

Focus on Sweden

Public family policies and their consequences

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Parental leave

- 8 months to each parent, but possible to "transfer" days
- Income replaced at 77,6%
- Possible to extend by adding unpaid days
- Very flexible, can use part of days
- Mothers use ~75% of all parental leave

>> Children's time home with parent before preschool varies considerably

Preschool



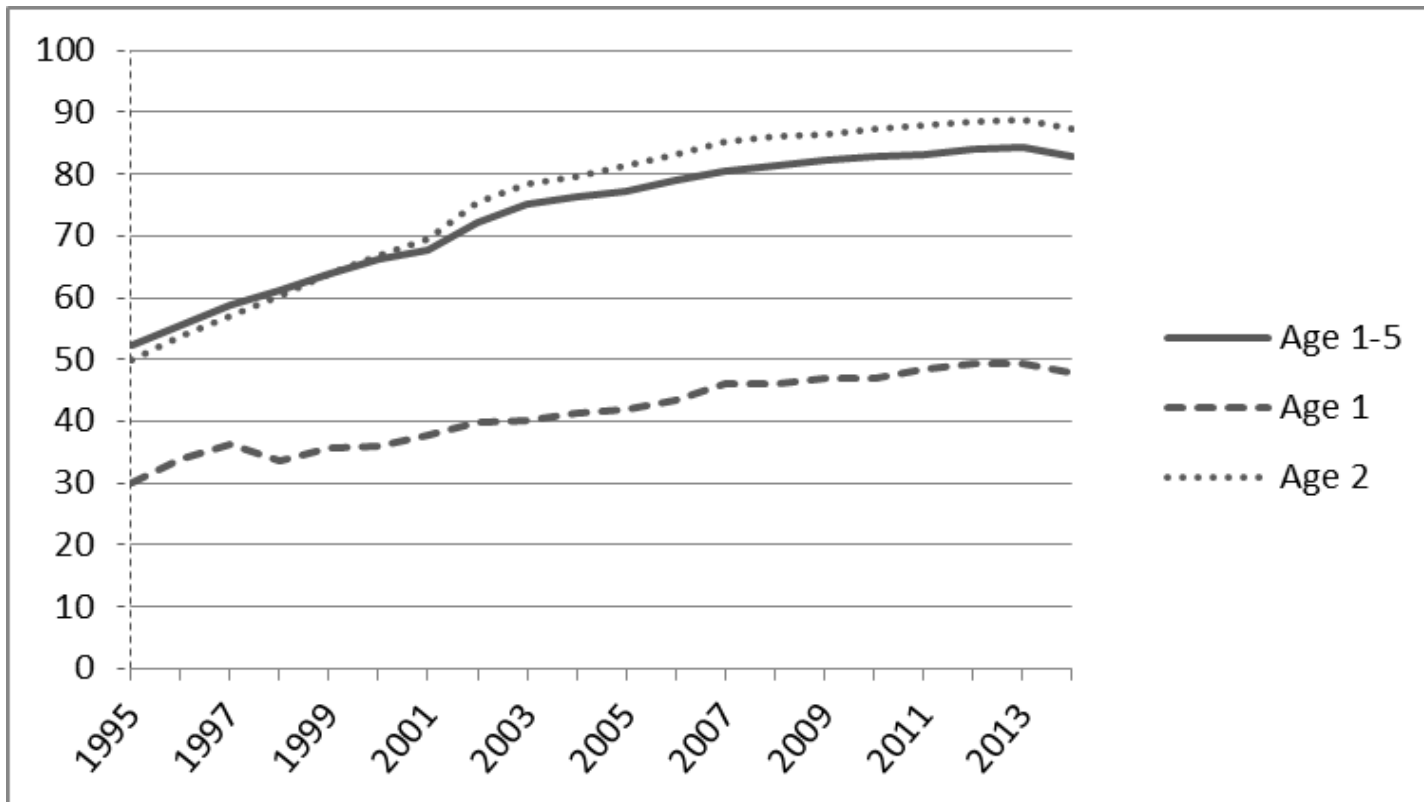
- Guarantee of place at age 1 since ~ 2000
- Subsidized and same cost for all, maximum ~ 130 Euro for first child, less for second, meanst-tested
- Part of educational system, pedagogics important
- Increasing share of tertiary educated personnel
- Private alternatives available, but same rules and costs apply

