



Key Data on

# Early Childhood Education

# and Care in Europe

*Eurydice and Eurostat  
Report*

*2014 Edition*



Education and  
Training





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Early Childhood  
Education  
and Care  
in Europe

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**Eurydice and Eurostat Report**

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# FOREWORD

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At a time of unprecedented challenges, the importance of giving all our children a solid start by providing quality early childhood education is central to the European strategy for smart and sustainable growth, the EU 2020 strategy.

In recent years, the importance of high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is reflected in a high volume of joint reflection on policies and programmes between the European Commission and the Member States. Since the 2011 Council Conclusions on early childhood education and care <sup>(1)</sup>, there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of early years provision not only for parents' labour market participation, but also to mitigate socio-economic inequalities and most importantly for children's personal development.

The Eurydice *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* report, published jointly with Eurostat, contributes to informing policy efforts on early childhood education and care by combining statistical data and qualitative information to describe the structure, organisation and funding of early childhood education and care systems. It analyses issues which are important for the development of quality services identified through European policy co-operation, such as access, governance, quality assurance, affordability, professionalisation of staff, leadership, parental involvement and measures to support disadvantaged children. It aims to provide insights into what constitutes high quality early childhood education and care through internationally comparable indicators. This is the second report on the topic, following the 2009 report that focused on tackling social and cultural inequalities through ECEC. It covers 32 countries and 37 education systems.

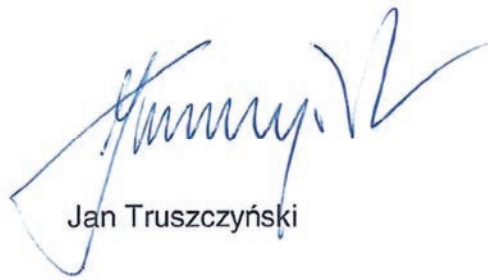
We are convinced that the more we study and reflect on practices developed across Europe, the more we learn from each other and the more we can advance in providing quality early childhood education for the benefit of our children, their families and our societies. We hope that this report will help many of us – policy-makers, teachers and pedagogical staff, parents and the wider public – to better

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<sup>(1)</sup> Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. 2011/C 175/03.

understand the different policies and actions that are being implemented in Europe, and consequently to make the right choices to build a better future for our children. This is a significant contribution to support further developments in the field of early childhood education and care and for ensuring evidence-based policy making.

We are therefore confident that the publication will be of great use to those responsible for designing and implementing early childhood education and care programmes across Europe.



Jan Truszczyński

Director General

DG Education and Culture



Walter Radermacher

Director General

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# CODES, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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## Country codes

EU/EU-28	European Union	NL	The Netherlands
BE	Belgium	AT	Austria
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	PL	Poland
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	PT	Portugal
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	RO	Romania
BG	Bulgaria	SI	Slovenia
CZ	Czech Republic	SK	Slovakia
DK	Denmark	FI	Finland
DE	Germany	SE	Sweden
EE	Estonia	UK	The United Kingdom
IE	Ireland	UK-ENG	England
EL	Greece	UK-WLS	Wales
ES	Spain	UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
FR	France	UK-SCT	Scotland
IT	Italy	Candidate countries	
HR	Croatia	IS	Iceland
CY	Cyprus	TR	Turkey
LV	Latvia	EFTA countries	European Free Trade Association
LT	Lithuania		
LU	Luxembourg	LI	Liechtenstein
HU	Hungary	NO	Norway
MT	Malta	CH	Switzerland

## Statistical codes

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:	Data not available	(–)	Not applicable
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## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>CPD</b>	Continuing professional development
<b>EU-28</b>	The EU-28 average includes only data for the 28 Member States of the European Union.
<b>Eurostat</b>	Statistical Office of the European Union
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IEA</b>	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ITE</b>	Initial teacher education
<b>LLP</b>	Lifelong Learning Programme
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (IEA)
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing Power Parity
<b>PPS</b>	Purchasing Power Standard
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs

# MAIN FINDINGS

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Early childhood is the stage at which education can most effectively influence children's development. The European Union therefore wants all young children to be able to access and benefit from high quality education and care. Reliable information on ECEC systems in Europe is essential in order to understand what challenges are facing European countries, what we can learn from each other, and what new solutions might be developed to meet the needs of the youngest members of society.

This Eurydice *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care* report aims to provide insights into what constitutes high quality early childhood education and care through policy-driven and internationally comparable indicators. It is published jointly with Eurostat and combines statistical data and system level information to describe the structure, organisation and funding of early childhood education and care in Europe. This is the second report on the topic, following a 2009 report that focused on tackling social and cultural inequalities through ECEC.

Information has been collected from three different sources: the primary source being the Eurydice National Units, which have provided information on ECEC policy and practice. Eurostat has undertaken the preparation and production of statistical indicators. International student achievement surveys (Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)) are used to explore the connections between ECEC participation, student outcomes and student background. The reference year for all policy information is 2012/13.

The main findings of the report highlight a number of issues of particular interest to policy-makers and refer readers to the specific indicators where detailed information can be found. These issues include access to ECEC; participation; governance; funding and affordability; professionalisation of staff; leadership; parental involvement; and, to conclude, the provision of targeted support for disadvantaged children.

