# School for all – towards inclusive education in Finland

Riia Palmqvist
Councellor of education

# Finnish National Agency for Education in a nutshell

- a national development agency working under the Ministry of Education and Culture

- tasks and organization are set in the legislation

- core tasks

  - to develop education and training, early childhood education and care, lifelong learning

  - to promote internationalization in Finland

  - led by Minna Kelhä

# The Finnish education system has no dead-ends

The Finnish education system consists of:

- early childhood education and care

- pre-primary education

- primary and lower secondary education

- upper secondary education: general upper secondary education/vocational education and training

- higher education: universities/ universities of applied sciences

- adult education

- non-formal education
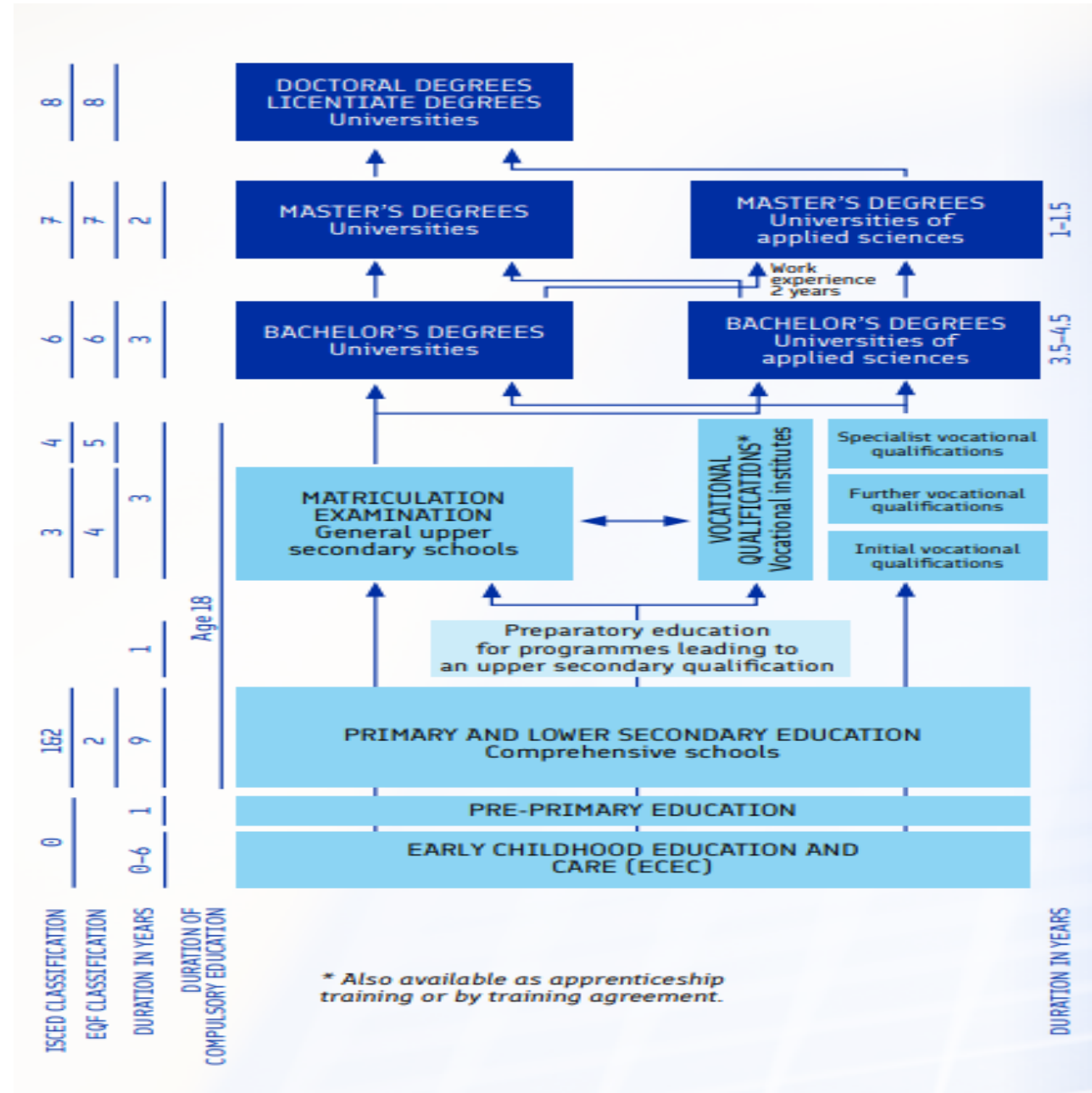
# Support in early childhood education and care, pre-primary education and basic education

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PRE-SCHOOL

BASIC EDUCATION

**Early Childhood Education and Care Act and Basics of the early childhood education plan (2022):** general, intensified and special support

