

ESTONIA

Key Contextual Data

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Sources are outlined at the end of each section. Full details of all sources are to be found in the references section at the end of the key contextual data profile. Individual statistical data used in tables are indicated by an asterisk*, both in the table and in the sources.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

ECEC system type and auspices

Overall, the system of early childhood education and care institutions in Estonia falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*). This includes responsibility for the integrated ECEC centres (*koolieelne lasteasutus*)¹ for children aged 1½ to 7 years, day nurseries (*lastesõim*) for children under age 4, and kindergartens-in-schools (*lasteaiad-algkool*) in rural areas. Additional childcare/playgroups (*lapsehoiu*) and the relatively new system of family day care (*päevehoid*) come under the Ministry of Social Affairs (*Eesti Sotsiaalministeerium*), meaning that the ECEC system as a whole is partially split. However, it is planned to transfer responsibility for the childcare/playgroups and family day care to the Ministry of Education by 2018, making the ECEC system in Estonia fully unitary.

The Estonian Parliament (*Riigikogu*) makes decisions on the organisation and development of the education system, the Government attends to the implementation of education reforms and the Ministry of Education is responsible for research and management, including quality assurance, funding plans, national curricula and the professional education/training of teachers at all levels of the education system. At the local level, the regional administration (county governor) is responsible for the monitoring of teaching and learning activities and the municipalities for providing and organising places in ECEC provision.

Sources: European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat 2014.
Eurydice 2016.
IEA 2016.
Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer and M. J. Neuman 2010.

General objectives and legislative framework

The general objectives of early childhood education and care are based on three main principles: ensuring every child's right to education, developing individual potentials and reducing social inequalities. ECEC in Estonia represents an integrated approach to education and care, both aiming to help parents to balance family and workplace duties and to promote children's capabilities in preparation for school and life in general. The latter includes enhancing their emotional, moral, social, intellectual and physical development and taking into account their individual needs.

The organisational principles of the education system and its continually evolving decentralised structures are set down in the Estonian Education Act (*Eesti Vabariigi haridusseadus*, 1992 with amendments up to 2004), the Child Protection Act (*Eesti Vabariigi lastekaitse seadus*, 1993 with amendments from 2016), the Preschool Child Care Institutions Act (*Koolieelse lasteasutuse seadus*, 1999 with amendments up to 2015) and the Estonian Constitution (*Eesti Vabariigi põhiseadus*, 1992).

In 2014, the Estonian Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2020 (*Eesti elukestva õppe strateegia 2020*) was introduced, providing the current basis for government decisions regarding changes in the

¹ In official documents these are variously translated into English as 'Preschool child care institutions' or 'Preschool institutions' or 'Kindergartens'.

education system. Five general objectives are foregrounded: (1) respecting the individuality of the learner; (2) improving the competence and motivation of educators/teachers; (3) combining life-long learning with the needs of the employment market; (4) utilising digital technologies and creating a supportive infrastructure for this; (5) providing equal chances for all. The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of these goals.

In 2015, the Estonian Minister of Education and Research approved an integrated ECEC concept (decree no. 1.1-2/15/455) that aims to provide high quality education and care, to ensure access for all children aged 1½ years up to statutory school age, to provide a safe and supportive learning environment and to enhance school readiness. Relevant legislation is expected in 2017.

Sources: EPIC 2016.
Eurydice 2016.
Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer and M.J. Neuman 2010.
Veisson, M. 2017.

ECEC entitlement and compulsory enrolment age

Since 2014, all children aged between 1½ and 7 years are entitled to a free place in an ECEC setting. However, it is not always possible for the municipalities to fully meet this requirement.

Attending an ECEC institution is not obligatory. However, the local authorities have a duty to provide a place for all children between 1½ and 7 years of age whose parents wish them to attend, regardless of their possible special educational needs.

Primary schooling begins at age 7.

Sources: Eurydice 2015.
European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice 2015.

