school and counselling institutions;
* Counselling and guidance available;
* Alternative educational forms for children with complex needs, whose health conditions prevent them from attending mainstream school (education at home available) ;

**Pre-school education**

The concept of pre-school education is based upon positive influence on the pupil’s personality, social performance and future success in education and social inclusion.  
Special Educational Centres and Educational and Psychological Counselling Centres contribute to the smooth transition of pupils from the pre-school system into compulsory education.  
Pupils with complex needs at the age of compulsory education (6 – 8 years) may attend specific pre-school institutions offering a 1 to 3 year programme of systematic preparation for compulsory education.  
Compulsory education preparatory classes are available for pupils who have socially and culturally disadvantaged family backgrounds. This provision supports the schools readiness of ‘at-risk’ children and their smoother transition into formal compulsory education.  The preparatory classes are mainly established at mainstream basic schools.

**Compulsory education**

**Basic schools- mainstream education**

Compulsory education is organised within the system of basic schools in the Czech Republic which covers primary (1st – 5th grade) and secondary (6th – 9th grade) educational level.   
The decision about the organisational form of education of a pupil with special needs is the responsibility of the head teacher who decides this taking into consideration the wishes of parents and counselling centres recommendations.   
A pupil with special needs has the right to be educated at a mainstream school (preferably with regards to the special needs of the pupil), and/or at a special class/unit within the mainstream school and/or at a basic school for children with special needs (‘special school’).

**Basic school – special needs education**

Basic schools for children with special needs provide education for pupils whose special educational needs cannot be fully met within the mainstream provisions and facilities, and also that their parents prefer this placement. The number of pupils in a class is much lower in comparison to a mainstream class. It ranges from 4 to 14 pupils relating to the type of school. A mainstream class consists on average, of 22, 5 pupils, and no more than 30 pupils.

In addition to the regular teaching subjects each special educational programme provides so called subjects of special provision, such as speech and communication therapy, mobility and orientation training, sensory stimulation, using special IT, music and musical instrument playing, etc., according to the type of the school and the special needs of the pupil.   
The organisational strategy is the same in special classes within mainstream schools.

Recently, the role of special schools has been changing. In addition to their educational role, they have become resource centres developing new pedagogical methods and approaches and providing wide ranges of advice and support services both to pupils, their parents and mainstream teachers. They usually consist of more levels of education.

The system includes basic schools:

* for pupils with hearing impairment
* for pupils with visual impairment
* for pupils with physical impairment
* for pupils with speech impairments
* for ill and health risk pupils
* for pupils with specific learning difficulties
* for pupils with specific behavioural difficulties
* for pupils with mental impairment
* for pupils with multiple impairment

For pupils with severe mental challenges and complex needs there is the possibility of attending a basic special school. Pupils follow the Frame Educational Programme for Education in Basic Special Schools. The structure of the document matches the structure of the curricular document for mainstream basic schools. The content is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with significant mental challenges. The process of education is supported by the rehabilitation services. The development of social and communication skills of pupils is stressed.

The pupils reach the bases level of education.

**Post-compulsory education, upper secondary education**

Upper secondary education offers education for pupils with special needs in these organisational forms:

1. Individual integration within mainstream settings;
2. Education in a special class within the mainstream secondary school;
3. Education is a secondary school for pupils with special needs.

A broad range of educational programmes are available at the upper secondary level of education to pupils with special needs. The curricular model is the same as with the compulsory education. Each branch of study has its Frame Educational Programme. There are some 500 branches at the upper secondary level of education. Reduction of this number within the process of the grouping of branches is expected. The expected number is ca 250 – 300 branches and the same number of Frame Educational Programmes.

Some schools offer education in various studies especially for pupils with special needs. For example the Conservatory for pupils with visual impairment in Prague has a long tradition and very successful history. There are secondary schools providing education specifically for pupils with a hearing impairment, such as Upper Secondary Health Service School and the Secondary Pedagogical School, using sign language as a standard communication tool.

Practical schools offer upper secondary education to pupils with mental challenges in 2 programmes: a1-year programme and a 2-year programme.

The programmes cover both academic and practical areas of knowledge. Besides general knowledge the school provides pupils with a wide range of practical daily life knowledge and skills including social skills, the basics of working knowledge and other skills helping the pupils to enter the labour market.   
The standard length of each educational programme at upper secondary level can be prolonged by 2 years according to the needs of the pupils. (Act on Education 561/2004).

Each Frame Educational Programme contains a recommendation of support provisions and eligible adaptations to meet the needs of pupils with special needs.  Each school has to develop its school educational programme that reflects class diversity and the special needs of the pupils in the class.

**Lifelong Education for Adults with special educational needs**

For pupils who have not acquired the level of basic education there is a possibility to attend courses set up to reach the level of basic education and/or bases of education.   
Besides school, other educational bodies are offering a broad range of courses and follow-up education reflecting the needs of pupils to support their independent life and access to employment.

A limited number of special schools (11) remain even after the decentralisation under the direct management of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.  
From the political point of view it was important to give a clear signal to parents of pupils with special needs that the Ministry of Education is securing this educational alternative for their children, even though the main trend in policy is towards inclusion. These schools co-operate closely with the ministry and research institutes and with mainstream schools in developing new methods, provisions and approaches to meet the diversity in needs of all pupils.

All schools that are offering education specifically to pupils with special needs are entitled to provide education to pupils without special needs as well, as a certain kind of “vice versa integration”. The number of these pupils is limited to 25% of the total number of pupils in a class/school.  
Special schools often provide boarding services for children from remote areas. The state contributes to these services and parents pay only a small part of the costs covering boarding services. Travel costs are covered by parents or by the social system.

The needs of gifted children are met through a broad range of additional educational provisions both at school and counselling level. The provisions of these pupils are usually described in the individual educational plan.  
A specialist from the counselling centre co-operates closely with the class teacher. With regards to the educational needs of the pupil, the organisation and structure of their education is designed.

**Teacher training - basic and specialist teacher training**

The Act on Educational Staff was approved by the Parliament of the Czech Republic in September 2004. The Act came into force January 1, 2005. The Act defines the categories of educational staff and the general prerequisites for carrying out their professional work. It stipulates the requested educational background and regulates the further education of teachers and other professionals from the field of education.   
The university level of teachers´ education is predominantly requested. For pre-school teachers, the upper secondary level of education is accepted.

Most university programmes are at master’s level (ISCED 5A) and are taught at universities. The responsibilities for the content and organisation of studies belong entirely to the individual universities. Each faculty of education in the Czech Republic providing education for teachers has the right to determine the content and organisation of studies, including study programmes, study and assessment regulations, entrance examination requirements, the requirements for state final examinations, etc.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports formulates only the key competences for teachers. It is up to the universities providing teacher-training to meet the expected level off skills of their graduates.    
Co-responsibility for the quality of university education is up to the Accreditation Commission, which is one of the bodies that carries out comparative evaluation of the particular area of study at all faculties of education.

The study model for teachers at faculties of education consists predominantly of both the academic and the practical/professional parts and run simultaneously. The teacher-training integrates both the theoretical and practical aspects. In addition to traditional methods (lectures, seminars), the ‘'learning by doing’ approach is also used, as well as various theoretical methods, learning through practical exercises, workshops etc.

There is no unified compulsory curriculum for teacher-training at higher educational institutions, but certain components are always present: general subject education, psychology, pedagogy, didactics and pedagogical practical training.

The amount of teaching hours dedicated to these subjects can vary. The proportion of instruction depends on a teacher’s area of specialisation.   
Issues concerning management and administration are included in greater scope in the functional training curriculum for school heads.

The student-teacher’s professional development, which means personal profile and development of professional competency, is stressed. Student teachers should acquire needed academic, social and didactic skills. They are expected to develop their own efficient teaching style, self-reflection skills and assessment for learning skills.

Practical training runs through the whole programme either in blocks of one to two weeks teaching or in the form of long-term training consisting of 1 day a week spent at a school for a period of several terms. By the end of their studies a student- teacher has usually had six weeks teaching practice. Emphasis is placed on the student-teacher’s own attempts at teaching and their reflection on this practical experience. There is no transitional period between training and employment.

The Act on Educational Staff (563/2004) defines the qualifications of teachers working with children with special needs. University teacher-training in special education or additional university training in special education is requested.

All university teacher-training programmes include modules on the education of pupils with special needs.   
Teachers who want to work as SEN- Counsellors and/or special teachers of pupils with special needs have to follow the master 5-year university study programme in special education.

**In-service training**

Teachers are entitled to further education and in-service training. The ministry provides financial support to cover the part of expenditures connected with the in-service training and further education of teachers at courses that are approved by the ministerial decision.

To support inclusion, teachers are supposed to participate at the in-service training in special needs education.

**Development of inclusion**

The first alternative for providing special needs education is to include pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and, when necessary, provide special needs education in small teaching groups.   
Pupils with special needs are provided with a broad range of support provisions to facilitate inclusion.   
The class teacher is responsible for the learning process of all pupils in a class. Mainstream teachers are supported by guidance and counselling services from the resource centres. Special teachers from these counselling centres provide direct support to pupils in mainstream settings if necessary.

The general objective of education of children with special needs both in mainstream and segregated provisions is to give them equal opportunities to successful and efficient education in accordance with their needs and abilities. The main principle is the focus on each pupil’s strengths and her/his individual learning and development needs.  
Education has to promote pupils’ initiative and self-confidence and promote life long learning.

The systematic integration policy in the Czech Republic started after 1989. During this period the development of integration has changed towards broader social acceptance of inclusion of persons with disabilities, mainstreaming, and better educational and technological support for pupils with special needs in mainstream settings.

