

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Definition:

Inclusive education in the Netherlands is called “Appropriate Education”. This is the name for the new way of teaching children, who need extra support, is organized. Because of appropriate education more children can, possibly with additional support, remain in regular education.

A. Policy

Law has introduced appropriate education on August 1, 2014. The purpose of appropriate education is to fix the problems with the old system and to reduce the number of truants. With the introduction of the Act, appropriate education, the “backpack” (2003) is therefore canceled.

The purpose of the new law is that all children, including children who need extra support in the classroom, get an appropriate education place. The essence of education remains the same: to challenge each child to get the best out of themselves. The starting point for appropriate education: if, the child can go to a regular school, if not, he goes to special education.

There are children who are at their best in regular education, which indeed often provides the best opportunities for further training and participate in society. While for other children in special education most opportunities are provided. The new law give schools more options for customized support. The possibilities and the educational needs of children are decisive, so the focus is less on the disability or obstruction of the child but more on the possibilities. This new approach has to ensure that fewer children are not prolonged to sit at home (truants).

The school system in the Netherlands has next to mainstream schools also schools for:
Special primary education (SBO): Special schools for primary education (SBO) provide more intensive support than mainstream schools. The groups are smaller and the teachers know more about learning disabilities and behavioral problems.

Special Needs Education: Children who require specialized and / or intensive counseling, may in special education (SO). These include children with a (severe) physical, sensory or mental disability. Or pupils with severe behavioral disorder or psychiatric disorder.

Special Needs Education consists of four clusters:

Cluster 1: blind, visually impaired children;

Cluster 2: deaf, hearing-impaired children;

Cluster 3: mentally handicapped and chronically ill children;

Cluster 4: children with disorders and behavioral problems.

The special schools are maintained.

B. Implementation of the policy

The new law is the most radical for the mainstream schools now they have a duty of care. That means they are responsible for all children who need extra support to provide a suitable place. These are children who will be notified and children who are already in school. The school is looking, in consultation with the parents, for an appropriate place. At the school or if the school cannot offer proper guidance, another mainstream or special school will be searched for. In the school support profile the schools determine what kind of support they can provide. For this working regular and special schools together in regional partnerships.

School has a duty of care.

Parents report their child at the school of their preference. Children may attend primary school when they are 4 years. The school must then make the most appropriate possible offer on its own, another regular or a special school. After registration, the school has six weeks to decide on the admission of the child. This period may be extended once for 4 weeks. The school first examines whether they can offer the child additional educational support, possibly with additional support from the (secondary) special education or of the partnership. Sometimes the school needs more information to assess this properly. Schools can therefore ask for additional information from the parents. If the school cannot provide an appropriate educational place, they must arrange a suitable place at another mainstream or special school. This is done in consultation with the parents. The duty of care also means that a school may only remove a child when another school was willing to admit that child. This prevents a child falling between ship and shore.

Partnerships of schools in the region.

To ensure that all children receive an appropriate place, schools have formed regional partnerships. In primary and secondary education, a total of 152 established partnerships (77

in primary and 75 in secondary education). In these partnerships mainstream and special education (cluster 3 and 4) work together. The schools in the partnership make agreements about include guidance and support that can provide all schools in the region and over which children can get a place in special education. The partnership makes agreements with the municipalities in the region about the deployment and coordination with (youth) care. Each school provides the basic support. This is the guidance that can provide a regular school standard. For example: help for students with dyslexia or dyscalculia, programs aimed at (avoiding) behavior, protocol for medical procedures, competence of the staff. Besides the basic support some schools may offer additional guidance to children. Think of a special class for children with conduct disorder. Or training in social skills. This usually involves specialized guidance provided by one or more schools in the region. Sometimes this is done in collaboration with institutions of child welfare and youth services. The school provides support in the school profile which may provide additional guidance. You can use the profile to support your school. So you know as parents what you can expect from the schools in the region. And what teachers can at least offer. The base support is not fixed nationwide. The schools in the partnerships together determine what is covered by the basic support.

Additional funding support

The partnerships receive money for extra support. This will be distributed on the basis of the agreements made in the group of its schools. Thus, more customization and the money will be used as much as possible to support the regular school in the classroom. From the resources the partnership also pays secondary special education ((V) SO) for the number of children enrolled from that partnership.