Main types of provision

In 2015, the number of ECEC settings² totalled 634, providing places for 68,331 children. In national statistics, 505 of these are described as ‘kindergartens’ (here: integrated ECEC centres), 118 as ‘kindergarten schools’ (here: kindergartens-in-school), 7 as ‘nursery schools’ (here: day nurseries), and 4 as ‘special kindergartens’ (here: special ECEC centre) for children with disabilities.*

Table 1

Estonia: ECEC settings according to type, number and children attending, 2015*

Type of setting	Number of ECEC settings	Number of children enrolled
Integrated ECEC centre (<i>koolieelne lasteasutus</i>)	505	62,802
Kindergarten-in-school (<i>lasteaiad-alkkool</i>)	118	4,658
Day nursery (<i>lastesõim</i>)	7	554
Special ECEC centre	4	317
Total	634	68,331

² Again, the English translations of the names of different forms of provision vary from document to document.

Integrated ECEC Centres for children aged 1½ to 7 years (*koolieelne lasteasutus*) are the most common form of provision and local authorities are responsible for their management. ‘Integrated’ in this sense means both age-integrated across the early childhood years (1-7) as well as in terms of providing a combination of nursery and kindergarten facilities and also pre-primary education for 6- to 7-year olds under one roof. The centre head is responsible for leadership, together with the staff board and a management committee. Integrative groups comprising children with disabilities and children without can be set up in the centres, as can mixed-age groups. The Integrated ECEC Centres are open all the year round. The municipalities decide on the specific opening times in consultation with parents. If the demand for places exceeds the number available, the municipalities offer half-day places.

A relatively small number of free-standing **day nurseries** (*lastesõim*) offer places for 1- to under 5-year olds.

Kindergartens-in-schools (*lasteaiad-alkkool*) are a form of provision to be found in rural areas. ECEC centres are located in the same buildings as schools because the number of children in the region is not large enough to justify establishing two separate institutions.

Pre-primary groups (*koolieelikute ettevalmistusrühm*) for 6- to 7-year olds are to be found in all Integrated ECEC centres. They focus primarily on supporting children in their year preceding school entry. Although they are not obligatory, all children are expected to attend. In some cases, **preparatory classes** (*eelõpetust*) may be set up. These are a specific, non-official form of pre-primary group paid for by parents who wish their children to experience a specific focus on school readiness activities. It is planned to establish a ‘school readiness certificate’ as a mandatory document for school admittance.

A system of **family day care** (*päevehoid*) was introduced in Estonia in 2006/07. By 2013, roughly 10% of children under 3 years of age (4,543 Kinder) were being cared for by family day care personnel. A qualifying course has been developed and currently a system of online registration is being set up. The organisation of family day care is regulated by the Social Welfare Act and comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Municipal or privately-run **childcare/playgroups** have been set up for children under 3 years of age who could not be offered a place in a regular ECEC centre. The core practitioner is a child carer (*lapsehoidja*) who has undergone a one-year qualifying course. These groups charge considerably higher fees than mainstream provision. They are not required to work according to the national curriculum and are supervised by the local authorities. They also come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In recent years, so-called **hobby groups** as well as **Estonian language** groups have become increasingly popular. These groups are open both for children who attend ECEC settings as well as those who do not. Some are subsidised by the municipalities, others are fee-paying. In some municipal and private ECEC settings, so-called ‘**baby schools**’ have been set up for children aged 2 to 8 months which generally have to be financed by the parents. The aim of these groups is to provide a framework for parents and children to learn together.

Sources: European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat 2014.
Eurydice 2016.
IEA 2015.
*Statistics Estonia 2017a
Veisson, M. 2016 (personal communication, 20.08.2016)

Provider structures

The majority of ECEC provision in Estonia is public/municipal. From a total of 634 early childhood settings in 2015, only 9% (57) were run by private agencies.*

Municipalities have a duty to provide ECEC places for children aged 1½ to 7 years. In order to address the current insufficient supply of places, the “Government Action Plan 2011-2015” made it possible for municipalities to receive additional funding support in order to create new places. In this way, a home-based place may be offered instead of a place in a centre-based setting, particularly in the case of children under 3 years of age, or private ECEC settings may be offered a subsidy for providing additional places.

Sources: EFA 2015.
Eurydice 2016.

Participation rates in regulated provision

The proportion of children under 3 years of age attending centre-based settings in Estonia increased from 12% in 2005 to 21.4% in 2015. The proportion of children up to 6 years of age also increased and by 2015, over 90% of this age-group was enrolled in an ECEC centre.