## **32 million children are in the age range to use ECEC services in Europe**

- Population projections suggest that by 2030 the number of children under 6 will fall by 7.6 %. In absolute terms, this means 2.5 million fewer children in the European Union in 2030 than in 2012. The most drastic decline in the child population is expected in some Eastern European countries and Spain (see Figure A3).
- These demographic projections suggest that the demand for ECEC services will decrease in the future. However, this trend alone is not enough to compensate for the current shortage of ECEC places, which exists in almost all European countries particularly with respect to the younger age group (see Figure B12).

## **Only eight European countries guarantee every child an early place in ECEC – often directly following childcare leave**

- Most European countries have committed themselves to providing an ECEC place for all children, either by establishing a legal entitlement to ECEC or by making attendance compulsory for at least the last pre-primary year. Seven countries, namely Croatia (until September 2014), Italy, Lithuania, Romania (until September 2014), Slovakia, Iceland and Turkey have not yet introduced either of these measures.
- Eight European countries, namely Denmark, Germany (from August 2013), Estonia, Malta (from April 2014), Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway, guarantee a legal right to ECEC for each

child soon after their birth, often immediately after the end of childcare leave (see Figure B3). In most of these countries, the entitlement is not phrased in terms of hours of provision, but usually implies a full-time place. Typically, parents are expected to contribute to the cost of provision until the beginning of compulsory education. However, the fees are relatively low (see Figure D6) and means-tested reductions are offered (see Figure D7).

- In all other countries, the gap between the end of adequately compensated (65 % of prior earnings) childcare leave and the legal entitlement to ECEC is more than two years. In around one third of European education systems (three Communities of Belgium, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal and all parts of the United Kingdom), the legal entitlement to publicly subsidised ECEC starts when children reach 3 years old, or a few months earlier. Typically, children are entitled to ECEC free of charge. Usually, the length of free ECEC provision corresponds to a typical school day, except in Ireland and all parts of the United Kingdom, where the free entitlement covers only 10-15 hours a week (see Figure D7).
- In nine countries, the last year or two of pre-primary education is compulsory (Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland and Switzerland). Similarly, children are legally entitled to the last year or two of ECEC in the Czech Republic and Liechtenstein. The minimum weekly duration of compulsory pre-primary education varies between 16 hours per week in some *Länder* in Austria and 27.5 hours per week in Cyprus.

### **In most European countries, ECEC is split into two separate phases according to age**

- The most common form of ECEC structure – the split system – structures ECEC services according to the age of the children (see Figure B1). Provision is delivered in separate settings for younger and older children – the age break is usually around 3 years old. The responsibility for ECEC governance, regulation and funding are divided between different authorities. Educational guidelines normally apply only to provision for older children (see Figure F1). The requirements for staff qualifications also usually differ depending on the type of provision (see Figure E2). Moreover, conditions of access may vary greatly, with a legal entitlement usually applying to older and not to younger children (see Figure B4). Split systems showing all the attributes mentioned above are in operation in Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), the Czech Republic, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovakia.
- Only five countries with a split ECEC system have implemented measures to facilitate the transition between settings for younger and those for older children. This is the case in Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Hungary, Romania and the United Kingdom (Scotland) (see Figure F5).
- In contrast, in unitary systems, ECEC provision for all children of pre-school age is organised in a single phase and delivered in settings catering for the whole age range. There is no break or transfer between institutions until children start primary school. The ministry of education is responsible for ECEC governance, regulation and funding. All care and education for young children is considered to be part of 'early education' services, and educational guidelines cover the entire ECEC phase (see Figure F1). Unitary settings have a single management team running provision for children of all ages and the same level of staff qualification (usually tertiary level – see Figure E2) is required for working with the entire age range. Furthermore, a legal entitlement to ECEC or free ECEC is often granted from a very early age in unitary systems. This type of system prevails in most Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, Croatia and Slovenia (see Figure B1).

- Where regulations exist, the maximum number of children allowed per staff member often doubles when children reach 3 years of age (see Figure B6). The difference is usually greater in countries with a split system, and the change in maximum numbers often takes place when children move from one setting to the next. The number of children per staff member jumps from four to seven in Finland and from three/four to eight in Ireland and the United Kingdom (Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). At the other extreme, it jumps from 6/7 to 20 in Belgium and from 6 to 25 in Cyprus.

### **Participation in ECEC is low for the under-3s, but high during the year or two before starting primary education**

- In almost all countries, the demand for ECEC places is higher than supply, especially for younger children (see Figure B12). However, a few countries do not monitor supply and demand at central level (see Figure B11).
- ECEC attendance among children under 3 is very low. In 2002, the ‘Barcelona target for childcare facilities’ was agreed, with the aim that by 2010 childcare should be provided for 33 % of children under 3 years old. However, in 2011, only ten European Union countries had reached the Barcelona target. Denmark stands out with 74 % of under-3s in ECEC. In contrast, ECEC attendance among under-3s was especially low (approximately 10 % or less) in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Some of these countries provide long childcare related leaves (see Figure B3).
- In contrast, 93 % of children attend ECEC before starting primary education (see Figure C1). However, a few countries still have a long way to go to achieve the European target that by 2020 at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory primary education should be participating in ECEC. In 2011, the participation of children in the specified age group in ISCED 0 programmes was between 70 and 79 % in Greece, Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Finland and Switzerland. The lowest participation rate was in Turkey (43 %).