The main principle of education for pupils with special needs is to provide them with quality education, with equal opportunities to eliminate the disadvantage in accessing an appropriate level and quality of education. Social inclusion and social participation of a person with special needs is the main aim.

Inclusion of pupils into mainstream schools at all levels of education is in the centre of interest of the Ministry of Education in Czech Republic. Additional provisions tailored with regard to the pupil’s needs support the success of the school performance of each pupil with special needs.

Although the situation of inclusive education has been improving, there still are some difficult areas to be dealt with. The problems are partly caused by the limited resources available for a support teacher in a mainstream class, partly by the architectural barriers/accessablility of school buildings. Traditional thinking patterns of teachers (and parents) and their resistance to change also plays a role.

All strategic documents on national level deal with these issues and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports gives grants to schools to improve conditions for pupils with special needs and for supporting their inclusion.

**Quality Indicators for special needs education**

Quality indicators for special needs education are very similar to those for general education. The National Programme for Development of Education formulates the indicators for the Czech Educational Policy as a result coming from the broad discussions of professionals.

The indicators are:

* Equal opportunity and access to education

Each child has the right to be educated with respect to his/her individual needs.  Education has to be adapted to meet the needs of each child and diversity of their needs.

* Positive school environment

This means an environment offering all of the pupils an opportunity to improve their personality and individual knowledge and practical skills.

* Open school atmosphere

A classroom atmosphere built on friendly relations, feeling of security with the participation of all pupils, supporting inclusion of children with special needs.

* Teaching as facilitating

The learning process has to stimulate pupil’s active role, his/her self confidence, participation in the process and activities within the class and his/her motivation for life-long education.

For further information, contact please the national [Agency Representatives](http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/czech-republic/contacts)

Sources:  
[Eurydice](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_CZ_EN.pdf)

Other sources:

<http://www.uiv.cz/>, [www.msmt.cz](http://www.msmt.cz) and <http://www.vuppraha.cz/>

**COMPLETE NATIONAL OVERVIEW - FINLAND**

**Legal System**

Parliament enacts laws on education and decides on the general principles of education policy. The Government and the Ministry of Education implement these principles at the central government level. The Ministry of Education is in charge of the administration of education, research, culture, youth issues and sports; its remit includes all universities. In matters related to comprehensive and upper secondary schools, vocational institutions and adult education, the Ministry is assisted by an expert agency, the National Board of Education. A central development document in the educational sector is the Development Plan for Education and Research, which the Government approves every four years for the year of its approval and for the following five calendar years. The currently effective development plan for 2003–2008 was approved at the end of 2003.

**Historical Overview**

Development of special education at Finnish folk schools within the parallel school system prior to the introduction of the uniform comprehensive school system can be divided into four periods. The first period covers the establishment of special education from the 1840s until the Compulsory Education Act came into force in 1921. Initially, special education focused on arranging instruction for pupils with sensory disabilities. The first schools for people with hearing impairments, visual impairments and motor impairments were established in the 1840s, the 1860s and the 1890s respectively. When it was stipulated that folk education was the obligation of local authorities in 1866 and when it subsequently became compulsory, many disabled children were excluded from school during these reforms. Education for disabled people was provided in the form of philanthropic activities of individuals and charitable organisations.

The second period ranges from the time when the Compulsory Education Act came into force in 1921 until the end of the Second World War. The Compulsory Education Act stated that the children of Finnish citizens were considered to be subject to compulsory education, except for those children with intellectual disabilities, who were exempt from compulsory education.

The third period starts at the end of the Second World War and runs through to the unification of education and the launch of comprehensive schools in 1972. The post-war period witnessed the development of care for the disabled. In addition to medical care and rehabilitation, the field of vocational rehabilitation was also being developed. The quantitative increase in special education and specialisation in its different sectors occurred between the 1940s and the 1960s. New forms of education emerged alongside adjusted instruction, such as instruction for maladjusted pupils and part-time special education not tied to year classes.

However, the medical approach prevailed in the provision of education for children with special needs. Deviation was, above all, considered from the perspective of physical and functional disability. Pupils with special needs were seen as being different from other pupils to such an extent that their education could not be organised in conjunction with mainstream education. In addition, the special needs of different groups were so varied that, in order to answer their needs, these children were segregated into groups that were as homogeneous as possible in terms of instruction. As this way of thinking was prevalent at that time, special education remained highly differentiated and segregated.

From the early 1970s, the principle of normalisation and the philosophy of integration came strongly to the fore in the education of pupils in need of special support. The aim of the principle of normalisation is that the lives of disabled people would be as normal as possible. Integration is considered to be the means of implementing this normalisation. The objective was perceived to be social integration, in other words, the opportunity for pupils with special needs to participate in regular instruction in the school they would attend without their disability.

Integration has been promoted in basic education since the 1970s. An important legislative reform was the new Comprehensive Schools Act passed in 1983, which enabled a better starting point for the development of the integration process. According to the Act, no child was allowed to be exempt from completing compulsory education any longer. Another important factor for the promotion of integration was the new comprehensive school national core curriculum issued in 1985; it raised the issues of differentiation and individualisation of education and, where necessary, the provision of special education and the individualisation of education and the syllabus. In terms of promoting integration, it was important that education and the syllabus were to be individualised according to individual children’s age and learning abilities so as to enable special education curricula to also be used in conjunction with mainstream education. Education for children with minor intellectual disabilities was initiated within folk schools in the form of special school instruction. In 1985, integrated instruction for children with medium and severe intellectual disabilities was transferred from social administration to educational administration. The instruction of children with the most severe intellectual disabilities, which had long been organised as part of special care for intellectually disabled people within the social administration, was transferred to be provided by comprehensive schools as from 1 August 1997, as was the instruction provided by reform schools from 1 August 1998.

The fourth period of special education started in the 1990s. In 1995, the status of special education was evaluated nationally. The conclusions of the evaluation formed the basis for national development measures implemented in subsequent years. The aim was to reform the operating culture, organisation of education and joint steering by supporting regional and municipal integration of service systems.

The comprehensive reform of school legislation in 1998 and the new Basic Education Act (628/1998) aim to guarantee educational equality and equal educational services for all those subject to compulsory education. The old disintegrated legislation based on institution forms has been replaced by more concise and centralised legislation based on the objectives and contents of education, levels and forms of education and the rights and responsibilities of students.

**Legal System in Mainstream Education**

According to the Constitution of Finland, everyone is equal before the law. No one may, without a valid reason, be treated differently from other people on grounds of sex, age, origin, health, disability or any other reason that concerns her/his person. Children are to be treated equally and as individuals and they are to be allowed to have an influence on issues affecting themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development. Everyone also has the right to basic education free of charge. Everyone is to be guaranteed an equal opportunity to receive education in accordance with their abilities and special needs and to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

According to the Basic Education Act (628/1998), all education must comply with national core curriculum. Instruction is to be organised so as to meet the age level and abilities of pupils and so as to promote pupils’ healthy growth and development. Instruction is to be conducted in co-operation with pupils’ homes.

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education is the national framework covering both mainstream and special education and it is used as the basis for drawing up local curricula. Education providers are responsible for preparation and development of local curricula. As per the provisions of the national core curriculum, the curriculum must also include a description of the provision of special education.

**Renovation of national and municipal curricula 2000 - 2006**

In Finland the national core curriculum is the national framework on the basis of which the local curriculum is formulated. The new national core curriculum for basic education was approved by The National Board of Education in January 2004

The new national core curriculum is more precise and more detailed compared with the previous curriculum from 1994. It emphasizes the curricular unity of basic education for the whole nine-year period. It also emphasizes learning environment and school’s operational culture, the conception of learning, cross-curricular themes in teaching, individual support and guidance and pupil welfare.

The implementation of the new curriculum is to take place gradually between autumn 2003 and autumn 2006. The National Board of Education has supported municipalities and schools in this implementation process by training and providing guidance and counselling. The municipal coordinators of the implementation process have received training in training programmes organized by the National Board of Education. National Board of Education has also produced and continues to produce material supporting the implementation, published both in print and on the home page of National Board of Education.

**Legal System in Special Needs Education**

Constitution provides that the support services needed in special education are to be available to everyone, who cannot obtain the security, indispensable subsistence and care required for a life lived with dignity. The public authorities must guarantee everyone adequate social, health and medical services and promote the health of the population. In addition, the public authorities are to support families and others responsible for providing for children so that they can ensure the well-being and personal development of children.

The objective of special education is to help and support pupils in such a way as to give them equal opportunities to complete compulsory schooling in accordance with their abilities and alongside their peers. The starting point is to assess each pupil’s strengths and her/his individual learning and development needs. Education is required to promote pupils’ initiative and self-confidence. Special education calls for decisions to be made concerning the study place, time and facilities and different functions as well as the allocation of resources to implement these decisions.

The first alternative for providing special needs education is to include pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and, when necessary, provide special needs education in small teaching groups. Only when this is not feasible is the second alternative considered: the provision of special needs education in a special group, class or school.

Special instruction within vocational education and training should primarily be provided in connection with regular instruction or in separate groups or both. Vocational special institutions, in turn, are responsible for providing education and training for students with the most severe disabilities. Vocational education and training are provided in the form of special education and training for students who need special educational and student welfare services due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or some other similar reason. It is the task of each education provider to determine how to define which students are in need of special education and training and how to draw up individual education plans for them. Special education and training may deviate from the general provisions governing vocational education and training as determined in the relevant national core curriculum. The duration of studies and study arrangements may be adjusted where a student’s state of health or previous studies dictate accordingly.