Table 2

Estonia: Participation rates in ECEC centre-based settings by age and duration of attendance, 2005-2015*

Year	Weekly attendance	0 to under 3 years in %**	3 years to school entry in %
2005	1 to 29 hours	3	9
	Over 30 hours	9	69
	No attendance	89	22
2010	1 to 29 hours	2	6
	Over 30 hours	19	86
	No attendance	79	8
2015	1 to 29 hours	3.6	6.8
	Over 30 hours	17.8	86.1
	No attendance	78.5	7.1

According to national statistics (2015) and own calculations, the participation rates for the various age-groups were as follows (Table 3):

Table 3

Estonia: Children in centre-based settings according to age-group – participation rates and absolute figures, 2015**

Age-group	Participation rates, in % [†]	Children enrolled
0- to 1-year olds	0.2	25
1- to 2-year olds	28.5	3,884
2- to 3-year olds	73.7	10,358
Under 3-year olds	34.5	14,267
3- to 4-year olds	87.5	12,816
4- to 5-year olds	87.7	13,836
5- to 6-year olds	94.0	14,613
6- to 7-year olds	79.5	12,491
3- to 7-year olds	87.2	53,756
Under 7-year olds	66.1	68,023

[†] own calculations on the basis of national population statistics

Since the late 1980s – as a result of demographic changes and sinking birthrates – there was a considerable drop in the number of settings and the number of children attending them (Table 4). Over the years, these numbers were consistently lower in rural areas than in the cities. Participation rates in general started increasing again after the turn of the century: between 1995 and 2003/04 those of 1-year olds increased from 6% to 14%, and those of 2-year olds from 38% to 56%. Overall it is estimated that the child population will continue to decrease in the coming years.

Table 4

Estonia: Number of ECEC centres and children attending and participation rates across time, 1987–2015/16***

Year	Number of ECEC centres	Number of children	Participation rates of 1- to 6-year olds, in %
1987	747	91,300	70
End of 1990s	767	81,100	56
2000	646	50,600	64
2004	600	52,900	70
2009	637	62,100	74
2014	653	68,812	76
2015/16	634	68,331	77

The provision of places especially for children aged 18 months to 3 years (when parental leave ends) is still insufficient. With the help of European Structural Funds 2014-2020, additional places are to be provided. To create around 3,200 new places, 47 Mill. Euro will be invested****.

Sources: ****EPIC 2016

European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice. 2016.

*Eurostat 2017f.

**Statistics Estonia 2017a; 2017b.

***Veisson 2016 (mit Bezug auf Eesti NSV Rahvamajandus 1987; Eesti Statistika Aastaraamat, 2005, 2009)

Financing and costs for parents

Public/municipal ECEC centres, which comprise the majority of settings, are financed through municipal budgets. Staff salaries, teaching/learning materials and the professional development activities of ECEC staff, as well as language courses for children with Estonian as an additional language are subsidised by the government. Privately-run settings also receive these subsidies. The four special ECEC centres for children with multiple disabilities are fully state-funded.

Parents always have to pay for meals. Sometimes, however, their fees may contribute both towards staff salaries and materials/equipment. This varies from municipality to municipality. What is regulated by law is the maximum fee, which may not exceed more than 20% of the minimum wage. On average, parents pay approximately 2.30€ per month, including meals.³* Disadvantaged families may be exempt from fees.

In the case of privately-run ECEC settings, it is mostly the provider who is responsible for the running costs. However, in certain circumstances they may be supported through state and municipal budgets, particularly regarding salaries and staff professional development. Parental fees are determined by the service provider.

Sources: EFA 2015.

*European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat 2014.

Eurydice 2016.

IEA 2016.

³ The amounts in Euro refer to the artificial common reference currency unit PPS (Purchase Power Standard) used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of cross national comparisons. (European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice and Eurostat 2014, p 156)

Staff-child ratios

In the Integrated ECEC Centres there are groups for children from age 3 up to school entry and also pre-primary groups for 6- and 7-year olds and/or groups for children who have been deferred from school entry. Mixed-age groups for children under age 3 can be established if the parents so wish. The centre head decides whether children with special educational needs are included in a mainstream group or whether a separate group should be set up.