### **International student achievement surveys (PISA and PIRLS) clearly show the benefits of ECEC attendance**

- On average in participating EU-28 countries, students who attended ECEC outperformed those who did not by 35 points – the equivalent of almost one full year of formal schooling (see Figure C6).
- Evidence from PIRLS 2011 indicates that children who have spent longer periods in ECEC are better prepared to enter and succeed in primary education. For most of the European countries participating in PIRLS 2011, the data shows that the longer a child spends in ECEC, the better their reading results (see Figure C7).

### **Fees for ECEC vary considerably between European countries but around half provide education free of charge from age 3**

- Affordability is a very important factor in ensuring that all children have access to ECEC, especially those in most need, i.e. children from low-income families. However, parents have to pay for ECEC for younger children in all European countries, except Latvia, Lithuania and Romania (see Figure D5). Average monthly fees for ECEC for younger children are highest in Ireland, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and Switzerland (see Figure D6). In most of these countries,

the private (self-financing) sector predominates for this age group (Figure D1). The entire phase of ECEC requires parent contributions in Denmark, most *Länder* in Germany, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Iceland, Turkey and Norway (see Figure D5). However, these countries usually offer fee reductions or exemptions (see Figure D7), or targeted support for families (through tax relief, allowances or vouchers – see Figure D8) to reduce or offset the costs of ECEC.

- ECEC fees for younger children are the lowest in Eastern European and Nordic countries (see Figure D6). As most Eastern European countries do not offer a legal entitlement (see Figure B4) for the youngest children, the demand for ECEC places often outweighs supply (see Figure B12). In contrast, ECEC is both affordable and available in Nordic countries.
- Fees are not charged for older children in most European countries for the last year or two of pre-primary education. However, in approximately half of European education systems, the entire period of ISCED 0 is provided free of charge (see Figure D5). Typically, in countries where ECEC is provided free of charge, there is also a legal entitlement to a place, or a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area (see Figure B4). Where there is no legal entitlement or attendance is not compulsory, there is often a shortage of free ECEC places (see Figure B12).
- On average, Eurostat data show that households contribute 14.4 % of educational expenditure at ISCED 0 (see Figure D9). This largely comprises household spending on tuition fees and all other payments to education institutions for ancillary services such as meals, school health services and transportation to and from school. This number also takes into account fee reductions, exemptions (see Figure D7) and indirect family support (through tax relief, allowances or vouchers – see Figure D8).

### **Local authorities often finance ECEC for younger children while they share costs with the central level for older children**

- The private sector often plays a bigger role in ECEC for younger children, while more public funding is usually provided to support ECEC for older children. Centre-based ECEC is entirely public or publicly subsidised in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway (see Figure D1).
- The most common pattern for financing ECEC is a combination of central and local funding (see Figure D2). Often this financial split is made between infrastructure and operational costs, although which level is responsible for which element varies between countries. Local authorities finance ECEC for younger children in one third of European education systems. In many countries, supplementary funding for children with additional educational needs comes from central authorities.

### **Educational staff working with older children are usually required to have a Bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification**

- In most countries, three different types of staff (see Figure E1) work as a team in centre-based ECEC settings: educational staff, usually qualified at tertiary level (Bachelor's level); care staff with a minimum qualification at upper-secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary; and auxiliary staff/assistants who usually are either not qualified or have a minimum qualification at upper secondary level (see Figure E2).



- Educational staff are employed in all settings for older children and in two-thirds of ECEC settings for younger children. In France, Italy, Portugal and Iceland, the minimum qualification to work in ECEC with older children is at Master's level (see Figure E2).
- In ten countries, staff working with younger children are not required to have more than an upper secondary qualification (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). In two countries, there is no minimum level of formal qualification for working with younger children (Ireland and Slovakia) (see Figure E2).
- Continuous professional development is an obligation for education and care staff in settings for younger children in only half of European countries. However, for older children, it is an obligation in most countries. It is optional only in Denmark, Ireland, Cyprus, Sweden and Norway (see Figure E4).

### **Heads of ECEC settings need relevant experience in most countries, but they receive specific management training in fewer countries**

- Good leadership in settings is important if ECEC is to be of high quality. Heads of ECEC settings are faced with a wide range of tasks. They are not only required to organise educational provision, but they must also manage financial and human resources. The minimum qualification for heads in ECEC settings is usually at Bachelor level. However, the minimum qualification required is below tertiary level for the entire ECEC phase in the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. In Slovakia, this is only the case in settings for older children, while in Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, in settings for younger children. Moreover, there is no minimum qualification for heads specified in Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) (see Figure E7).
- Professional experience in ECEC is the basic condition for becoming a head in ECEC settings in most countries (see Figure E8). The required minimum period is usually between two and five years but can be up to ten years, for example in Cyprus and Malta (in settings for over 3 year olds).
- In a few countries, prospective heads are required to have had professional and administrative experience simultaneously, and to qualify through a special training programme for heads. This is the case in Estonia and the United Kingdom (Scotland) for all ECEC settings; but only for heads of ECEC settings for older children in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic (in public settings), Malta, Poland and Romania (see Figure E8).