The 1998 legislative amendments introduced on-the-job learning and the appreciation and priority of learning by doing to the sphere of vocational education and training. These changes have promoted the provision of special education and training, as special education has traditionally intensified learning by emphasising practical skills and activities.

The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools emphasises the fact that the purpose of special support is to help and support students so as to guarantee them equal opportunities to complete their upper secondary school studies. Once a student’s learning difficulties have been identified, planning and implementation of support measures are started immediately, taking into account the information acquired on the student’s study performance and their needs for support during basic education. The local upper secondary school curriculum will determine how instruction and support measures for special needs students are to be organised.

Special education is provided in all stages of education from pre-primary education to upper secondary education and training. The provisions governing special education are included in the Basic Education Act (628/1998) and Decree (852/1998) and in the Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998). In addition, provisions for issues related to the organisation of special education have been laid down in the Act on Children’s Day Care (1290/1999), the Act on Children’s Home Care and the Private Care Allowance (1291/1999), the Act on Client Fees in Social Welfare and Health Care (1292/1999), the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998) and Decrees (811/1998 and its amendment 1139/1999), the Act on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision (328/2000), the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999) and in the Government Decree on the Evaluation of Education (150/2003). The provisions for support services to be arranged for disabled people have been laid down in the Act (380/1987) and Decree (759/1987) on Services and Assistance for the Disabled. The provisions governing the elaboration of personal study and rehabilitation plans and their content have been set out in the Decree on the Amendment of the Rehabilitation Allowances Decree (726/1999).

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/EuryCountry>

**Financing**

Most institutions providing basic and upper secondary level education are maintained by local authorities or joint municipal boards (consortia of municipalities). Private institutions are under public supervision: they follow the national core curricula and qualification guidelines confirmed by the National Board of Education. They also receive the same level of public funding as publicly funded schools. Responsibility for educational funding is divided between State and the local authorities. Of the funding for primary and secondary education, the state subsidy averages 57 per cent of the costs, while municipal contributions amount to an average of 43 per cent. In addition, the State supports local authorities by granting them increased state subsidies to assist with provision of special education.

Every pupil has the right to receive their education and the interpretation and assistant services, teaching and pupil welfare services (including the services of the school doctor and psychologist, dentist, therapists and social and health care) and any special aids required for participation in education free of charge. In addition, textbooks and other learning materials, tools and work materials, school transport and daily school meals, accommodation and full board, as well as treatment of injuries sustained in accidents at school or during travel to school, are also free of charge for all pupils.

All students in vocational education and training are entitled to receive instruction free of charge, free daily meals every school day and free accommodation in a hall of residence assigned by the educational institution. Disabled students are entitled to receive assistant services, other student welfare services and any special aids required for studying. Some services are offered by the educational institution, whereas others are organised as services provided by the student’s municipality of residence in accordance with the Act on Services and Assistance for the Disabled (380/1987).

The Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998) provides that students with disabilities and those in need of special support for some other reason are entitled to assistant services, other teaching and student welfare services and special aids, as required in their studies.

**Identification of Special Educational Needs**

**Early Education**

In ECEC, the child’s need for support is assessed by considering both the parent’s and the staff’s observations, or based on the child’s earlier established need for special support. The child may need support in the physical, cognitive, emotional or social areas of development or in the development skills for varying periods of time. The need for support may also arise in situations when the child’s health or development is endangered or is not adequately fostered by developmental conditions. On assessing the child’s need for support, it is important to identify and define the child’s individual opportunities to act in different environments and in different educational situations and to also define related need for support and guidance. The aim is to prevent the child’s need for support from accumulating and becoming prolonged.

**Pre-School Education and Compulsory Schooling**

If a child cannot cope in mainstream education due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or some other similar reason, s/he may be admitted to special education during pre-primary education and upon commencement of compulsory education or s/he may also be transferred to special education later during comprehensive school.

A psychological, medical or social examination of a pupil and her/his growth environment may be conducted as early as during early childhood education and care and also, where necessary, later during pre-primary and basic education. In addition it is possible to obtain statements from different therapists, other experts and the child’s teachers.

The decision on the transfer to special education is made by the public authority, which is defined on the rules and regulations of the pupil’s municipality of residence. According to the Basic Education Act, admission or transfer of pupils to special education always require consultation with their parents or other guardians. Where the decision on transfers to special education is made against the consent of a parent or guardian, the parent or guardian may appeal against the decision to the Provincial State Office.

**Special Needs Education within the Education System**

**Pre-School Education**

Pre-school education shall build on the basic values of society. These have been stipulated in national legislation and international declarations, recommendations or conventions, which endeavour to safeguard human rights and the viability of the globe. The role of pre-school education shall be to promote children’s growth into humane individuals and ethically responsible membership of society by guiding them towards responsible action and compliance with generally accepted rules and towards appreciation for other people. The core role of pre-school education shall be to promote children’s favourable growth, development and learning opportunities. It shall support and monitor physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development and prevent any difficulties that may arise. Early childhood education and care, pre-school education and basic education form an integrated whole progressing consistently in terms of children’s development.

Special supporting pre-school education is needed by children, whose conditions for development, growth and learning have been affected by illness, disability or reduced functional ability. In addition, children in need of psychological or social support for their growth shall receive special support. Children whose development according to experts in education and pupil welfare services and parents or other guardians, involves risk factors related to learning potential, shall also be entitled to special support. In addition, special support in pre-school education shall be provided for children, who are within extended compulsory education or whose basic education has been deferred until one year later, and for children admitted or transferred to special education during pre-school education.

The physical and social learning environment and the necessary support services in children’s pre-school education shall primarily be organised so as to enable children to participate in group activities as fully as possible.

A child’s pre-school education plan shall be drawn up for each child in need of special support together with parents or other guardians and the relevant experts. The plan shall include the objectives set for the child’s growth and development and an assessment of the child’s strengths and risk factors and difficulties related to learning. The plan shall indicate any change needs related to child’s learning environment and the support and pupil welfare services required for participation in instruction, the bodies responsible for those and the monitoring and assessment of progress. The plans for those children admitted or transferred to special education shall be prepared in the form of personal plans covering the organisation of education (IEP).

**Compulsory Schooling**

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education forms the basis for local, i.e. municipal and/or school-specific, curricula for special education. According to the provisions of the national core curriculum, education providers are to draw up a curriculum including two general syllabi, one divided into subjects and the other based on functional domains. The curriculum is then used to determine syllabi for each pupil’s individual plans. Pupils following the syllabus of mainstream education may be provided with a child’s pre-primary education plan and a personal study plan for basic education. Each pupil admitted or transferred to special education must be provided with an individual education plan (IEP).

Students who are lagging behind in their studies have possibility to remedial teaching. In addition, student welfare, educational guidance and cooperation with parents enable studying in mainstream instruction. (See Appendix 1.)

Pupils, who have minor learning difficulties, specific learning disorders or problems in adjusting to work, have the right to receive part-time special needs teaching. Part-time special needs education within mainstream instruction is provided to a pupil, who has slight difficulties in learning and adjustment or who needs special support to overcome learning difficulties. There are different ways to arrange part-time special needs education. It may be organised in general education (as team teaching), in small groups or individually.

Each pupil transferred or admitted to special education must be provided with an individual education plan (IEP). Provision of special education must always ensure that the interpretation and assistant services required for participation in education, as well as other teaching and pupil welfare services, rehabilitation needed in connection with special education and the development, guidance and support tasks related to instruction have been organised and that special aids have been acquired.

If 10-year compulsory education is not possible due to disability or illness or for some other similar reason, compulsory education will start one year earlier than for other pupils and it will last eleven years. Within this system of extended compulsory education, pre-primary education may take two years. If the parent or guardian so wishes, the extended compulsory education can start at the age of five on a voluntary basis.

Instead of subjects, instruction for the most severely disabled is divided into functional domains, which are motor skills, language and communication, social skills, activities of daily living and cognitive skills. The functional domains are further divided into sub-domains.

Individual education plans are drawn up so as to enable assessment and monitoring of pupils’ learning processes, rehabilitation and achievement of their individual educational objectives. Each plan must include the following information as required to individualise instruction provided for the pupil:

* a description of the pupil’s learning abilities and strengths, special needs related to learning and the needs to develop teaching and learning environments as required by these;
* long- and short-term objectives for instruction and learning;
* the numbers of weekly lessons per year included in the pupil’s study plan;
* a list of those subjects where the pupil’s studies differ from syllabi for regular instruction;
* the objectives and core contents of those subjects where the pupil follows an individual syllabus;
* principles for monitoring and assessment of the pupil’s progress;
* interpreting and assistant services, other teaching and pupil welfare services, communication methods and special aids and teaching materials required for participation in education;
* a description of the provision of instruction for the pupil in conjunction with other education and/or in a special education group;
* people participating in organisation of the pupil’s teaching and support services and their areas of responsibility;
* monitoring of the implementation of support services.

**Transition Period**

**Additional Education**

Young people who have completed the basic education syllabus may be provided with additional education lasting one extra school year in accordance with the Basic Education Act. Additional education is open to young people who have received their basic education leaving certificate in the same or previous year. No national lesson allocation or syllabus has been determined for additional education. The curriculum for additional education may include the core subjects common to all pupils as part of the basic education syllabus, elective subjects within basic education, other subjects and subject groups conforming to the role of basic education, vocational orientation studies and periods of workplace guidance.

**Vocational Education**

Students in need of special support may apply to ordinary vocational institutions within the national joint application system or through the related flexible application procedure. They may also apply to educational institutions with special educational tasks directly or, in some cases, through the joint application system. Pupil counsellors in basic education and student counsellors in vocational education and training aim to find a suitable place for each student according to the student’s wishes.