Maximum group sizes are regulated. These are 14-16 for children under 3 years of age, 20-24 for pre-primary groups and 18 for mixed-age groups. Groups for children with special educational needs are smaller.*

A qualified member of staff *or* an auxiliary member of staff is responsible for up to 7 children under 3 years of age, up to 9 children in a mixed-age group, up to 10 children in a pre-primary group, and up to 8 children in an integrative group or for 2 to 6 children in a separate group for children with special educational needs.

Sources: Eurydice 2017.
*IEA 2016.

Curricular frameworks

The centre-specific educational programmes are required to follow the national early childhood curricular framework (*Koolieelse lasteasutuse riiklik õppekava*, 2008). A particular emphasis is placed on the co-operation between families and the ECEC setting. Early childhood education is understood as supporting the children's emotional, moral, social, intellectual and physical development as well as respecting their individual needs. Through learning, play and social activities they are encouraged to develop a positive self-image and ethical attitudes. The national curricular framework also sets out learning goals assumed to be appropriate for 6- and 7-year olds and includes principles for the evaluation of children's progress. A smooth transition to school is also foregrounded.

Specifically, the aim is to support the acquisition of competencies through play, learning, social and reflective activities. The curricular framework is organised around the following learning areas: Self and environment; language and talking; Estonian as an additional language; mathematics; the arts; music; movement. The curriculum is essential play-based. Staff are expected to actively support children's play activities, their creativity, their respect for group rules, and their problem-solving abilities. Moreover, children start learning a foreign language between the ages of 3 and 7 years.

The daily programme of activities is flexible and the lead practitioner in the group can adapt it according to the children's current needs. Group activities relating to the national curricular framework do not have to be followed in detail. Some ECEC centres may prefer to work e.g. according to the Step-by-Step approach, the Reggio Emilia approach or Waldorf pedagogy.

Staff are free to choose the methods and materials they consider appropriate. Since 2014, guidelines for all curricular areas have been developed in order to support implementation.

Sources: EFA 2015.
Eurydice 2016.
Veisson, M. 2017.

Inclusion agenda

A number of intervention and integration programmes exist in Estonia for children from disadvantaged families, minority ethnic groups and for children with special educational needs.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

If children with special educational needs cannot be included in a regular, integrative group in an ECEC setting, then the municipalities have a duty to ensure that a separate group is set up. The work with them also follows the national curricular framework; where necessary, an individual development plan is drawn up. 11% of the child population up to compulsory school age in 2013/14 were classified as having special educational needs. In 2013/14, all these children attended an ECEC setting.

Children with a background of migration

In 2016, 31.2% of the total population had a non-Estonian background. Persons from Russia comprised the largest group (25.1%), followed by persons from Ukraine (1.8%), from Belarus (0.9%) and from Finland (0.6%). Children with a background of migration accounted for 8.1% of the total child population under 4 years of age*.

17% of children up to compulsory school age had a non-Estonian background. Likewise, 17% of all children under compulsory school age had a family language other than Estonian. All these children attend an ECEC setting and are supported in acquiring the Estonian language. Mostly they are grouped together with children whose native language is Estonian**.

In 2015, 2,684 children participated in language immersion programmes in kindergartens. This corresponded to 18% of all kindergarten children with a first language other than Estonian. Five methodological centres offer support for kindergarten teachers who work with minority language children.

.Sources: EFA 2015.
Eurydice 2016.
**IEA 2016.
*Statistics Estonia 2017b.
Veisson, M. 2017

Monitoring – Evaluation – Research

Evaluating children's progress is one of the daily tasks of early childhood staff. Children are observed during a variety of activities according to a predefined plan. Observations are documented under consideration of data protection issues, and a discussion with the parents takes place at least once a year in order to give them feedback about their child's development. The child-related assessments are known only to the centre staff and the parents and are not passed on to others – they are used only for the optimal support of the children. Parents are asked about their satisfaction with the ECEC centre. For children below 3 years of age, these observations are the only form of assessment, whereas for the older preschool children standardised tests may also be used. Before the child starts school, parents are given a 'school readiness' certificate that they pass on to the primary school in question. Usually the assessment is conducted in kindergartens, but sometimes externally. The document includes information on the child's cognitive, physical and social competencies related to the national curricular framework and also notes the child's particular strengths and the areas in which he/she needs further support. Pilot studies conducted at Tallinn and Tartu universities have confirmed the effectiveness of the school readiness certificate.