### **All countries set learning objectives related to children's progress and development**

- The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process largely determines the quality of ECEC. Therefore, all European countries issue official educational guidelines to help settings improve their provision. However, such guidelines in around half of countries are restricted to settings for over 3 year old children. For younger children, the emphasis tends to be on the care element of provision (see Figure F1).
- All European countries list learning objectives referring to personal, emotional and social development as well as language and communication skills for older children. Some countries

also apply these latter objectives to younger children. Physical development and health education are also covered almost everywhere for both groups. In addition, most countries stress the development of artistic skills and understanding of the world for both younger and older children. Literacy and numerical and logical reasoning, as well as adaptation to school life are more often directed at older children (see Figure F2).

- Most countries recommend the type of approaches to education that institutions should adopt. Usually, these approaches refer to finding the right balance between adult-led and children-initiated activities as well as between group and individual activities. The principle of free play is underlined in around half of countries. Recommendations are usually quite broad, and often institutions are free to develop their own curricula and choose their own methods (see Figure F3).

### **Most countries regularly assess children's progress and pay special attention to the transition between ECEC and primary education**

- Assessment of children's progress and achievement is an important task for staff in ECEC settings. The goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and to identify children's needs and potential difficulties. In all countries, children's progress is regularly assessed through continuous observation. In the case of older children, observations often form the basis of a written record of assessment (see Figure F4).
- In several European countries, readiness for school, maturity and language skills are criteria for entering primary education. Children who do not fulfil these criteria may not be admitted to primary school even if they have reached the official entry age (see Figure F6).
- The move from ECEC to primary education is one of the transition phases that children face in their early years. Almost all European countries have issued central guidelines and/or implemented measures to help children and their families to adapt to their new environment. The types of measures vary widely and involve different parties (see Figure F5).

### **Many countries recommend that settings provide support for parents and involve them in ECEC governance**

- An effective partnership between ECEC providers, families and the wider community creates better conditions for children's learning. Most European countries, therefore, emphasise the importance of partnership with parents. Central authorities in many countries recommend the types of support that settings should provide to parents. Information sessions and guidance on home learning are the most common forms of support. Parenting programmes and home visits are less frequently recommended, but where they are, it is usually for the benefit of the disadvantaged and the most vulnerable groups (see Figure F8).
- One of the ways of involving parents and community representatives in the life of an ECEC setting is by encouraging them to participate in its governance (see Figure F9). Generally, parents are more often involved in these processes than are community representatives, and it is more common for them to be involved in the governance of settings for older children. Parent and community representatives are more usually involved with matters relating to the everyday routines of ECEC settings. They deal to a lesser extent with educational content, teaching methods and objectives, and choice of educational materials (see Figure F10).

## Regulated home-based provision exists in most European countries, but the training required for childminders is often quite short

- Regulated home-based provision exists in most European education systems (see Figure B2). However, home-based provision represents a significant proportion of ECEC provision only in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, the United Kingdom and Iceland, and caters largely for younger children. In Germany and France, legislation treats home-based and centre-based provision equally with respect to children under 3 years of age.
- In the countries where home-based provision is a significant part of the ECEC sector and where educational guidelines exist, they usually apply to both home-based and centre-based provision (see Figure F2). However, in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Sweden and Iceland, only general objectives are stipulated for home-based provision. Moreover, there are no educational guidelines for home-based ECEC in Belgium (Flemish Community) and France.
- Where regulations exist, the maximum number of children per childminder in home-based provision varies between four and six (see Figure B7). The maximum number is higher (eight children) only in the Flemish Community of Belgium. The limits are usually similar to, but sometimes lower than those that apply to children under the age of 3 in centre-based provision.
- The most common approach to qualifications for home-based workers in ECEC is to require them to undertake a special training course. The length of these courses is often quite short, but does vary greatly – between 18 and 300 hours (see Figure E3).
- Only six education systems (Denmark, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Norway) require the same level of qualification for staff in home-based settings as in centre-based settings. Four education systems require neither a minimum qualification nor specific training for childminders, namely Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), Ireland, Slovakia and Liechtenstein (see Figure E3).

## Disadvantaged children have lower ECEC participation rates, even though most countries offer means-tested financial support to parents

- One in four children under the age of 6 in Europe is at risk of poverty or social exclusion and may need specific measures to support their educational needs. Almost one in two children in Bulgaria (51.4 %) and Romania (47.4 %) is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Other countries with considerably higher rates than the EU average are Greece, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Hungary and the United Kingdom, all exceeding 30 % (see Figure A4).
- ECEC participation has a stronger positive effect on the reading scores of disadvantaged children than on the results of their better off peers. PIRLS 2011 data show that the beneficial impact of ECEC on reading achievement is stronger for children from families with a low level of education, than for those children who have at least one parent with tertiary level education (see Figure C8). However, PISA 2012 results indicate that disadvantaged students (those from low socio-economic status, poorly educated and immigrant families) were less likely to have attended ECEC for longer than one year (see Figure C9).
- Increasing the participation in ECEC of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is one the main priorities of European ECEC policy. Family income is taken into consideration in determining fee reductions in 25 European countries (see Figure D7). Moreover, in Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia, free meals are offered to children from very poor families attending ECEC. Some education

systems (Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Portugal and Liechtenstein) offer supplementary family allowances, conditional on ECEC attendance.