In vocational education and training, students in need of special educational or student welfare services are provided with instruction in the form of special education and training. An individual education plan is to be drawn up for each student receiving special education and training. This plan must set out details of the qualification to be completed, the national core curriculum or the requirements of the competence-based qualification observed in education and training, the scope of the qualification, the individual curriculum drawn up for the student, grounds for providing special education and training, special educational and student welfare services required for studying as well as other services and support measures provided for the student. Each education provider is responsible for organising special education and training and services for students in special education and training.

**Upper Secondary Education**

Special needs education is not mentioned in the current regulations of upper secondary education (629/1998, 810/1998). Although The Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998) provides that students with disabilities and those in need of special support for some other reason are entitled to assistant services, other teaching and student welfare services and special aids, as required in their studies.

In its Regulation dated 22 September 2000, the Matriculation Examination Board issued instructions for completion of the matriculation examination, including instructions for students with dyslexia or other disabilities or illnesses. Every year, about 1,200 candidates present the Board with a medical certificate, requesting relaxation of the terms of completion of the matriculation examination or exemption from completion of a specific part of the examination, such as deaf students requesting exemption from listening comprehension tests.

**Teacher Training - Basic and Specialist Teacher Training**

**Mainstream teacher training**

**Pre-school Education**

Teaching and guidance staff within day-care centres has either Bachelor’s degrees from a university or a polytechnic or what used to be known as post-secondary vocational qualifications. In addition, they may be assisted by other child-care professionals with relevant upper secondary vocational qualifications.

**Compulsory Education and General Upper Secondary Education**

Teachers in the first six forms of basic education are usually generalists (class teachers), whereas those in the last three forms and at upper secondary level are subject specialists (subject teachers). Class teachers are Master of Education and subject teachers have completed a Master’s degree in the subject they teach as well as pedagogical studies.

**Special Needs Education**

Special needs education is provided for pre-primary pupils by special kindergarten teachers, part-time special needs education for pupils in mainstream basic education is provided by special needs teachers, while pupils who are admitted or transferred to special needs education are taught by special needs class teachers. Vocational special needs teachers work at both mainstream vocational institutions and vocational special institutions. It is possible to study special needs education as major and take higher first degree. In addition, teachers can qualify themselves for special kindergarten teachers, special needs teachers or special needs class teachers.

In addition to special needs teachers, educational services also employ special needs assistants, educational guidance and school welfare officers, psychologists, doctors, pupil and student counsellors and various therapists. State-owned special schools and vocational special institutions also have social workers, nursing and accommodation staff and other staff to cover school transport, for example.

The departments of teacher education and continuing education centres of universities and the National Board of Education provide teachers with further and continuing education and training every year.

Development of Inclusion

The reforms of school administration in the 1990s with decentralisation of decision-making to the municipalities have decreased the number of special schools, while special classes have been founded in mainstream schools. The state maintains eight special schools providing comprehensive school education. These schools are primarily intended for pupils with hearing or visual impairments or with a physical or other impairment.

The state-owned special schools are national development and service centres, which provide expert services for municipal and other schools and temporary education and rehabilitation for pupils of compulsory school age studying at other schools, in order to support their studies. The schools may also provide rehabilitation for disabled people under compulsory school age and those who have completed comprehensive school. The tasks of state-owned special schools are to develop basic education and the related rehabilitation, curricula, teaching and rehabilitation methods, teaching aids and learning materials; to provide guidance and information services for pupils at other schools, their parents or other guardians, teachers and other staff; to steer the preparation of education and rehabilitation plans; and to promote the transition of pupils into further study, working life and society.

It is the duty of the municipality and the individual school to include pupils with SEN in the mainstream educational system. The first alternative for providing special needs education is to include pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and, when necessary, provide special needs education in small teaching groups. Only when this is not feasible is the second alternative considered: the provision of special needs education in a special group, class or school.

**Inclusion has developed in Finland as follows:**

1.Separate curricula of special education have been abolished and all pupils use the same curriculum individualised by individual education plan. In the curricula the concept ‘Need for special support’ will be used when referring to special education.

2.The pupil welfare-services are to be included in the curriculum and municipalities and schools will be obliged to include the services they offer in the curriculum.

3.Development of inclusion and production of models regarding municipality, school and pupil-level planning, organisation and implementation of inclusive special needs education in co-operation with various interest groups.

4.The statistics on provision, resources and costs of special needs education will be elaborated upon in order to obtain a continuous view on the state of special needs education nationwide, as well as to acquire comparative data on the effects of regional and municipal differences.

5.Several projects are developing the virtual school for the needs of special education according to the national strategy. The actors of these projects represent private and public sector, state, municipalities, universities and research centres, both in the humanities and technical areas.

6.There are several projects for preventing exclusion of pupils by developing productive learning models and models to teach and support pupils with mental illnesses.

The fourth period of education (see 1.1) started with the 1995 evaluation of the status of special education, which formed the basis for two projects dealing with qualitative development of special education running from 1997 to 2001 and from 2002 to 2004. The national project for 2002–2004 to develop the quality of special education integrated the operating systems of education in mainstream and special education and in vocational education and training. Its purpose was to reform the operating cultures and joint guidance of education and instruction as well as support services (health care and social administration, day care and youth services) by supporting the integration of the service systems on regional and municipal levels. The activities were based on continuous co-operation, evaluation and steering across administrative boundaries, which took the roles, tasks and operating models of different experts into account. This also involved ensuring that instruction and support services were organised in accordance with pupils’ age level and abilities and so as to promote the healthy growth and development of pupils. Pupil welfare services was to be organised in co-operation with the authorities responsible for implementation of social and health care services.

**Quality Indicators for SNE**

The planning, provision, evaluation, monitoring and development of special education are included in the overall plan for the development of education and the curriculum drawn up by each education provider on the basis of the relevant National Core Curriculum and they are carried out in co-operation with those responsible for mainstream education. In vocational education and training the curricula of the education providers define the organisation of special education and the co-operation within the institution. The responsibility for arranging the rehabilitation and support services related to special education rests jointly with the educational and social administrations and the health care services of each local authority.

In terms of provision of education, an important document is the Development Plan for Education and Research for 2003–2008 drawn up by the Ministry of Education, which sets out the key contents and measures for national development over the coming years. These concern the provision of both mainstream and special education as a whole, because special education is being developed as an integral and natural part of mainstream education. Education providers are required to draw up their local development plans on the basis of the national plan in such a way that the development plan for special education is included in the overall plan. The plans may also be regional and sub-regional. The starting points for planning include guaranteeing the achievement of basic educational security, prevention of social exclusion, early intervention and guaranteeing fundamental educational rights for all people at all levels of the education system.

The priorities of implementation include enhancing the efficiency of the education system and supporting children and young people at both basic and upper secondary level by means such as strengthening remedial instruction and special education as part of mainstream education and pupil and student counselling, pupil and student welfare services and other support services. The starting points include realisation of educational security, prevention of social exclusion, early intervention and realisation of fundamental educational rights for all people at all levels of the education system. Implementation of special education is to be evaluated and supported by drawing up an action programme to improve early identification of difficulties in learning and adjustment and development of teaching arrangements.

The aim is to improve the provision and quality of pre-primary and basic education, promote the creation of sub-regional networks of resource centres, strengthen the realisation of the local school principle and support multidisciplinary co-operation in different branches and at different levels of administration, as well as to develop morning and afternoon activities. Educational objectives and contents, teaching materials and teaching methods will also be developed with a view to taking different learning methods and operating environments into account. Development of operating methods aims to promote the inclusion of pupils and to enhance close co-operation between home and school. In addition, improvement of co-operation between mainstream and special education in activities within the uniform comprehensive school system will be taken into account in teacher education.

Info

**COMPLETE NATIONAL OVERVIEW - SPAIN**

**Legal System**

The legislative framework governing and guiding the Spanish education system comprises the Spanish Constitution (1978), the Organic Act on the Right to Education (LODE, 1978) and the Organic Law of Education 2/2006, 3rd May (Ley Orgánica de Educación LOE 2006) which develops the principles and rights established in it.

The Spanish Constitution recognises the right to education as one of the essential rights that public powers must guarantee to every citizen.  
   
The Organic Law of Education offers (at national level) the legal framework to provide and assure the right to education (The Autonomous  communities will be able to regulate the adaptation of this Law to their territories).

The Spanish education system, set up in accordance with the values of the Constitution and based on the respect for the rights and liberties recognized therein, is inspired by the following principles:

*"a) Quality education for all students, regardless of their condition and circumstances.  
b) Equity that guarantees equal opportunities, educational inclusion and non-discrimination and that acts as a compensating factor for the personal cultural, economic and social inequalities, with special emphasis on those derived from disabilities.  
c) The transmission and application of values that favour personal liberty, responsibility, democratic citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice and that also help to overcome any type of discrimination.”*

Organic Law of Education 2/2006, 3rd May. Preliminary title Chapter I. Principles and Aims of Education. Article 1. Principles.

The State is responsible for education and for offering all pupils cost-free and compulsory education until 16 years of age. The Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport has the responsibility for central administration.  
Schools are classified as public schools, private schools and publicly-funded private schools. Public schools are those owned by a public administration. Private schools are those owned by a person or legal entity of a private nature. Publicly-funded private schools are private schools which are under the system of legally-established agreements. The provision of the public education service is carried out in public and publicly-funded private schools. Schools have got pedagogic, organisational and management autonomy within the current legislation. They have the autonomy to draw up, approve and execute an education project and a management project, as well as the organisational and running procedures of the school.