**Basic Education Act and Basics of the preschool curriculum (2014):** general, intensified and special support

**Basic Education Act and Basics of the basic education curriculum (2014):** general, intensified and special support

# The core subjects studied in basic education

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| mother tongue and literature | second national language | foreign languages | mathematics | environmental studies |
| biology | geography | physics | chemistry | health education |
| religion | culture, worldview and ethics | history | social studies | music |
| visual arts | crafts | physical education | home economics | guidance counselling |

# Activity areas

Social skills

Communication skills

Learning of cognitive

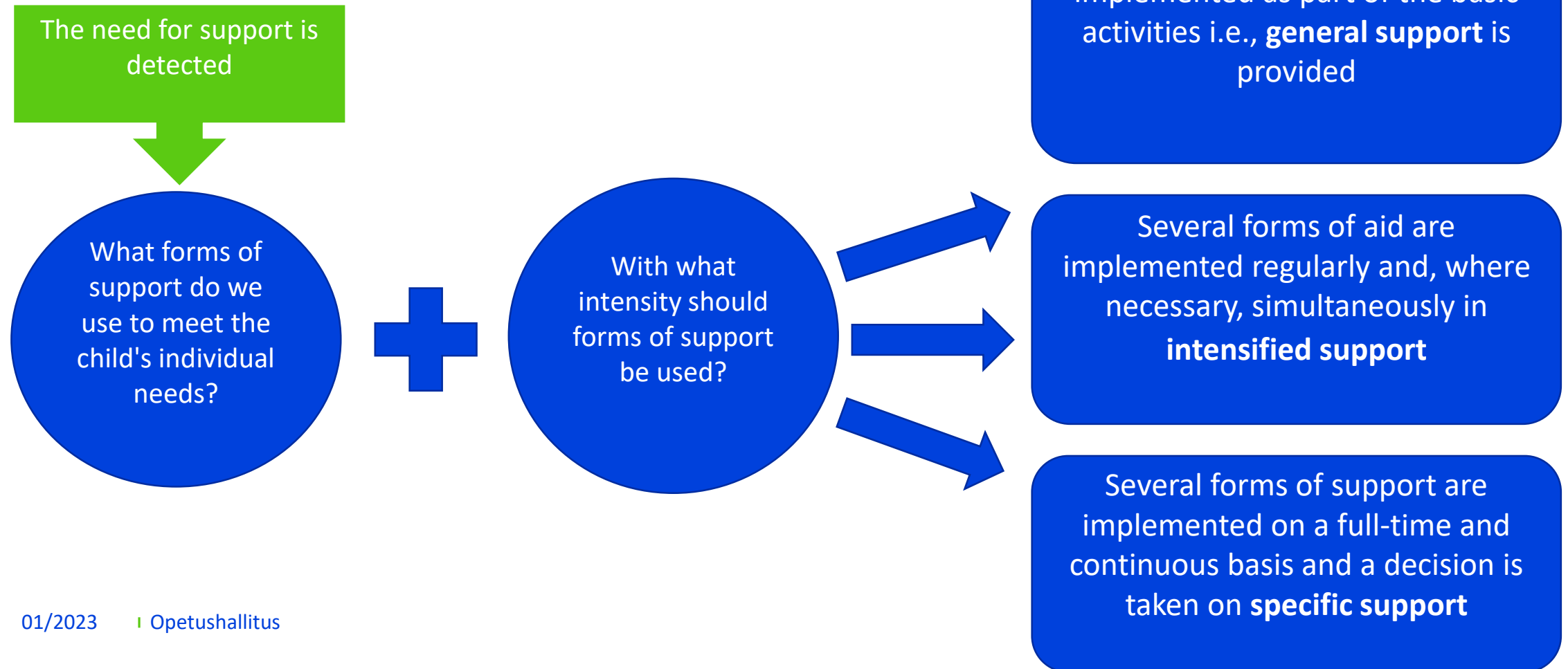Skills in activities of daily living

Motor skills: perception of body

# Inclusive principles

- Inclusive operating culture is the basis of all education and learning
- Inclusive education supports the inclusion, commitment and learning of all children, regardless of gender, origin, cultural background or other characteristic
- Inclusion is the implementation of values in
  - practices
  - structures
  - processes
  - procedures
  - operating methods
  - experiences

01/2023   ꞁ Opetushallitus

Equal rights for all children

Communality

Equality

Values guide the planning, evaluation, development and cooperation of operations

Inclusion, commitment and learning for everybody

Social inclusion

Parity

Valuing diversity

Non-discrimination

Values guide the planning, evaluation, development and cooperation of operations

# Support is determined through the assessment of the need for support and the design of the necessary forms of support

The need for support is detected

What forms of support do we use to meet the child's individual needs?

**+**

With what intensity should forms of support be used?

