

# Finland: Parents march to demand better salary for early childhood education teachers <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

The Education Trade Union in Finland, Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö has welcomed the support given by parents and citizens to the status and living and working conditions of early childhood educators.

A media campaign by the Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö (OAJ) to highlight the shortage – and salaries – of Finnish early childhood education (ECE) teachers was instrumental in mobilising parents whose children are in early childhood education institutes. On 24 March, around 500 parents demonstrated in the capital city, Helsinki, to demand better salaries for early childhood educators, and were joined by the OAJ and many politicians.

In Finland, ECE educators must have bachelor degrees, yet municipalities pay only the basic salary. This has led to a shortage of ECE teachers in areas of the capital city, according to Olli Luukkainen, President of the OAJ. The ECE teachers' basic salary is around €2,300, and parents have demanded that this be raised to at least €3,000.

### Basic salary only

Basic salaries are set in collective agreements, but municipalities are expected to pay more and to evaluate the degree that the job is demanding.

According to the OAJ, while some municipalities pay more than €200 more than others – and do not have difficulty in attracting teachers – municipalities in more expensive areas only pay the basic salary.

Three larger municipalities have also agreed not to compete in terms of salaries – a move deemed “a cartel” by the OAJ which has demanded explanations from employers' organisations.

### “Wake up and act!”

“We, in the OAJ, are very satisfied that parents respect teachers' work and have started this campaign,” Luukkainen said. “It is not enough that employers and politicians explain that early childhood education is an important step within the education system. We hope that municipalities will now wake up and act!”

The parents' campaign started on Facebook, where it gathered over 10,000 supporters. Parents have said that they see this demonstration as a “prelude” to the next event planned for 21 April.

-reprinted from Education International

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/04/finland-parents-march-demand-better-salary-early-childhood-education>

### Links

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/04/finland-parents-march-demand-better-salary-early-childhood-education> <sup>[2]</sup>

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