Provisions for students with special educational needs are governed by principles of normalisation and inclusion and will ensure non-discrimination and real equality in the access to the education system and continued attendance, allowing flexibility in the different stages of their education when necessary. The schooling of these students in special education centres or units, which may be extended to the age of twenty one, will only take place when their needs cannot be met by the special needs provisions available in mainstream schools.

Royal Decree 696/1995, of 28 April, arranges the education of pupils with special educational needs and establishes the conditions for educational provision for this population. These pupils are educated at mainstream schools and under mainstream curricula; only when it is objectively established that the needs of the above pupils cannot be properly met at a mainstream school, is a proposal made for them to be educated at special schools

The different stages constituting the Spanish education system are:

1. Preschool education (0-3 years): on a voluntary basis for families where the purpose is to give educational assistance and attention to early childhood education.
2. Infant education (3-6 years): is voluntary, cost-free and constitutes the first level of School Education. It is organised into a single three-year cycle.
3. Compulsory Education

The basic, compulsory, and free of charge education comprises Primary Education and Compulsory Secondary Education, from 6 to 16 years. It lasts for ten years and is divided into two educational levels:

* Primary education (6-12 years): comprises six academic years and is organised into three, two-year cycles. It is compulsory and cost-free.
* Secondary education comprises Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), Bachillerato and Intermediate Specific Vocational Training:

1. Compulsory Secondary Education (12-16 years): covers ages 12 to      16 and comprises four academic years organised into two, two-year cycles. When passing these two cycles, the pupils receive the Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. It is compulsory and cost free.
2. Bachillerato: is a two-year non-compulsory education level, which complements Compulsory Secondary Education. The Secondary Education Certificate is a prerequisite for entering Baccalaureate. The theoretical ages for commencement and completion are 16 and 18, respectively
3. Specific Vocational Training: is a non-compulsory education level and its purpose is to prepare pupils to work in a specific professional field by providing them with an all round and practical education that enables them to adapt to the changes affecting their trade, which may take place during their working lives.

**Financing**

The total budget allocated to education in Spain comes from: public funds, which are provided by State, autonomous and local authorities; private funds, which are provided by families; and to a lesser extent, from private institutions. The public or private nature of the ultimate funding agent, rather than the recipient of the services, is what determines whether spending on education is considered to be public or private. 80% of education expenditure in Spain is financed through public funds, while the remaining 20% comes from private funds. In 2005 Spain devoted 4.2% of its gross domestic product to education.

Public funds earmarked to finance Spanish education are provided mainly by the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport as well as the Education Authorities of the corresponding autonomous communities. Other ministries as well as other local and regional authorities also provide funding.

Regardless of the authority providing funding, public spending is not earmarked for public education only, but is also allocated to subsidise private establishments and finance student scholarships and grants.

Education funding comes from the following sources:

* National Budget
* Autonomous  communities
* Ministry budget

The Budget for Special Education which covers the following spending lines:

* Staff expenses
* Operational expenses
* Furniture and inventoried equipment expenses
* Expenses for alterations
* Grants to NGOs
* Grants to private schools with an educational co-operation with the Ministry
* School Canteens
* Hostels located inside the schools
* Financial support for mainstream schools with integration of pupils with SEN
* School transportation
* New building improvement
* Removing architectural, physical barriers

The autonomous communities finance special education in a similar way

**Identification of special educational needs**

LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education) focuses attention on those students with SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS. This  concept covers the students who require additional educational support because of special educational needs, specific learning difficulties, high intellectual capacity, late entry to the education system or due to personal conditions or past school records.

LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education) regulates and governs special education within general education and asserts the incorporation of special education into the mainstream system. It also introduces the concept of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream or special education establishments. This law also establishes that pupils with special educational needs should attend mainstream establishments and programmes, by adapting such programmes to the individual capacities of each pupil. Their schooling in special education units or establishments, or a combined schooling, will only take place when pupils’ needs cannot be met in mainstream establishments. This situation will be periodically revised in order to promote, if possible, better inclusion of the pupils.

According to LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education), special education is no longer conceived as education for a different kind of pupil, but begins to be conceived as a combination of material and personnel resources available to the education system in order to be able to meet the needs (either transitory or permanent) that pupils may have. In this sense, the education system must have the necessary resources so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the general goals set for all pupils. The principle of normalisation, with the aim of promoting school inclusion, underlies this Law.

The 2006 Organic Law of Education (LOE) stipulates that, in the case of pupils with special educational needs, the identification and evaluation of their needs will be carried out by teams of professionals with different qualifications. These professionals will establish performance plans with regard to each pupil’s educational needs, taking into account both parents’ and teachers’ opinions, as well as the management team of the corresponding establishment. At the end of each year, the evaluation team will assess the extent to which the objectives set out in the plan have been achieved. This will facilitate the introduction of the necessary adaptations, including the most suitable type of schooling according to pupil’s educational needs. If necessary, this decision can be made during the school year.

**Special needs education within the education system**

The educational system will arrange the necessary resources in order for pupils with temporary or permanent special educational needs to achieve the objectives established within the general programme for all pupils   The public administrations give pupils the necessary support from the beginning of their schooling or as soon as they are diagnosed as having special needs. School teaching is adapted to these pupils’ needs. The schools develop the curriculum through didactic plans, which have to take into account the pupils’ needs and characteristics. They also develop an Educational Project, where the objectives and the educational priorities are fixed along with the implementation procedures. In order to prepare this project, they consider the school characteristics, its environment, and the pupils’ educational needs.  
LOE, as it was mentioned above, considers three types of specific educational support needs:

1. Students with special educational needs
2. High ability students
3. Late entries into the education system

**Students with special educational needs**

Students with special educational needs refers to those who require, certain support and specific educational attention due to disability or serious behavioural disorders, either for a period or throughout the whole of their schooling.

These pupils require specialised support in accordance with non discrimination and educational normalisation principles, and with the purpose of achieving their inclusion. These pupils are schooled in accordance with their characteristics, either integrating them in mainstream groups, in specialised classrooms within mainstream schools, or in special education schools, depending on the form determined by the professional teams, taking into account their parents’ and teachers’ opinions.  Thanks to the successive developments by each educational establishment and group, the curriculum foresees many possibilities for adjusting to these differences so that pupils may overcome any difficulties encountered. However, all through the school period, and perhaps to a greater extent at stages in which studies become progressively more complex, there will be certain pupils who for very different reasons find it more difficult to reach the objectives and contents laid down for everyone in the common curriculum for all. These pupils will consequently be in need of another type of more specific adjustments.

Among the ordinary measures (offered to all pupils) contemplated by the educational system for attending to diversity, the following are to be mentioned: successive levels of curricular formulation, involving the progressive adaptation of the official curriculum and optional areas and subjects, which constitutes a resource in the hands of the pupil to enhance and develop his or her personal preferences; the organisation of reinforcement and support activities in educational establishments, a very generalised measure of attention to diversity which is usually aimed at the instrumental areas (mathematics and language) and specific grouping. Once ordinary measures of attention to diversity have been applied and have proved to be insufficient to respond to the educational needs of an individual pupil, the education system considers a series of extraordinary measures. These are: repeating a cycle or school year, significant curricular adaptations, support measures for pupils with special educational needs, curricular diversification and, as a last resort, Social Guarantee Programmes.

Curricular adaptations signify adaptations to the curriculum made for one specific pupil. When the student body shows itself to have educational needs which in view of their permanent nature, source or the type require modification of central features of the curriculum to be followed by the majority of the pupils of that age, significant curricular adaptations may be carried out. The application of these extraordinary measures signifies the modification of content, objectives and assessment criteria of the ordinary curriculum. The necessary point of departure for such a measure is a previous psycho-pedagogical assessment (performed by the specialised guidance services) and an ongoing follow-up that allows the pupil to access the standardised curriculum whenever possible.

Pupils with special educational needs can attend both special education and mainstream establishments. Schooling should preferably be provided in mainstream establishments, adapting such programmes to each pupil’s capacities.

Hence, in ordinary infant education, primary education and secondary education establishments, these pupils are enrolled as part of the mainstream pupil body. These establishments, in addition to adapting the physical and material conditions to the needs of the pupils enrolled there, should have the necessary resources available (special teachers, qualified professionals, etc.) and must likewise take the pedagogical, organisational and operational measures for accommodating pupils with special educational needs within their programmes. Furthermore, all the autonomous communities consider the possibility of appointing preferred centres for the enrolment of pupils with specific special educational needs, who may require a particular type of environment or a professional specialisation difficult to find in many places. In this fashion, suitable educational attention may be guaranteed for such pupils.

The schooling of pupils with special educational needs in non-compulsory education stages, if the requirements are met, will be one form of inclusion with the necessary curricular adaptations or the total or partial exemption of subjects. The establishments providing such education must possess the necessary physical and material adaptations in order to guarantee the principle of equal opportunities.

**Specific support measures**

**Alterations to school building facilities**

All educational establishments must meet the hygienic, acoustic, habitability and security conditions stipulated in the legislation in effect. The places devoted to instruction must have ventilation and natural lighting. They will also have to possess the necessary architectural conditions to facilitate access, movement and communication, in accordance with what is laid down in the legislation with regard to promotion of accessibility and elimination of barriers.

