

Estonia - 2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

This summary provides key highlights from the Biennial report on the Child Guarantee implementation in Estonia published in April 2024. It is not exhaustive or evaluative.

Roll out of key services

Preschool education and care: The Early Childhood Education Act, establishing a more uniform framework for kindergartens and childcare and requiring local governments to provide children with the opportunity to attend these services, will enter into force in January 2025. A transition period has been set for implementation.

Education: Investment in restructuring the school network and vocational schools, increasing the participation of students with special needs in mainstream education, and ensuring high-quality youth work. Compulsory school education has been extended for children up to the age of 18.

Healthy food: In state-maintained general education schools and many municipal schools, lunch is free for all students.

Healthcare: Activities to integrate social and healthcare services. A reform for rehabilitation services and the revision of the Social Welfare Act will also support the transition from institutional to family and community-based care. Measures to support families with children in need have been introduced to reduce the burden of care for the family. Training courses on children's mental health have been developed and disseminated.

Healthy diet: Measures include updating guides for food provided in schools and vending machines, regulating school catering, providing free fruits and vegetables, and supporting organic food in schools.

Funding to implement the Child Guarantee

The report includes a detailed table outlining the percentage by which various activities are covered by the European Union or Estonia's state budget. Funding for support services for family based alternative care will be €1.5 million from 2025 onwards.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The indicators of the National Action Plan have been updated based on the Framework prepared by the Social Protection Committee.

Relevant trends

- The absolute poverty rate of children increased from 1.3% in 2021 to 4% in 2022.
- The percentage of local governments where youth work services are at least at the "advanced" level has dropped from 59% in 2019 to 39.2% in 2022.
- The percentage of children placed in non-institutional alternative care out of all children placed in alternative care increased from 65% in 2020 to 67% in 2022.
- The employment gap between men and women aged 25–49 with children aged 0–2 decreased from 44.3% in 2020 to 28.4% in 2022.
- The percentage of fathers receiving parental benefits rose from 8% to 17% between 2017 and 2023.

Lessons learnt and further development

- The importance of strengthening national coordination to ensure cross-sectoral integration and target the most vulnerable children.
- The need to update the National Action Plan to incorporate indicators of children's mental health and establish a scoreboard system that also measures violence against children.
- To address challenges linked to data fragmentation on children across sectors, Estonia launched a project to develop cross-sectoral indicators across the country.

Target groups

The target groups have been listed in the National Action Plan.

Resources

- [Full Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee](#)
- [Eurochild's Estonia Country Profile](#)
- [Estonia's Child Guarantee National Action Plan – Eurochild's overview](#)