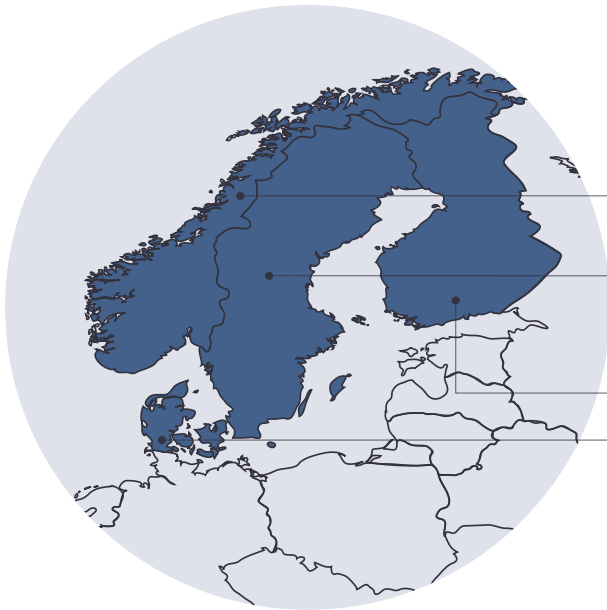
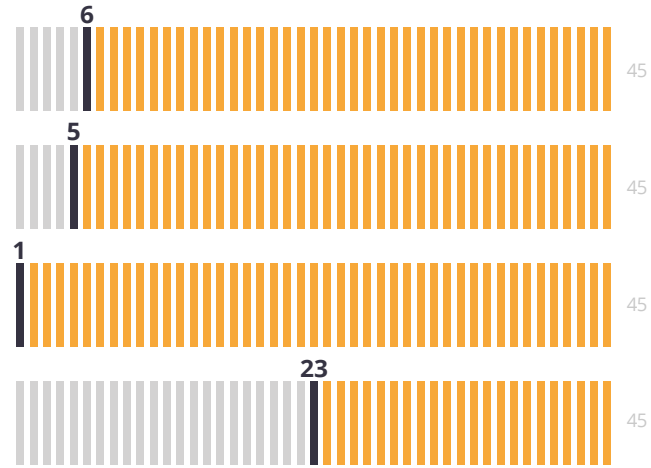




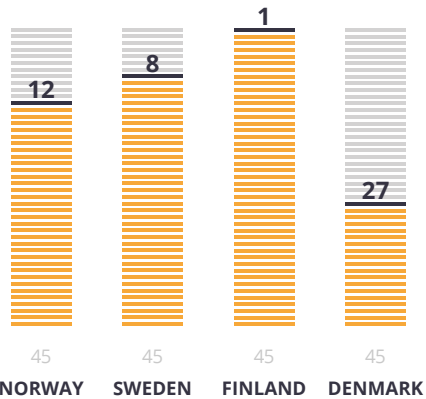
Family Life Close to the Arctic Circle



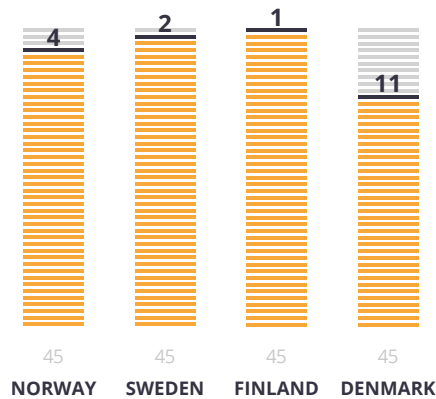
Family Life Index



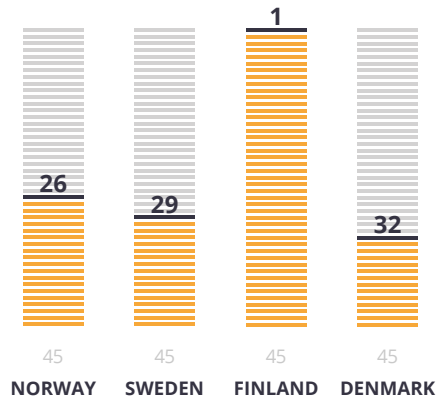
Availability of Childcare & Education



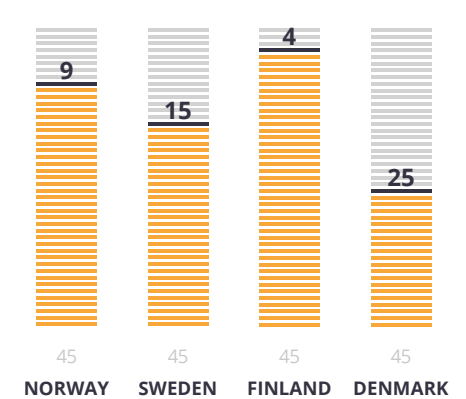
Costs of Childcare & Education



Quality of Education



Family Well-Being



Family Life Close to the Arctic Circle

Europe's Nordic countries are often praised for being particularly family friendly. There are, however, some noticeable variations in opinion between expat parents in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