**Special adaptations to the curriculum**

Schooling at the various levels and stages of the system for pupils with special educational needs linked to personal disabilities will begin and end at the ages set down by the education regulations, with the exceptions listed below. The necessary adaptations or modifications within the established curriculum are carried out so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the objectives and contents generally laid down. These adaptations may take two different forms: curriculum access adaptations (modifications or predictions related to spatial resources, introduction of new materials and use of additional communication systems) and curricular adaptations such as modifications in the objectives, contents, methodology, activities and assessment criteria and procedures, which are carried out within the classroom planning. Curricular adaptations may, in turn, be grouped into two large sections: significant and non-significant adaptations. The first ones do not affect the basic teaching, whereas the second ones imply the elimination of certain basic teaching included in the official curriculum (objectives, contents and assessment criteria). Some of the latter adaptations require additional human and material resources to carry out adaptations which entail changes in the organisation of educational establishments and methodology, substitution or introduction of new areas or subjects, contents and objectives.

On the other hand, the possibility of making the length of compulsory schooling in primary education and in compulsory secondary education for highly-gifted pupils more flexible, under exceptional circumstances, is also present.   
The link-up and co-ordination between mainstream schools integrating pupils with special educational needs and in specific special education establishments is one of the principles guiding school integration. The aim is for special educational establishments to progressively become open educational resource centres for the professionals working in the district’s mainstream establishments.

**Additional support provided by specialist teachers**

The decision to enrol pupils in a mainstream or special educational establishment, as well as the guidelines on the most suitable educational treatment to offer (types of schooling, curricular adaptations, etc.) is made subsequent to a diagnosis and is the responsibility of the services established by each autonomous community in order to respond to the educational and psycho-pedagogical counselling demands of establishments, pupils and teachers.

Most autonomous communities have regulated and organised these services through sector educational and psycho-pedagogical interdisciplinary guidance teams and through the guidance departments of secondary education establishments.   
Apart from the guidance teams working for the educational establishments of a district or area (zone or sector teams), specialised specific teams and early intervention teams, with a different geographical sphere, have been set up in some autonomous communities. Regardless of the education authority to whom they report, guidance teams have among their functions the detection, assessment and diagnosis of special educational needs as well as counselling, collaborating and participating in the educational process of pupils with special educational needs.

In the majority of autonomous communities, guidance teams are still part of an external support network for schools. It is frequent for the members of the teams to be part of the school staff (either through the Teachers’ Council, the Guidance Department - when it exists - the Pedagogical Co-ordination Commission, etc.).

In almost all autonomous communities, guidance departments have been set up in secondary education establishments and, in some communities, in infant and in primary education schools. The result has been a closer bonding between specialised support services and schools, which has improved the response to special educational needs.

For pupils who have serious developmental disorders and cannot attend school to receive their education, for pupils who are hospitalised, or for pupils who must be absent from school for long or repetitive periods of time for medical reasons, the autonomous communities have formulated and implemented various organisational alternatives, among which should be mentioned: peripatetic special education teachers who go to pupils’ homes, so that they may receive their educational schooling; itinerant attention on the part of special education centres for under school-age pupils with special educational needs or those who are enrolled in mainstream centres; the setting up of itinerant school support units and school support units in hospitals.

**Special teaching methods and materials**

There are more specific guidelines according to the type of special educational need of the pupil. Therefore, in the case of those having sensorial alterations (visual, auditory), strategies aiming at fostering and promoting alternative ways to the altered ones, strategies which enable to relate, in a explicit way, learning experiences, space organisations, pupils grouping, in order to take advantage of their visual and auditory possibilities, and the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction, have to be prioritised.   
The reading-writing teaching methods for pupils with visual disabilities should be mentioned. Those pupils who cannot have access to the ink reading-writing method will have to use Braille. In this case, tact sensorial stimulation and space-time orientation will have to be fostered.

Pupils with auditory disabilities have to learn to communicate by alternative means: sign language, bimodal system, etc., which have their own methodological guidelines and that can be combined, in certain occasions, with oral re-education.   
Pupils with motor problems have to be assisted in the specific limitations of mobility and the manipulation of objects, favouring mobility in the classroom and the access to didactic resources, as well as prioritising oral and visual explanations in order to favour the understanding of messages.

In cases of pupils with serious development disorders, it is necessary to resort to specific methodologies aiming at the development of oral communication or alternative systems. Imitation learning, modelling and mediation (physical, oral aids, etc.) techniques, incidental methodology, and reinforcement are some of the most specific guidelines.   
On the other hand, space must be arranged according to their needs and adapted to the instruments, equipment and technical aids required by these pupils, favouring the possibility of creating different layouts and functional arrangements in order to promote the interaction and communication with adults and among themselves.

**Reduced class sizes**

The number of pupils integrated in mainstream classrooms depends on the homogeneity and severity of their deficiency or maladjustment, their psychological problems and the required educational support. If they require continuous pedagogical reinforcement and specific treatments, the maximum number of pupils per classroom is two. In mainstream classrooms, where pupils are enrolled under an integrative framework, the maximum number or pupils per classroom is 25, subject to obtaining the authorisation of the education administration.

In special education classrooms, either in specific special education or mainstream establishments, the number of pupils will be reduced. The ratio is 10-12 pupils per teacher when there are pupils with psychical or auditory disabilities or pupils showing serious auditory disabilities. 8-12 when there are pupils with physical disabilities, 6-8 in the case of pupils showing several disabilities, and 3-5 when having autistic pupils and/or pupils with severe personality problems.

Apart from the ordinary teaching staff, there are also specialist teachers in charge of carrying out different tasks, as well as other professionals. In mainstream establishments, there is a specialist teacher providing pedagogical reinforcement for every 15-20 pupils. In this type of establishment, there is also a speech therapist for every 35-40 psychic and motor disabled pupils and for every 20 auditory disabled pupils. There is also a physiotherapist for every 35-40 pupils with motor disabilities and a caretaker for every 15-20 motor disabled pupils.

There is also support staff in charge of correction, rehabilitation, and specific individual treatments. Both in special education establishments and special education classrooms in mainstream establishments, there is a psychologist for every 20 autistic pupils or pupils with severe personality disorders. There is also a psychologist in those establishments having at least 100 physical, motor or sensorial disabled pupils. There is a speech therapist for every 35-40 psychic or motor disabled pupils, every 20 pupils showing severe auditory problems or every 15-20 autistic pupils or pupils with severe personality disorders. There is a caretaker for every 35-40 pupils with behavioural problems; every 15-20 motor disabled pupils, autistic pupils or pupils with personality problems.

**Special arrangements for evaluation or progress through education**

The reply to the question as to exactly what is to be assessed is determined by the mandatory assessment criteria established by the autonomous communities. In a case of pupils with special educational needs, such criteria must be amended in conjunction with the amendments to objectives and curricular content made through curricular adaptations.  
To assess entails determining the most suitable tools and procedures on one hand, and the possible adaptations of these commonly used tools on the other. The use of varied and diverse assessment tools and procedures is recommended, since a single procedure, such as a written or oral test, entails serious difficulties for some pupils with motor functional difficulties or with problems in expressing themselves. Moreover, the exclusive use of this kind of testing to assess any pupil provides only limited information on his/her comprehension of curricular content. Consequently, it is necessary to use other kinds of tools that provide information on various aspects that are difficult to assess by oral or written means, and which include observation, questionnaires, interviews, analysis of class work, etc. The use of testing and tools adapted to the ‘real-life’ classroom is likewise recommended, for example pedagogical tests, observation records, and follow-up sheets.

Furthermore, the educational context should be evaluated in terms of pupils with special educational needs and common criteria should be established to provide and receive information from parents and pupils, given the diversity of the professionals that on occasion work with them.

The issue of when to assess entails considering the various key moments in the development of a given teaching/learning process. Three moments can be defined: initial assessment; formative assessment; and summative assessment.

At the end of the school year, the assessment teams evaluate the degree of achievement of the targets, which were established at the beginning of the school year for those pupils with special educational needs. The assessment results are to allow the introduction of the necessary adaptations, including the most suitable modality of schooling depending on the pupil’s needs. This decision, if necessary, could even be adopted during the school year.

In relation to the process of the promotion of pupils with special educational needs, the general regulation for infant, primary and compulsory secondary education is applied nation-wide. Therefore, a pupil may remain one more year in the second cycle of infant education when the counselling department deems that such a measure will allow the pupil to meet the objectives of that cycle or will be beneficial for his or her socialisation process. A pupil may remain one more year in primary education, and one more in each cycle or in any of the years of the second cycle of compulsory secondary education, only when the previous circumstances have not taken place. This implies that basic schooling can be prolonged up to the age of 18.

In post-compulsory secondary education there is also the possibility of prolonging schooling by two years in bachillerato. In specific vocational training, pupils with special educational needs related to disabilities can take the programmed activities for the same module up to four times.

Decisions regarding promotion or repeating will always be made on the basis of the information obtained during the assessment process and in relation to pupils' progress as compared to the programmed objectives for him/her. The decision will be accompanied, as appropriate, by complementary educational measures, intended to help pupils reach programme objectives. There is, however, no direct or automatic correlation between a pupil's failure to reach objectives and non-promotion to the following cycle.

Pupils with special educational needs, after finishing the compulsory secondary education and reaching the objectives planned, are awarded the Secondary Education Certificate, which enables them to gain access to baccalaureate and intermediate specific vocational training. In any case, all pupils receive a certificate including the (number of) years of study and the grades they have received in the different areas, together with non-prescriptive and confidential guidance regarding their academic and professional future.

