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# Government decides to lift the restrictions on early childhood education and care and on primary and lower secondary education

Government Communications Department, Ministry of Education and Culture

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**In its negotiations today, 29 April, the Government decided to lift the restrictions on early childhood education and care and those on primary and lower secondary education on the basis of an assessment by the health authorities. Contact teaching in early childhood education and care as well as primary and lower secondary education will resume on 14 May in a controlled manner and with care for safety. . At the same time, education providers have time to arrange to resume contact teaching by informing staff and making other arrangements.**

Based on an epidemiological assessment, there are no longer grounds for extending the Decree on the Application of the Emergency Powers Act concerning early childhood education and care and primary and lower secondary education.

International and national experience show that the role of children in the dissemination of coronavirus infections is not similar to that of adults. Children are essentially not a source of infection. Based on current information, the opening of schools will therefore be safe for both pupils and staff.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare have drawn up guidelines and instructions on the arrangements for returning to early childhood education and care and to primary and lower secondary education. The most important thing is to avoid unnecessary physical contacts and arrange teaching premises more spaciouly than usual. School break times and school meals must also be held with the students' own class or group. Large gatherings, such as spring festivals, will not be organised. Personnel must also work with the same group of children and hygiene guidelines must be strictly respected. Education providers will make decisions on more specific arrangements.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education and Culture will jointly prepare instructions for the Regional State Administrative Agencies. Restrictions on early childhood education and care and primary and lower secondary education to contain the spread of an epidemic in society are governed by the Communicable Diseases Act.

Doctors will assess whether risk groups may engage in contact teaching. In the case of employees, the assessment will be carried out together with a doctor and the employer.

Once the Decree on the Application of the Emergency Powers Act is no longer effective, education providers cannot organise teaching in the form of distance teaching. Local authorities themselves cannot decide to close schools, nor can local authorities decide to organise teaching only in the form of distance teaching. The right to basic education is a subjective right laid down in the Constitution and belongs equally to everyone.

The Government will discuss the restrictions on upper secondary education and higher education later.

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[Instructions to providers of education and early childhood education and care, updated 4th May 2020](#) PDF 93kB

[OKM linjausehdotus valtioneuvostolle](#) PDF 173kB

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