## **Support measures for disadvantaged children exist in most European countries; in most cases they focus on language development**

- In order to reach those children who might have learning difficulties as a result of their background, most education systems use cultural and/or linguistic criteria (socio-economic and geographic criteria are also considered important in many European countries) to target the groups most at risk. One third of countries combine this target group approach with the assessment of children's individual needs. The individual approach alone is rarely used (see Figure G1).
- Language support is the most common form of centralised support for disadvantaged children and is usually targeted at migrant children or those from ethnic minorities (see Figure G2). Most countries which have many children who are either foreign citizens or foreign-born (see Figure A6), have issued central recommendations on language support programmes. However, the involvement of staff from a minority or immigrant background in supporting children with language difficulties is quite rare (see Figure G2).
- In most European countries, specific training to prepare ECEC staff for working with children with additional needs is integrated into initial education. While in some countries specific training is compulsory for all ECEC staff (Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Spain, France, Austria, Slovenia and Turkey), in others, it is only compulsory for staff preparing to work with older children (Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland) (see Figure G3). Continuous professional development programmes specifically designed for staff dealing with disadvantaged children are recommended in 16 education systems, more often for those working with older children (see Figure G2).
- In most countries, ECEC teams receive support from educational psychologists and speech/language therapists; however, support from professionals specialised in teaching reading or mathematics is rare. In some countries, multidisciplinary teams provide support to individuals or small groups, either on their own premises or in ECEC settings. This is the case in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (Scotland) (see Figure E6).

# INTRODUCTION

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The importance of and need for high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has been strongly emphasised in various European Union policy documents. The recently adopted Council Conclusions on early childhood education and care <sup>(2)</sup> highlight a wide range of short- and long-term benefits of ECEC for both individuals and society. Early childhood is the stage at which education can most effectively influence children's development. It is increasingly acknowledged, therefore, that investment in high quality ECEC lowers the cost for society in terms of lost talent and helps reduce public spending in the long term on welfare, health and even justice. Moreover, by laying strong foundations for successful lifelong learning, high quality ECEC brings particular benefits to disadvantaged children. It therefore serves as the keystone for building more equitable education systems. Needless to say, collecting and exploiting reliable information on ECEC systems is crucial if provision is to meet the demands placed on it.

The Eurydice *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* report aims to provide insights into what constitutes high quality early childhood education and care through policy-driven and internationally comparable indicators. This is the second report on the topic, following a 2009 report that focused on tackling social and cultural inequalities through ECEC.

The *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* report, published jointly with Eurostat, combines statistical data and system level information to describe the structure, organisation and funding of early childhood education and care in Europe. It covers a number of specific issues important to policy-makers such as access to ECEC, governance, quality assurance, affordability, professionalisation of staff, leadership, parent involvement, and measures to support disadvantaged children.

## Coverage

**Early childhood education and care (ECEC)** in this report covers provision for children from birth through to primary education that falls within a national regulatory framework, i.e., it has to comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures. It includes:

- Public, private and voluntary sectors – both publicly subsidised and self-financing private/voluntary sectors are within the scope.
- Centre-based as well as home-based provision – but only publicly regulated ECEC provision delivered in a provider's home is covered; in-home care (i.e. care which occurs in the child's own home) is excluded.

Only 'mainstream' provision, or the most common types of ECEC provision available to all children, are included. The report does not cover:

- settings which operate out of normal hours e.g. breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday programmes;
- 'specialist' provision, e.g. programmes integrated into hospitals, orphanages or other such institutions;
- pilot, experimental or temporary ECEC provision;
- 'open' early childhood education services organised for children and their families, e.g. playgroups, open kindergartens, mother/child centres.

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<sup>(2)</sup> Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. 2011/C 175/03.

This *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* report covers the 32 European countries (37 education systems), involved in the Eurydice Network under the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013), except the Netherlands. Eurostat and international student achievement survey data are given only for the countries taking part in the Lifelong Learning Programme.

## Structure and content of the report

The report is organised into seven chapters: *Context, Participation, Organisation, Funding, Staff, Teaching Processes, and Support Measures for Disadvantaged children.*

National system information sheets at the end of the report provide a concise overview of the key features of each country's ECEC system. These national sheets include a visual representation of the principal elements of the ECEC structure in the form of a diagram, a description of the main types of ECEC provision, participation rates, fees for full-time provision as well as a summary of current reforms.

## Sources

Information has been collected from three different sources: the primary source being the Eurydice National Units, which have provided information on ECEC policy and practice. Eurostat has undertaken the preparation and production of statistical indicators. International student achievement surveys (Programme for International Student Assessment – PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS) are used to explore the connections between ECEC participation, student outcomes and student background.