The Law establishes that those pupils who do not achieve the objectives of compulsory secondary education, and who are therefore lacking a certificate and are consequently unable to continue their education, are entitled to enrol in specific social guarantee programmes. The aim of these programmes is to provide basic and vocational training, which will enable these pupils to take part in the working world. Pupils with special educational needs may enrol either in the general social guarantee programmes under the integrative framework or in social guarantee programmes specifically designed for pupils with special educational needs.   
Furthermore, pupils with special educational needs who have successfully completed any of the post-compulsory stages of the system will receive the corresponding certificate. Furthermore, a proposal may be put forward to issue the Baccalaureate, Technician or Technical Superior certificate, for pupils who have studied baccalaureate and specific vocational training with significant adaptations in some of their subjects,

**Separate Special Provision**

Special education schools are intended for pupils who are unable to be integrated into mainstream schools but who follow compulsory teaching. When there are no special education centres in the area, these pupils receive their schooling in units for special education within mainstream centres. Pupils are enrolled in separate special education units or schools only when there is sound reason to believe that their needs cannot be suitably met in a mainstream establishment. There is also specific special education establishments that enrol pupils with special educational needs associated with a very specific type of handicap.

These establishments provide basic compulsory education: primary education, with pupils between 6-12 years of age and compulsory secondary education, with pupils between 12-16 years of age. These centres can also provide social guarantee programmes. Once basic education is over, they can also provide programmes intended to facilitate transition to adult and working life. These programmes last two years, with the possibility of lasting one more; therefore, pupils here are between 16-19 years of age.

Teachers engaging in basic education in specific special education schools are generally teachers specialising in special education and/or hearing and speech. In complementary vocational training or programmes for transition to adult life, pupils receive instruction from technical teachers of vocational training, who teach technical-practical courses, as well as from the before mentioned ''Maestros''.

Moreover, the autonomous communities have endowed special education schools with additional support and guidance staff members. The number and specialisation of these professionals vary according to the autonomous community in question. The professional/pupils ratio varies depending on the number of pupils and the kind of curricular adaptations they may need.

**General Objectives**

According to LOE the objectives set for pupils attending special education establishments are the same as those for all pupils. Furthermore, establishments must have the necessary school organisation and carry out the necessary curricular diversifications in order to facilitate pupils the achievement of such objectives. Therefore, the general objectives of the different educational stages constitute the necessity for individual programmes or curricular adaptations of pupils with special educational needs, studying either in mainstream or special education establishments.

Given the specific nature of the special education centres, compulsory education objectives will undergo more significant adaptations and the programmes for transition to adult life or of complementary vocational training will aim fundamentally, at developing abilities linked to professional occupations, personal independence and social integration.

The Organic Act on the Quality of Education states that the general objectives for pupils with special educational needs must be those generally established for all pupils, with the necessary curricular adaptations. For those unable to achieve the objectives, public administrations are to promote training programmes adapted to the pupils’ specific needs, aiming at facilitating their social and labour inclusion.

**Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils**

In the case of specific centres for special education that provide education for pupils who cannot enter an inclusive framework, only two educational levels are carried out: basic compulsory education (6 to 16 years of age) and complementary vocational training or programmes for transition to adult life (16 to 19 years of age). Pupils at these centres may be enrolled up to the maximum age of 20. Notwithstanding, on an exceptional basis, and subsequent to obtaining the agreement of the pupil’s parents or legal guardians, the maximum age may be raised, allowing for enrolment up to the age of 21 and taking into account the grave circumstances that pupils affected by certain types of disabilities may suffer.

The schooling for pupils with special educational needs is to start and finish at the ages generally established for the corresponding level and stage. There can be exceptions made in the conditions and procedures making more flexible compulsory schooling for pupils with special educational needs, but these have to be authorized. However, the age limit for schooling in a special education establishment is still 21.

**Curriculum, Subjects**

The programmes for general studies in special education schools are those corresponding to the compulsory basic areas included in levels of primary education and compulsory secondary education. In order to organise them, the curriculum established for these stages is taken into account, particularly the primary curriculum with any necessary adjustments or adaptations made. Once pupils reach the age of 12, they are also taught subjects corresponding to secondary education, which are primarily related to pre-occupational activities.

The educational needs of pupils enrolled in such schools, as well as those related to their health and personal well-being, are often so complex and variable that it is imperative to adopt an extreme flexibility regarding curricular organisation and the necessary human and material resources for implementation. It is necessary for this organisation to be very different from the general arrangements prevailing in mainstream schools.

Reference should also be made of both vocational training, which includes both the specific category of social guarantee programmes for pupils with special educational needs and official vocational training programmes, which may be included within the training programmes for transition to adult life in special education schools.

Therefore, provision has been made for pupils with special educational needs who finish basic education without having reached the objectives of compulsory secondary education to continue their schooling under three different vocational training-related options.

Some pupils with special educational needs may be able to enrol on an integrative basis in social guarantee programmes that adapt to their personal circumstances as well as to their level of skills and development. Such programmes are available under integrative conditions.

Special social guarantee programmes: specifically designed for pupils with special educational needs wishing to continue schooling beyond compulsory secondary education. This does not prevent these pupils from participating in mainstream social guarantee programmes. The special programmes are adjusted to their personal characteristics, their degree of development and skills, as well as to their subsequent employment aspirations. They have the same structure as the social guarantee programmes run for the pupil population at large and are organised around the following areas: basic training, training and career guidance, vocational training, complementary activities and educational guidance. Vocational training is particularly important, taking into account the special needs shown by this group. It should address both the acquisition of skills and abilities of a general nature and training for practising a specific trade.

These programmes are provided in secondary education establishments, in  special education schools designated for this purpose and, when such is the case, wherever may be determined, pursuant to agreements signed between the autonomous  communities and other authorities, town councils or non-profit organisations.

Programmes are available for the transition to adult life, designed for pupils with special educational needs associated with more severe and permanent handicaps that, in light of the low degree of development and skill achieved after basic education, are unable to take advantage of the two training alternatives discussed above. These programmes are intended to last two years, but they may be extended to three, and are generally provided in special education schools. The priority objectives are to help these pupils to develop the necessary conduct and habits to lead an adult life as independently as possible, enable them to use the services that society makes available to all citizens and, wherever possible, to train them to undertake occupational activities related to  very specific and clearly defined jobs.

**Teaching Methods and Materials**

Both in mainstream and in the specific special education schools, the methodological assistance for these pupils must comply with the educational principles established for the school-age population in general - taking the pupil's level of development as a starting point. This means accommodating each pupil's intellectual, communicational-linguistic, social-affective, and motor characteristics, since here diversity prevails.

* Guarantee significant learning. More than anyone else, pupils with special educational needs require learning to be applicable to their daily living skills and to serve as a basis to gain access to subsequent learning.
* Enable pupils to undertake significant learning on their own (learning to learn). In order to achieve this, pupils with special educational needs must be provided with the necessary skills and procedures to be able to learn on an independent basis.
* Promote both physical and intellectual activity. Such pupils must be active in their learning process in order to be able to assimilate and fully comprehend the activities and operations they are undertaking. This may be achieved with the aid of their teacher or their peers although they will admittedly need more help and/or a different kind of help in order to do so.

The implementation of the corresponding technical aids will be available when pupils’ special needs require them.

**Progression of Pupils**

The principles for assessing the progress made by pupils with special educational needs should be the same as those employed for the rest of the school age population.

The reply to the question, as to exactly what is to be assessed, is determined by the mandatory assessment criteria established by the autonomous communities. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, such criteria must be amended in conjunction with the amendments to objectives and curricular content made through curricular adaptations.  
The assessment criteria for pupils with special educational needs must meet the principles generally established for the rest of the school population (see sections).

In specific special education schools, assessment of pupil progress as provided in the corresponding programmes or curricular adaptations is incumbent on the form teacher (special education teacher) in conjunction with the rest of the professionals involved in each pupil's programme. Such professionals include: the hearing and language teacher (speech therapist), the physiotherapist, the psychologist, the pedagogue, etc.

Teaching teams act independently to establish the most relevant criteria guiding decision-making as regards pupil promotion. Criteria should be of a different nature, so that decisions are made in accordance with the different variables which may prove decisive for pupils.

The decision of promotion or continuance must be individual, without being an obstacle for the establishment of general measures to facilitate the attainment of individualised decisions. The methodology and organisation of the establishment, as well as important variables in pupil promotion decisions, are related to them.

**High ability students**

LOE stipulates - concerning high ability students:

*It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to adopt the necessary measures to identify high ability and gifted students and assess their needs as early as possible. Moreover, they should introduce appropriate action plans to meet these needs.  
The government, after consultation with the autonomous communities, will establish the regulations to allow for flexibility in the length of each stage of the education system in the case of high ability students, independently of their age.*

**Late entries into the education system**

Regarding those students who enter the Spanish education system late LOE stipulates:

*It is the responsibility of the Public Authorities to ensure the incorporation into the Spanish education system of students who arrive from other countries or who enter the education system late for any reason. This will be guaranteed, at least, for compulsory school age.  
The Education Administrations will guarantee that the enrolment of late entries into the Spanish education system is adapted to the circumstances, knowledge, age and academic record of these students to ensure they are incorporated into the academic year which is best suited to their characteristics and previous knowledge, with the relevant support to ensure that they will pursue their education as successfully as possible.*

*1. It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to develop specific programmes for students who have serious language problems or lack basic competences and knowledge, in order to facilitate their integration into the corresponding academic year.  
2. The development of these programmes will be simultaneous, in all cases, to the students’ attendance of normal classes, according to their level and progress.  
3. It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that the parents or guardians of students who enter the education system late receive the relevant information and advice concerning the rights, obligations and opportunities which incorporation into the Spanish education system implies.*

**Teacher Training - Basic and specialist teacher training**

**Initial Training of Teachers**

The academic qualifications required to teach are uniform throughout the entire nation, although they do vary according to the various levels of the education system.  In public-sector institutions, teaching staff in higher education, as well as those at lower levels, generally have permanent civil servant status. In public education, first year teachers in a public school will work under the tutorage of experienced teachers. The tutor and trainee teacher will share responsibility for the trainee’s teaching plan.  
Three types of teachers can be distinguished, depending on the education level which they teach: the teaching staff of infant education and primary, that of secondary education, and that of higher education.