Appropriate education no retrenchment.

The introduction of appropriate education is not a cost-cutting measure. The budget remains the same nationwide, but is distributed differently across the regions. The money goes to the regional groupings, all the schools in a region. Per child they receive money for extra support. They divide the money on the schools in their region to provide support to children.

Teachers education

In the Netherlands the teacher training is on the level of a bachelor degree. The teacher training lasts 4 years and has 240 ECTS, bachelor of Education. There are about 35 teacher training education colleges in the Netherlands. At all the Institutions they work in a similar way. At the Hanzehogeschool of Groningen we work as

follows:

In the first and second year of study the students increase their knowledge. The training is focused on knowledge, teaching methodology, skills and attitude aspects needed soon to assume the role of teacher. The students work on his own knowledge base. Aspects as differences between pupils, classroom management, promote collaboration and model activating instruction are taught. Also the subjects as care expansion / development, action-oriented work, basic needs of children and differences between pupils, teaching methods, and working with combination groups. At the end of the second year he can choose to specialize in 'Young children' (age 4-8) or choose the specialization "Older children" (age 8-12). In the third year the student has chosen the specialization "Young child" or "Older child". From now on the heart is in the target group that is chosen and the students deepen their knowledge and skills in this area. There is great attention to identifying and diagnosing learning and development issues in children. Knowledge about orthopedagogical theories related to developmental and learning problems is taught. Practical research is done in elementary school, where students are two days a week. In the fourth year, they will work as a prospective teacher (Teacher In Training - LIO) six months in a primary school. Additionally, he can choose a minor or specialization, which also spends a half year. The LIO internship the students carry the responsibility for all professional tasks throughout the week. He works with children who belong to the target group he has chosen in the third year of study. During the internship LIO the students do practical research and he processes the results in a research paper. In the minor space students have the possibility to follow a minor "Special educational Needs" (30 ECTS). After bachelor degree students can do a master for Special Educational Needs, for the duration of one year.

The Minister of Education finds that the level of teachers must be raised. Therefore the quality of teacher training colleges and teacher training must be improved. It is intended that each student from 2016 fulfils to the legal expertise requirements. This means that new teachers can adequately deal with differences between pupils. From 2015, the new teacher training entry requirements will start. New entrants must be tested on knowledge about the fields of geography, history and science and technology. From academic year 2015-2016 HAVO and MBO graduates (secondary education) who want to follow the teacher training colleges already should demonstrate before the start of the training that they have sufficient ready knowledge. Students with a VWO diploma (higher secondary education) or a university or university program are exempt from the special additional prior education.

<http://www.paboweb.nl/themas/24>

Setting higher standards for the influx of the teacher helps the professionalization of primary education.

C. Needs and challenges.

Teachers and appropriate education: Appropriate education starts in the classroom. Teachers know the best what children need and what support them suits the best. They know what they can offer themselves and what they can still learn. And teachers know where the expertise of others, such as from special schools can put in. So teachers need to reflect on the way they act. They need to be ready to request and receive feedback.

See and respect differences: In the classroom teachers went even for the introduction of appropriate education to differentiation between pupils. For example, between intelligence levels and learning styles, but also in educational and support needs. Dealing with diversity is not new. It makes the teaching practice challenging and fascinating, but sometimes tricky. For teachers, the challenge is to see the differences and figure out what the learner needs and anticipate. For instance they can do to make that difference between instructions methods or in the way they offer learning material. Dealing with diversity it is not new, but because of the new law there will be more children from special schools come into the mainstream schools. There lies a challenge to prepare new teachers to this new situation. Even more education in acting and behavior of teachers in inclusive education.

Support by the school: Teachers are not alone. In designing appropriate education, they get the support in the practice of the class from their colleagues in the teaching staff, the internal counselor or care coordinator and the head teacher. The expertise of the (secondary) special education or youth workers can be used to support the teacher. The educational organizations stimulate the exchange of knowledge about appropriate education within the team. The new Law of Appropriate Education makes teachers focus on the possibilities of all children, that really is a step ahead, but it asks more of teachers if the preconditions are not clear. The introduction of this new Law is too recently to have all aspects, where needs are, insufficiently vivid.