## Eurydice information collection

The Eurydice indicators supply information derived primarily from legislation, national regulations or other official education documents. Where the matter examined is the responsibility of local authorities or individual institutions and therefore is not governed by central-level regulation, this is clearly stated in the Figures.

Eurydice information is generally of a qualitative nature and presents a general picture of ECEC systems in Europe. The analysis highlights the main structures in place and common patterns of organisation and provision, as well as draws attention to significant differences between systems.

The reference year for all policy information is 2012/13 school year. Some major reforms that were underway during the reference year 2012/13 (or those which have taken place since that period) have been covered.

## Statistical data collection by Eurostat

Eurostat data was obtained either from the Eurostat database (available at: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/database>) in March 2014, or provided in February 2014 by Eurostat.

The reference year for Eurostat data differs by data collection and topic, and varies from 2010 for funding indicators to 2013 for population statistics.

#### UOE DATABASE

The joint UOE (UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT) questionnaires are used by the three organisations to collect internationally comparable data on key aspects of education systems on an annual basis using administrative sources.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS STATISTICS DATABASE

National demographic data is collected from responses to an annual questionnaire sent to the national statistical institutes. The annual national population estimates are based either on the most recent census or on data obtained from the population register.

#### LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (LFS)

This survey has been carried out annually since 1983. It is the principal source of statistics on employment and unemployment in the European Union. The survey is directed at individuals and households. The questions mainly cover employment and job seeking.

#### NATIONAL ACCOUNTS DATABASE

The European System of National and Regional Accounts is an internationally comparable accounting framework for the systematic and detailed description of a 'total economy' (i.e. a region, a country or a group of countries), its components and its relationships with other 'total economies'.

#### EUROPEAN UNION STATISTICS ON INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS (EU-SILC)

The EU-SILC collects timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. The childcare target population is all household members not over 12 years old.

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### **International student achievement surveys**

International student achievement data make it possible to examine whether students who attend ECEC achieve higher results than their peers who do not, and whether children from some families are more likely to attend ECEC than others.

The two surveys analysed differ slightly in their focus and target group. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. In most countries, students of this age are approaching the end of compulsory education. While monitoring student performance in these three main subject areas, each PISA survey also has a particular focus on a single area. This report presents the results from the latest PISA survey from 2012, which focuses on mathematics.

The IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) measures the reading achievement of pupils largely in the fourth year of schooling – described in the survey as 'fourth graders'. In most countries, the pupils are approximately 10 years old and attend primary education. The report presents results from the last PIRLS survey, which was administered in 2011.

PISA addressed the question on ECEC participation directly to students, while PIRLS asked parents or guardians, in the context of a larger set of questions about preparations for primary schooling. PISA provides information only on whether a student attended ECEC for (i) a year or less than a year, (ii) longer than a year, or finally (iii) not at all. PIRLS, however, allows greater precision in specifying the exact number of years' participation in ECEC.

## Partnerships and methodology

An in-depth ECEC policy questionnaire was prepared by the Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit within the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) jointly with National Units in the Network. The Eurydice National Units provided responses to the questionnaire (national contributions). Eurostat carried out the preparation and production of statistical indicators.

All analytical content based on qualitative and quantitative data in the report was drafted by the Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit within the EACEA. The Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit within EACEA is responsible for the final publication and layout of the report. It is also responsible for all work entailed in preparing maps, diagrams and other graphic material.

The Eurydice Network and Eurostat undertook the checking of the content of the entire report.

## Conventions and presentation of content

Values associated with each quantitative indicator are presented in a table below the diagram concerned. Most figures are accompanied by an explanatory note with country specific notes directly underneath. The explanatory note contains all details concerning terminology and conceptual aspects, needed for a proper understanding of the indicator and the Figure. The country specific notes provide information that should be taken into account for the correct interpretation of the figure for particular countries.

The distinction between provision for 'younger children' and provision for 'older children' is often made in the main text and in many Figures of the report when referring to ECEC settings. National System Information Sheets identify which centre-based settings are considered to cater for 'younger' children and which for 'older' children in each country. Several Figures make further distinctions between 'some types of settings' and 'all types of settings'. If certain regulations do not apply to all settings, it is specified in the country notes.

Country name codes, statistical codes and the abbreviations and acronyms used are set out at the beginning of the report. The glossary of terms and statistical tools employed are included at the end of the report.

A list of all figures in the report is also included at the beginning of the publication.

All those who have contributed to this collective undertaking are listed at the end of the report.

## Electronic version

An electronic version of *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* is also freely available on the Eurydice (<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/>) and Eurostat ([http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/publications/collections/statistical\\_books](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/publications/collections/statistical_books)) websites.





## CONTEXT

Using Eurostat data, this chapter provides the key demographic information needed to gain a full understanding of the issues addressed in this European report on early childhood education and care (ECEC).

In order to provide a clear picture of the number of children covered by ECEC policies, this chapter starts with data on the proportion of children aged under 6 living in Europe. The indicators following discuss the major demographic trends in terms of fertility. They also include current estimates of the number of children under the age of 6 to be in the population in the years 2020 and 2030. These demographic projections suggest that the demand for ECEC services will decrease in the future. However, this trend alone is not enough to compensate for the current shortage of ECEC places, which exists in almost all European countries particularly with respect to the younger age group (Figure B12).