At the level of the municipal providers, efficiency is assessed by the local authority. Assessment of state-maintained provision is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. An annual account of external evaluations in the education system is published on the Ministry's home page. Items assessed include the spatial resources, materials and equipment, compliance with safety and hygiene requirements, adherence to regulations and the curricular framework, leadership qualities of the centre head and finance management.

The evaluation findings are made accessible to all those involved (ECEC centres, providers, parents, local authorities) and form the basis for further planning.

Early childhood centres are also required to conduct internal self-assessments.

Sources: EFA 2015.
Eurydice 2016, 2017.
Ministry of Education and Research 2016.
Veisson, M. 2017.

Parental leave arrangements

Maternity leave (*rasedus-ja sünnituspuhkus*) is granted for 140 calendar days; between 30 and 70 of these may be taken before the expected birth date. During this time mothers receive 100% of their average earnings based on the previous calendar year. Mothers who have not worked receive the basic minimum wage of 390€ per month.

Paternity leave (*isapuhkus*) is granted for 10 fully paid working days which can be taken during the two months before or after the child's birth. Between 2009 and 2013 the payment regulations were suspended and no payments were made.

Parental leave (*lapsehoolduspuhkus*) is a family entitlement and can be taken up to the child's third birthday and can also be taken in several parts, but not by both parents at the same time. Two kinds of parental leave allowance are available, independent of the specific use made of parental leave: (1) the parental benefit (*vanemahüvitis*) is a full payment of average earnings (up to 2,724€ per month) for 435 days after the end of maternity leave; and (2) a lump sum payment (*lapsehooldustasu*) of 38€ monthly which follows on from the parental leave period taken up to the child's third birthday. The allowance is reduced if a parent takes up employment during this time, but not by more than half. Parental leave can be taken in one or several periods of time.

Since 2015 the child allowance for the first and second child has been raised to 45€ per month.

In 2015, approximately 46% of fathers made use of paternity leave. There are no data available for the take up of maternity leave. In 2016, 9.3% of the parental leave allowance recipients were men. Based on preliminary data of birth registrations in 2016, around half of fathers made use of the parental leave entitlement.

Sources: EPIC 2016.
Pall, K. 2017.

Historical highlights and shifts

1839	First kindergarten established based on Froebel's principles of pedagogy
1921	First curricular programme developed by C.H. Niggol on the basis of Froebel's principles
Until 1940	Kindergartens the responsibility either of municipalities or private founders – no state legislation
1968	First state curricular framework based on Communist principles

1987	Second state curricular framework based on Soviet education programmes and organised according to separate age-groups
1989	747 kindergartens providing for approx. 83,000 children
1991	State-maintained provision comes under the responsibility of the municipalities; compulsory schooling age raised from 6 to 7 years
Post-1991	Economic crises and sinking birthrates lead to the closing of many kindergartens (100 between 1990 and 1994)
1999	Preschool Child Care Institutions Act
2008	Estonian National Curriculum for Pre-school Child Care Institutions.
2014	Introduction of legal entitlement to a place in ECEC provision for children aged 1½ to 7 years
2015/16	634 ECEC centres providing for 68,331 children

Sources: Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010.
Veisson, M. 2017.

Current challenges for the system of Early Childhood Education and Care in Estonia

Country expert assessment by Marika Veisson

The foremost challenge for the ECEC system in Estonia is the imminent integration of all ECEC institutions under the Ministry of Education and Research as from 2018. Related staffing challenges include ensuring that all teachers in ECEC institutions have a higher education qualification, as stipulated by law, and raising the salaries and status of ECEC teachers.

To continue improving the quality of ECEC both at the structural and process level, providing the framework for collaborations with researchers in Europe and beyond is essential, and at the same time a challenge. In order to participate actively in a knowledge based society, Estonian researchers need partners in other countries to conduct cross-cultural research studies. Tallinn University, for example, already cooperates with a number of universities in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Malta, the UK, and the USA on ECEC issues. Such international collaborations need to be extended and supported.