Individual forms of support are implemented as part of the basic activities i.e., **general support** is provided

Several forms of aid are implemented regularly and, where necessary, simultaneously in **intensified support**

Several forms of support are implemented on a full-time and continuous basis and a decision is taken on **specific support**

# Support may include the pedagogical, structural and multiprofessional forms of support
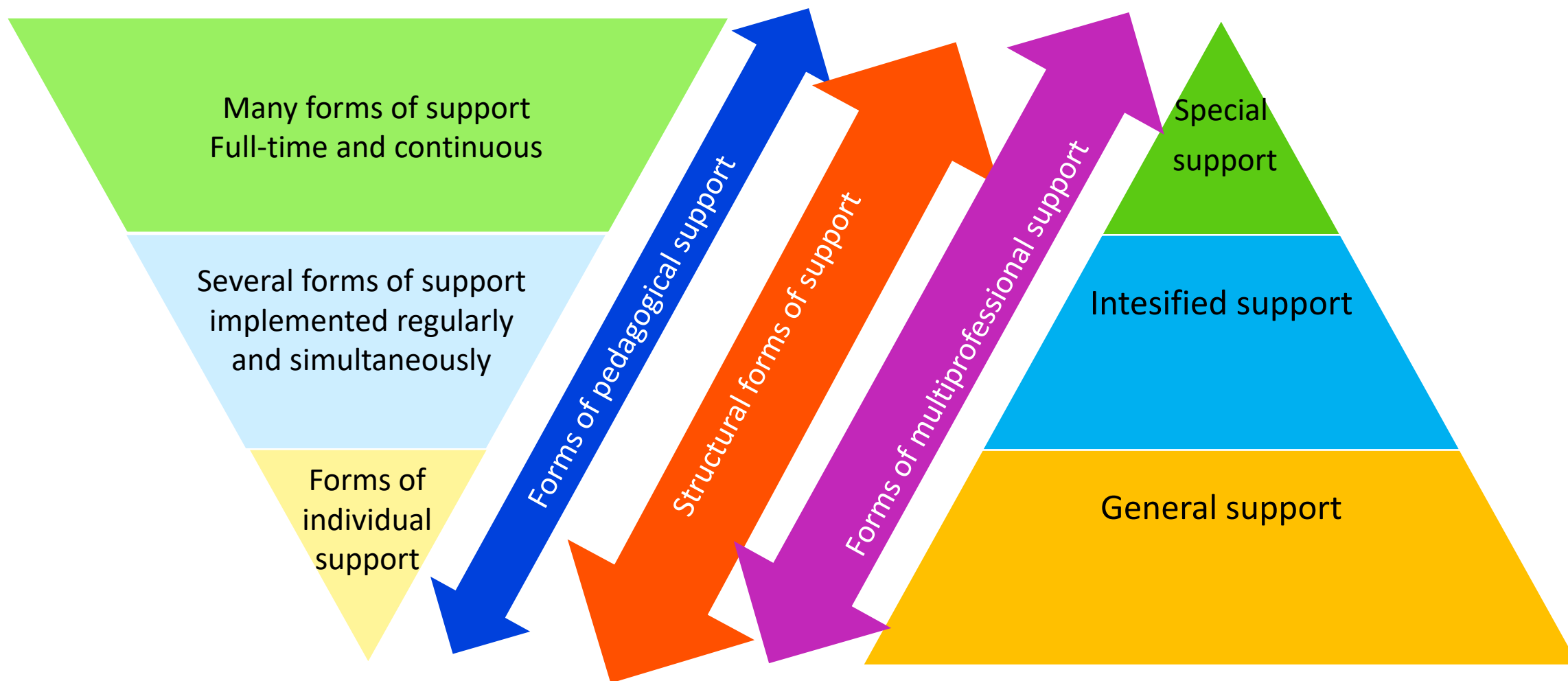
## Pedagogical forms of support

Solutions related to learning environments

Sensitive and accessible ways of interacting and communicating

Common and consistent use of pedagogical and special pedagogical working methods and methods

Operating methods in which the support needed by the child is provided as part of a peer group

Accessibility – pedagogical and structural solutions

## Structural forms of aid

Increasing the competence of personnel and special pedagogical competence

Reducing the number of children in a group, small or special group

Solutions related to staffing and/or structure and changing them according to the need for child support

## Multiprofessional forms of support

Considering health care needs, for example, the child's needs for assistance and assistive devices related to the treatment of long-term illnesses, medication, diet and movement

There is cooperation with social and health care experts, for example, for guidance and consultation

# Support for all

- **The starting point is the child's strengths and needs related to learning, development and well-being.**

- **Support is built on responding to the child's individual needs and on solutions related to communal and learning environments.**

- **Every child feels accepted as themselves and as members of a group.**

- **Working methods and learning environments are modified according to the child's individual needs.**

- **Pedagogical, structural and multiprofessional forms of support must be in the best interests of the child.**

- **The forms of support are based on local and case-by-case consideration in order to ensure that the support needed by the child is provided**

# Who is responsible for implementing support and developing inclusion?

| Assessment of the need for support | Provision of support | Development of practices | Development of the operating culture |
|---|---|---|---|

**EVERYBODY**