**Pre-primary and primary education teaching staff**

Teaching in infant education and in primary education requires a teacher certificate on the corresponding speciality, which is a university grade where they get a speciality: infant education, primary education, music, physical education, foreign language, special education and speech therapy.

LOE states that ''Maestros'' teaching in primary education are allowed to teach in all areas of knowledge of this educational stage and at students’ tutorials. However, they can get a speciality: infant education, primary education, music, physical education, foreign language, special education, and speech therapy. The study programme is focused on both academic and theoretical aspects and on pedagogical practice. The basic training on special education for all students is one core subject and the specific training for the specialist is much wider.

Likewise allowed to participate in the first cycle of Infant education, in addition to maestro degree holders, are other professionals trained in the nursery school or the infant education specialities of vocational training.  
For the care of pupils with special needs education, the educational system offers teachers help through teacher’s specialists in special education, speech therapy and qualified professionals

**Secondary education teaching staff**

Teaching in secondary education requires a post-grade. In addition, it is necessary to have a professional certificate of pedagogical specialisation obtained after doing a course of pedagogical qualification.

**Higher education teaching staff**

Initial training for higher education teaching staff takes place primarily in university establishments or institutions for first, second or third cycle studies alike.

**In-service training**

In-service training is the right and obligation of all teachers and the responsibility of the education administrations and schools. In-service training programmes will adapt knowledge and teaching methods to trends in education sciences and specific methodologies, as well as to all the aspects of co-ordination, guidance, tutoring, attention to diversity and organisation aimed at enhancing the quality of education and the functioning of schools.

**Development of inclusion**

Since school inclusion began in Spain in 1985 some things have been achieved although some of them still need to be worked on.   
The 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE) regulates and governs special education within general plan education, asserts the incorporation of special education into the mainstream system and also introduces the concept of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream or special education establishments. This Act also establishes that pupils with special educational needs should attend mainstream establishments and programmes, by adapting such programmes to the individual capacities of each pupil. Their schooling in special education units or establishments, or a combined schooling, will only take place when pupils’ needs cannot be met in mainstream establishments. This situation will be periodically revised in order to promote, if possible, the better inclusion of pupils.

Later, the 2002 Organic Act on the Quality of Education (LOCE) established a new framework, which gives attention to those pupils with ‘specific educational needs’. This new concept covers highly-gifted pupils, pupils with special educational needs, foreign pupils and those who require educational compensation. The above Act establishes that pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream establishments with specialised classrooms, or ordinary groups in special education establishments or combined schooling, according to their abilities.  Education authorities, in turn, anticipate the existence of specialised mainstream establishments in order to meet the needs of this last type of schooling. As regards the other groups which constitute the concept of ''pupils with special educational needs'', the Act stipulates that the schooling of foreign pupils will be facilitated, by arranging specialised classrooms in mainstream establishments for those who do not have knowledge of the Spanish language and culture or lack basic knowledge.

Education authorities will take the necessary measures to facilitate the schooling of highly-gifted pupils in establishments where the adequate attention can be provided. Coinciding with the European Year of People with Disabilities, the 2 December 2003 the Act on Equal Opportunities, Non-Discrimination and Universal Accessibility for Disabled people has been passed. This Act complements the 1982 Act on Social Integration of Disabled People (LISMI).

Nowadays LOE, The Organic Law of Education 2006 says: The Education Administrations will dispose of the necessary measures to ensure that all students reach their maximum personal, intellectual, social and emotional potential, as well as the objectives of a general nature established in the present Law.” Ant it also adds “In order to put into practice the principle of equality in the exercise of education rights, the public authorities will carry out compensatory measures with disadvantaged people, groups and regions and provide the necessary economic resources and support. The final goal should be a school for all.

**Historical Overview**

Initial experiments in special education in Spain can be traced back to the sixteenth century and were intended for children with sensory handicaps. The same line of thought was followed over the next two centuries, although there were occasional experiments unrelated to general education with the deaf, blind, etc.

During the nineteenth century, schools and institutions of a purely charitable and aid-providing nature were set up for the education of children with sensory disorders and for the attention to the mentally ill and misfits. The segregation of the handicapped in institutions providing fundamental aid and medical care went on well into the twentieth century. The focus on rehabilitation and education was only slowly introduced. After the civil war, the development of special education was left in private hands, which fostered the setting up of specific centres.

The questionable results obtained by segregated institutions, international normalisation trends, as well as a growing social awareness all led to a change in the concept of the educational treatment to be received by social maladjusted and the handicapped. The change was embodied in the 1970 General Act on Education and Financing of Educational Reform (LGE), which for the first time organised and formulated special education in Spain and stated its goal as the training through appropriate educational treatment of all social maladjusted and handicapped for their inclusion into as full a social life as possible. Special education was to be provided in special centres, while at the same time the establishment of special educational units in mainstream schools was fostered whenever possible for those who were only slightly handicapped. The creation of the National Institute for Special Education (INEE) in 1975 should be emphasized within the development of the LGE as regards special education.

The 1978 Spanish Constitution guarantees all citizens’ right to education and urges public authorities to implement a policy of planning, treatment, rehabilitation and integration of people with physical, sensorial, and psychical disabilities in all social areas and, therefore, in education. The same year, the INEE drew up the National Plan on Special Education where the standardization of services, educational integration and individual attention principles are formulated for the first time.

The principles set down are embraced and legally embodied with the enactment in 1982 of the Law for the Social Integration of the Handicapped (LISMI). The Law sets down a series of measures concerning personal, social and labour attention to handicapped people. Among these measures are basic guidelines for the educational framework, with the aim of guaranteeing that these pupils may reach as far as possible the established general objectives of education.

According to the 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE), special education is no longer conceived as education for a different kind of pupil and begins to be conceived as the set of material and personal resources available in the education system in order to be able to meet the needs, either transitory or permanent, that part of the pupils may have. In this sense, the education system must have the necessary resources so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the general goals set for all pupils. This Act lays down the inclusion of special education within the mainstream system and introduces the concept of ‘special educational needs’. The latter term covers anything from the most common and interim of needs to those of a more severe and permanent nature. All educational necessities should be attended to within the framework of a comprehensive education system that is open to diversity. The principle of normalisation, with the aim of promoting school integration, underlies this Act.

At present, the Organic Law of Education LOE 2006 changes the scope and the objectives on special education which is not longer the concept, but SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS.  It must take into account that education focuses on achieving the respect for basic rights and liberties, equal rights and opportunities between men and women and equal treatment and non-discrimination for the disabled.

**Quality indicators for SNE**

The evaluation will cover all education areas governed by LOE and will apply to the learning processes and results of students, teacher performance, education processes, management, the performance of schools, inspection and the education administrations themselves.

The evaluation of the education system will be carried out by the National Institute for Evaluation and Quality of the Education System – renamed Institute of Evaluation (IE) – and by the equivalent bodies designated by the education administrations, who will assess the education system in their area of competence.

The duties of this body are to:  assess the degree to which the core curricula are mastered at the various levels, cycles and grades of the education system; carry out research, studies and evaluations regarding the system; assess the general reforms of the system, as well as the structure, effectiveness and efficiency of the system; draw up a state system of indicators which will allow for evaluating the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the system; draw up assessment systems for the different types of education and their corresponding establishments; provide and interchange information with the education authorities to facilitate decision-making; inform the various sectors of society as to the functioning and outcomes of the education system; and publish and disseminate the results of assessments carried out, as well as of innovations occurring in the field of assessment. The IE is likewise responsible for proposing initiatives and suggestions that may contribute to quality and improvement in education and state co-ordination in international studies.

The assessment units of the various autonomous communities collaborate with the IE in the different assessment activities of the education system, and are responsible for carrying out an assessment of the education system within their territory.  
Assessment of educational establishments is of a dual nature: internal assessment carried out by the education community itself; and external assessment which is carried out by specialists in assessment, normally by the Education Technical Inspection. In any case, the autonomous communities are responsible for drawing up and implementing assessment plans in territories under their management. All of these plans are found to have the same objective and basic characteristics.

**Quality principles**

The quality principles within the education system are:

* Equity, which guarantees the quality of equal opportunities for a learner’s complete personality development throughout education, with respect to democratic principles and fundamental rights and liberties.
* The capacity of transmitting values that foster personal freedom, the social responsibility, cohesion and the improvement of society and equal rights between sexes, which help to overcome any type of discrimination, and also the practice of solidarity, to support the civic participation of pupils in voluntary activities.
* The capacity of acting as a personal and social compensative element
* The participation of the various actors of the education community, in the field of its corresponding competences and responsibilities, in the development of school activities within the schools, stimulation and especially, the necessary environment for living together and study.
* The conception of education as a permanent process, which is important throughout life (life long learning).
* The consideration of responsibility and effort as essential elements of the educational process.
* Flexibility in order to adapt its structure and organisation to the changes, needs and society demands, and to the different abilities, interests, expectations and personality in the pupils.
* The recognition of the teaching function as an essential factor regarding the quality of the education, the attention given to the teachers’ training, actualisation, and to their professional promotion.
* The pupils’ capacity to trust in their own abilities and knowledge, developing creativity, personal initiative, enterprising spirit, and basic principles and values.
* The stimulation and promotion of the investigation, the experimentation and the educational innovation.
* The assessment and the educational system inspection as a whole, both in its design and organisation, and in the teaching and learning processes.
* The schools efficiency, through their autonomous reinforcement and promotion of the school management.