Demographic data

Total population

In 2016, the population in Estonia totalled 1,315,944. Over the past 20 years the population has been showing a slight but steady decrease (1995: 1,448,075, 2005: 1,358,850).

Children under age 7

Since compulsory schooling in Estonia starts at age 7, data in this section include children up to age 7 from available sources, whereas otherwise the demographic data refer to children up to age 6.

In 2016, children under age 3 comprised 3.2% of the total population, and children under 7 years of age 7.7%. The proportion of under 7-year olds was significantly higher than the average for the countries belonging to the EU in 1995 (though Estonia was not a member at that time), but had

dropped below this average by 2005, reaching by 2016 a level above the EU28 average. For almost 20 years, the share of under-threes in the total population has been higher than the respective EU-average.

Table 5

Estonia: Proportion of children under age 7 in the total population, 2016

Age	Number of children
Under 1 year	14,047
1-year olds	13,795
2-year olds	13,879
Total under 3-year olds	41,721
3-year olds	14,158
4-year olds	14,724
5-year olds	15,752
6-year olds	15,474
Total 3- to under 7-year olds	60,108
Total 0- to under 7-year olds	101,829

Table 6

Estonia: Children under 7 years of age – relative share in total population compared with respective EU average, 1995 to 2016, in %*

Age	1995	Ø EU15 ⁴	2005	Ø EU25	2016	Ø EU28
Under 3 years	3.8	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.0
3 to under 6 years	5.7	4.7	3.6	4.2	4.6	4.2
0 to under 7 years	8.9	8.0	6.6	7.3	7.7	7.2

* own calculations, deviations due to roundings

Source: Eurostat 2017a.

Single households with children under age 6

The majority of all households (78.6%) in 2015 with children under age 6 were couple households. Single households in Estonia comprise only 5.7% - almost all of them single mother households.

Table 7

Estonia: Households with children under age 6, 2015

Household type	Total households	Total households in per cent*
All households	157,400	
Couple households	123,700	78.6
Other household type	24,900	15.8
Single households, total	8,900	5.7
Single households, women	8,500	5.4
Single households, men	400**	0.3

* own calculations, ** number calculated

⁴ The 1995 data are for the EU15 countries at the time (AT, BE, DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, F, FI, IT, LU, NL, PT, SE, UK); the 2005 data (EU25) also include CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, SI, SK. Data for 2014 include the additional EU28 countries BG, RO und HR.

Source: Eurostat 2017b.

Employment rates of parents with children under age 6

In 2015, the total employment rate for men in Estonia aged 15 to 65 years was 75.3%, for women 68.5%. In the same year, over half of all women with children under age 6 were employed (55.7%), and the larger majority of men (91.6%). The employment rate for mothers is thus below the EU28 average, whereas that for fathers is somewhat above the average level in the EU.

Table 8

Estonia: Employment rates of parents with children under age 6 compared with other EU states, 2005-2015

	Year	Mothers in per cent	Fathers in per cent
Estonia	2005	45.9	90.0
	2010	51.5	80.7
	2014	55.7	91.6
European Union	EU15 – 2005	56.2	90.0
	EU27 – 2010	58.2	86.6
	EU28 - 2015	61.0	87.3
Highest rate of employment	2005	Slovenia – 76.8	Cyprus – 95.3
	2010	Slovenia – 76.7	Netherlands – 93.5
	2015	Sweden – 78.9	Malta/Czech Republic – 93.0
Lowest rate of employment	2005	Malta – 29.3	Bulgaria – 72.4
	2010	Hungary – 32.7	Latvia – 74.8
	2015	Hungary – 38.8	Bulgaria – 77.3

Sources: Eurostat 2017b.
Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010.

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion⁵

In 2015, 22.8% of children under 6 years of age in Estonia were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This proportion is below the EU28 average (24.7%) for this age group. The proportion of people in the total population at risk of poverty or social inclusion was 24.2%.

National statistics refer to 4.5% of the population living under severe material deprivation in 2015. For example, they cannot afford their rent, heating or to deal with unexpected expenses*.

Sources: Eurostat 2017d.
*Statistics Estonia 2016, 112.

⁵ 'At risk of poverty or social exclusion' refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty (threshold set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers), or severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_\(AROPE\)](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_(AROPE))

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