Labor market



- Parents have protected employment when on parental leave (also extended leave)
- Right to reduce work hours to 75% until child is 8 years old
- Children reduced right to preschool when parent is unemployed or on leave (minimum provision 15 hours a week)
- Preschool has extended opening hours (7-18) and night-childcare is sometimes available

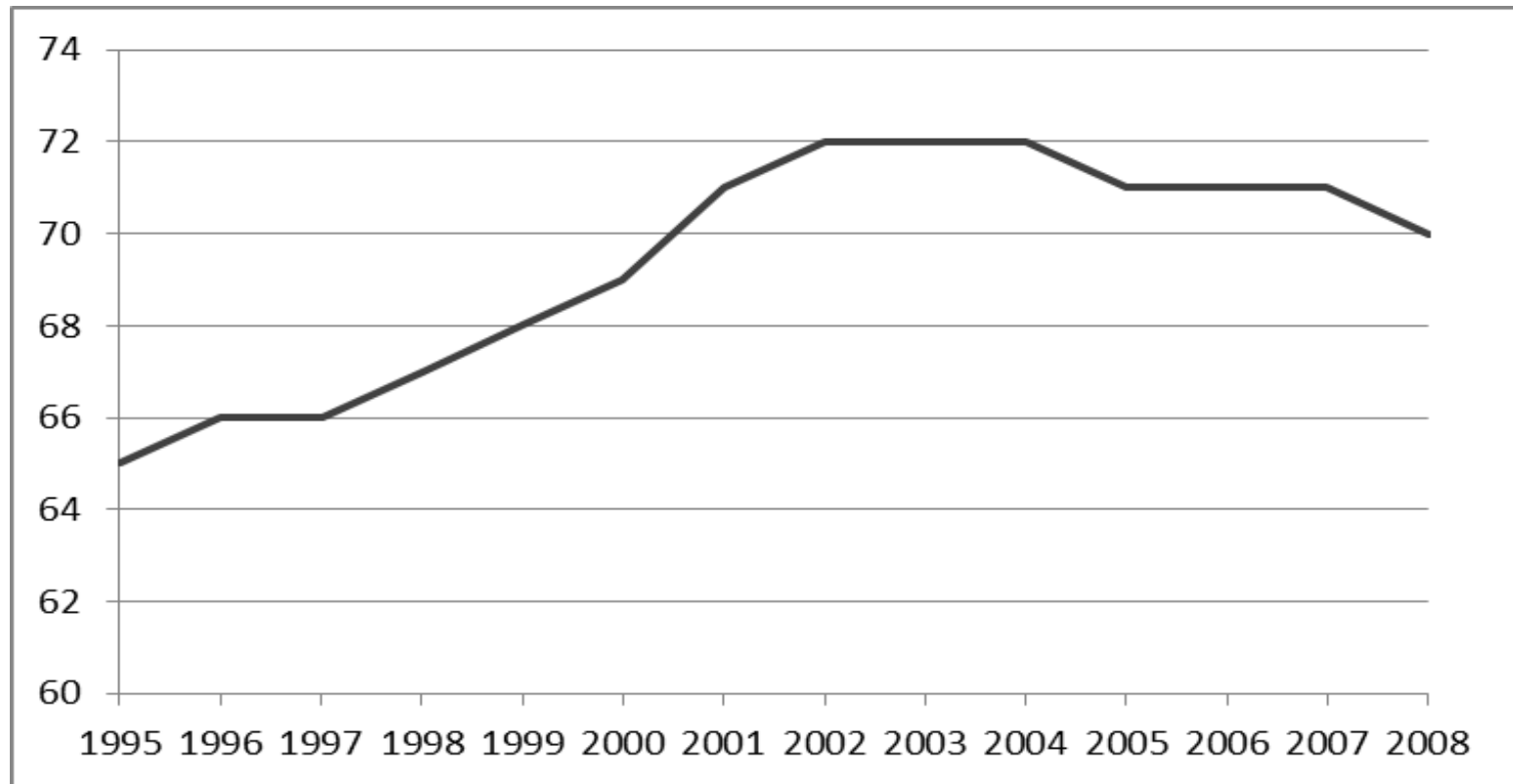
The share of children in preschool 1995-2014