This chapter also looks at the risk factors that may have a detrimental impact on children's education. It presents a general indicator on the rates of young children at risk of poverty or social exclusion and specifies the numbers of children living in jobless households. In order to assess how many children might come from a migrant background and therefore need special language support programmes, the proportion of young children with either foreign citizenship or born abroad are presented. An indicator on the proportion of children living in two-parent, single-parent and 'other' types of households provides an overview of children's family environment in various European countries. In particular, this subsection sets the context for Chapter D, which discusses fee reductions and special financial support measures; and Chapter G, which examines the specific targeted support measures for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### **AROUND SIX PER CENT OF THE EUROPEAN POPULATION IS UNDER 6 YEARS OF AGE**

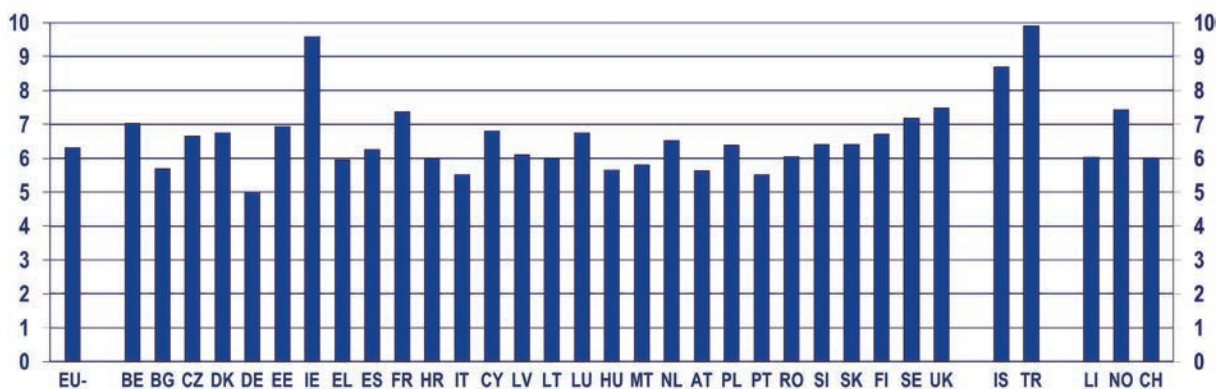
Currently, in the EU-28, children under the age of 6 constitute, on average, 6.3 % per cent of the total population. In absolute numbers, in 2013, across Europe, there were 32 million (32 003 394) young children in this age group. These are the children who, in most countries, make up the majority of ECEC users and who benefit from the services provided.

In 2013, in general, the variation between European countries in the proportion of children under the age of 6 was not significant. In more than one third of countries, the proportion was close to the EU average; only a few countries differed significantly from this. At 9.9 %, Turkey was the country with the largest percentage of children under the age of 6 relative to its total population. Ireland and Iceland also had a high proportion of young children, namely 9.6 % and 8.7 % respectively. In contrast, in Germany, the percentage was the smallest, reaching only 5.0 %. In countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Austria and Portugal, this age group represented less than 6.0 % of the total population.

In absolute numbers, Turkey has the highest population of children under 6, approximately 7.5 million. In the European Union countries, in 2013, France and the United Kingdom had the highest number of children under the age of 6, with around 4.8 million children. Germany, despite having the largest total population in the European Union, had approximately only 4.1 million children in the 0-5 age group.

Among the smaller countries, on 1 January 2013, in Liechtenstein there were approximately 2 200 children under 6 years old. Luxembourg, Malta and Iceland, had between 24 000 and 36 000, while in Estonia and Cyprus the numbers were less than 100 000; and in Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia less than 200 000.

**Figure A1: Proportion of the population in the 0-5 age group, 2013**



EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
6.3	7.0	5.7	6.7	6.8	5.0	6.9	9.6	5.9	6.3	7.4	6.0	5.5	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.7
HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
5.7	5.8	6.5	5.6	6.4	5.5	6.1	6.4	6.4	6.7	7.2	7.5	8.7	9.9	6.0	7.4	6.0

Source: Eurostat, Population statistics (data extracted March 2014).

**Explanatory note**

The proportion was computed dividing the numbers of children aged 0-5 years by the total population. The population numbers are for 1 January 2013.

**Country specific note**

EU-28 and France: Provisional.

## FERTILITY RATES IN EUROPE REMAIN BELOW THE REPLACEMENT RATE

On average, total fertility rates in European countries have increased slightly over the past few years. From 2001, when the first aggregate statistics for the EU-28 became available, the average fertility rate was more or less steadily rising from an average of 1.5 children per woman to 1.6 in 2012. This, however, is still significantly below the replacement fertility rate (which is approximately 2.1 for industrialised countries) required to keep population growth at zero. In other words, the proportion of children in the total population is expected to decline (see Figure A3).