Over the three years of the *Expat Insider* survey, the Nordic countries have repeatedly performed well in the Family Life Index, often appearing in the top ten. The fact that so many of these countries have ranked in the top ten — top five even — in recent years, as well as their general reputation as family-friendly places, warrants a closer look.

Finland Tops the List

Coming in first in the 2016 Family Life Index is Finland. This is an improvement from its 2015 debut in the Family Life Index, in which the nation came second. The country is given praise by the expats living there in almost all categories of the Family Life Index: availability and costs of childcare and education, quality of education, as well as family well-

being in general. The only areas that threaten to pop the bubble are available leisure activities for kids, the attitude towards families with children, and general family life. However, even in these categories, the country does not do too badly: not one person rates the attitude towards families with children as very bad, while 87% say it is generally good. Further, while the 72% of expat parents who are overall satisfied with general family life is less than the global average of 79%, just 3% are less than satisfied with this factor while worldwide 8% have something negative to say.

A Slow Journey down the Ranks for Sweden

While Sweden comes a respectable fifth in 2016, the country

Top Findings

- » Finland receives praise in almost all categories
- » Downward trend for Denmark and Sweden continues
- » Norway moving up the ranks, despite low ratings for quality of education

has been slowly falling in the Family Life Index, from first in 2014 and third in 2015. The country is given positive feedback by expat parents regarding the availability and costs of childcare and education. In fact, 29% agree completely that childcare options are numerous and easy to get, compared to 13% globally. Moreover, 59% of expat parents in Sweden generally agree that education options are numerous and easy to get. The costs of education and childcare there are considered in an even more positive light: 87% overall agree that childcare is easy to afford and 78% say the same about education.

The quality of education and family well-being in the country are not considered quite so favorably. In fact, one-fifth of expat parents in Sweden rate the quality of education

Family Life

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negatively, a rating that can perhaps be seen in the wider context of the crisis that the education system is currently facing with PISA rankings having fallen¹. Still, not one parent goes so far as to call it very bad. The country does not do too badly in the Family Well-Being subcategory with a 15th place, but comes almost last for the factor general family life, ranking 42nd. However, 71% are still happy with the general family life (79% globally).

Denmark Is Quickly Losing Ground

Denmark has been falling down the rankings quite steadily since the first *Expat Insider* survey in 2014 when it came second. In 2015, the nation was 11th and in 2016, Denmark is 23rd out of 45 countries in the Family Life Index. It comes mid-field in the Availability of Childcare & Education subcategory (27th), with 33% feeling negative about the availability of education compared to 9% in Finland, for

instance. The costs of childcare and education are viewed a bit more positive, however: 63% overall agree that childcare in Denmark is easy to afford and 51% hold the same opinion about education. This is still not that great compared to the other Nordic countries but does bring the country to eleventh in this subcategory.

Similar to all the Nordic countries in the *Expat Insider 2016* survey, Denmark performs badly for the general family life factor, coming 33rd. However, while slightly more expat parents than the global average (10% vs. 8%) are overall not satisfied with the family life there, 73% are still generally satisfied.

Returning to the Top Ten: Norway

In 2015, Norway dropped from the 10th place it held in the Family Life Index in 2014 to 17th out of 41 countries. This year, it not only returns to the top ten, but improves on the

2014 ranking by coming 6th out of 45 countries. While the country is seen positively in relation to the costs and availability of childcare and education, it does not have such good ratings for the quality of education. The country comes 26th for this with 21% of expat parents saying the quality is overall bad compared to the global average of 18%.

Those who live in the country are, however, happy with their children's well-being and health and safety. In fact, 91% rate their children's health as overall good and they have nothing bad to say about their children's safety. Furthermore, just 6% have something negative to say about their children's well-being in the country. ■



¹ **The Guardian.** "It's a political failure": how Sweden's celebrated schools system fell into crisis. 10 June 2015.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/10/sweden-schools-crisis-political-failure-education>