Source: The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015

Age in weeks by which 50 per cent of the children have started preschool

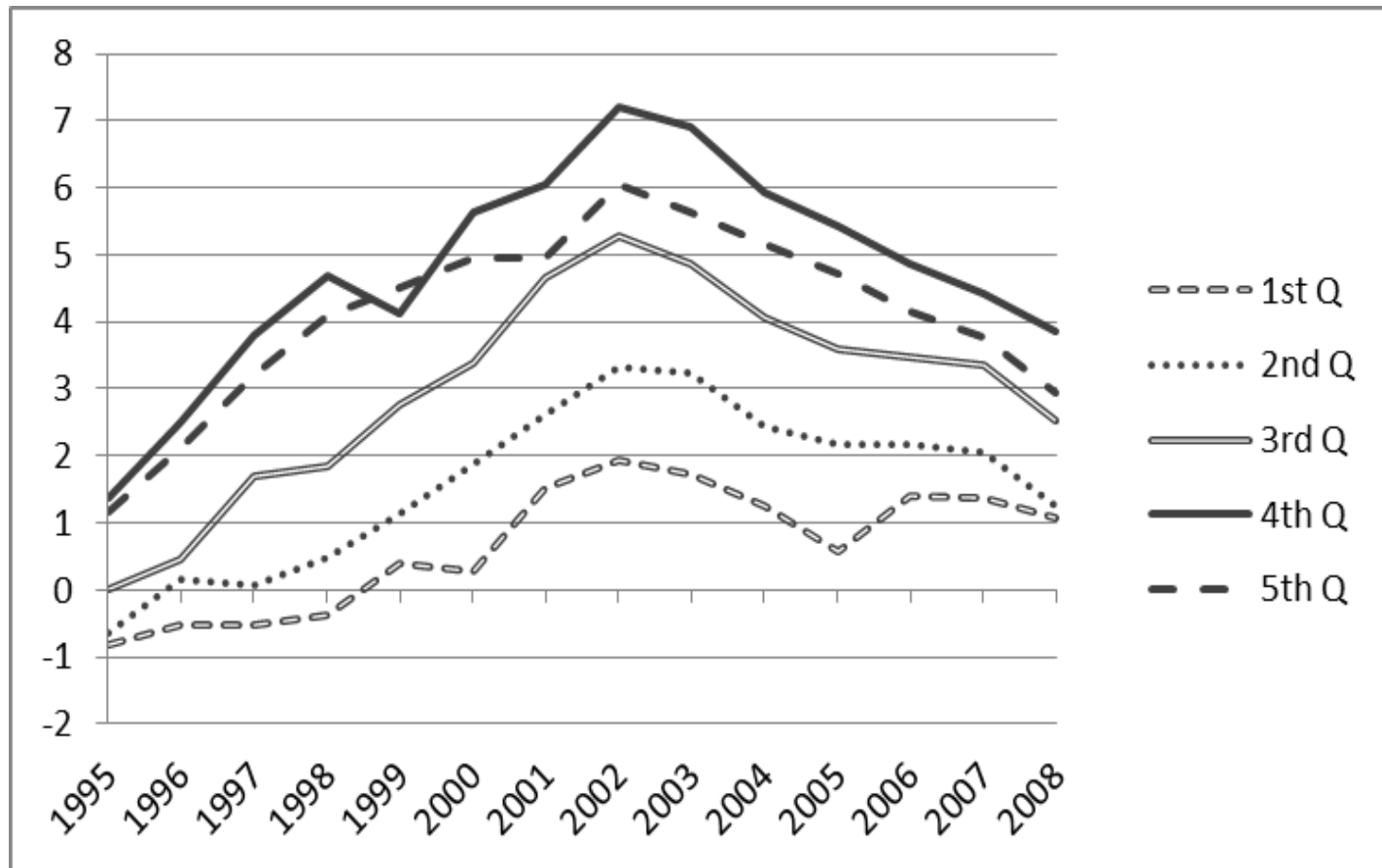
Children born 1995-2008



Source: Own calculations in Viklund and Duvander 2016

Differences in age of entry into preschool (in weeks) between income groups

Children born 1995-2008



Consequences

- Children
 - Uniformity of childhood
 - Positive outcomes of early education (?)
- Parents
 - Facilitates labor market participation
 - No care gap
 - Gender equal aims in part reached
- Fertility
 - Relatively high and stable by cohort
 - Gender equality enhancing fertility (?)

Concerns and challenges

- Good or bad with long time home before preschool?
- Quality of preschool a constant concern and discussion
 - Large groups of children
 - Education of personnel
 - Division between public and private alternatives
- Marginalised groups' access to family policy
 - Start earlier or not at all?
 - Flat rate parental leave
 - Fewer hours in preschool