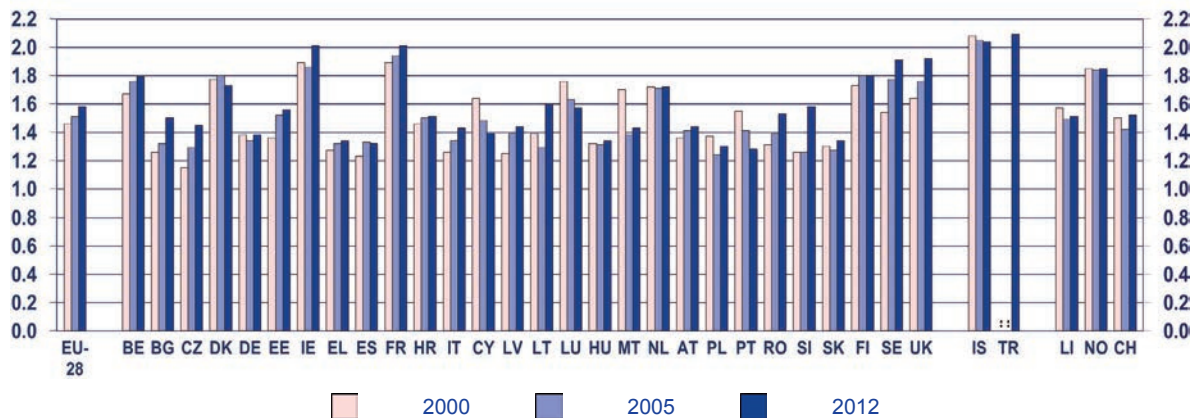
Despite a general average trend of moderate recovery in average fertility rates, developments in separate countries have been quite heterogeneous. Between 2000 and 2012, the highest increase in fertility rates – nearly 0.4 children per woman – was observed in Sweden. During the same period, the fertility rate increased by approximately 0.3 in the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the United Kingdom and more than (or equivalent to) 0.2 children per woman in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and Romania. Furthermore, the fertility rate increased between 0.1 and 0.2 children per woman in Belgium, Ireland, France, Italy and Latvia.

In contrast, over the last decade, the fertility rate declined in Poland and Lichtenstein (by 0.1 children per woman) and in Luxembourg (by 0.2 children per woman). The greatest decrease in fertility rate was in Cyprus, Malta and Portugal (0.3 children per woman).

In 2012, the fertility rate was the highest (reaching over 2.0 children per woman) in Ireland, France, Iceland and Turkey. The remaining four Scandinavian countries as well as Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom had a fertility rate between 1.7 and 2.0.

In more than half of Europe, the fertility rate was lower than the EU average in the same year. The fertility rate was the lowest in Portugal and Poland (1.3 for both).

**Figure A2: Total fertility rate, 2000, 2005, 2012**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
<b>2012</b>	1.58	1.79	1.50	1.45	1.73	1.38	1.56	2.01	1.34	1.32	2.01	1.51	1.43	1.39	1.44	1.60	1.57
<b>2005</b>	1.51	1.76	1.32	1.29	1.80	1.34	1.52	1.86	1.32	1.33	1.94	1.50	1.34	1.48	1.39	1.29	1.63
<b>2000</b>	1.46*	1.67	1.26	1.15	1.77	1.38	1.36	1.89	1.27	1.23	1.89	1.46*	1.26	1.64	1.25	1.39	1.76
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
<b>2012</b>	1.34	1.43	1.72	1.44	1.30	1.28	1.53	1.58	1.34	1.80	1.91	1.92	2.04	2.09	1.51	1.85	1.52
<b>2005</b>	1.31	1.38	1.71	1.41	1.24	1.41	1.39	1.26	1.27	1.80	1.77	1.76	2.05	:	1.49	1.84	1.42
<b>2000</b>	1.32	1.70	1.72	1.36	1.37	1.55	1.31	1.26	1.30	1.73	1.54	1.64	2.08	:	1.57	1.85	1.50

Source: Eurostat, Population statistics (data extracted March 2014).

**Country specific notes**

\* 2001 data

**EU-28:** Break in times series 2007, 2011 and 2012.

**Belgium:** Break in times series 2011.

**Bulgaria:** Break in times series 2007.

**Luxembourg and Hungary:** Break in time series 2012.

**Poland and Switzerland:** Break in time series 2011.

**BY 2030 THE NUMBER OF YOUNG CHILDREN IS EXPECTED TO FALL**

Effective management of human and material resources in education systems depends on demographic projections that provide a reliable estimate of the number of young people in the 0-5 age group who will make up the future pupil intake in pre-primary (ISCED 0) and in primary (ISCED 1) education. On the other hand, ECEC policies (see Chapters B and D) and general family policies (for example, length of childcare leave, see Figure B3) may affect fertility rates and the forecasted population figures.

Currently, there are over 32 million children aged between 0 and 5 living in Europe. For this age group, the projections made on the basic trend variation of the population anticipate a decrease of around 1.9 % in the EU-28 by 2020. This tendency is expected to accelerate until 2030 when the population aged between 0 and 5 years is forecasted to be 7.6 % lower than in 2012. In absolute terms, this means 2.5 million fewer children in the European Union in 2030 than in 2012.

An especially drastic decline in the child population is expected in some Eastern European countries and Spain. In Estonia, Latvia and Poland, the forecast is for approximately 24.0-26.0 % fewer children aged between 0 and 5 by 2030 than at present. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Spain, Romania,

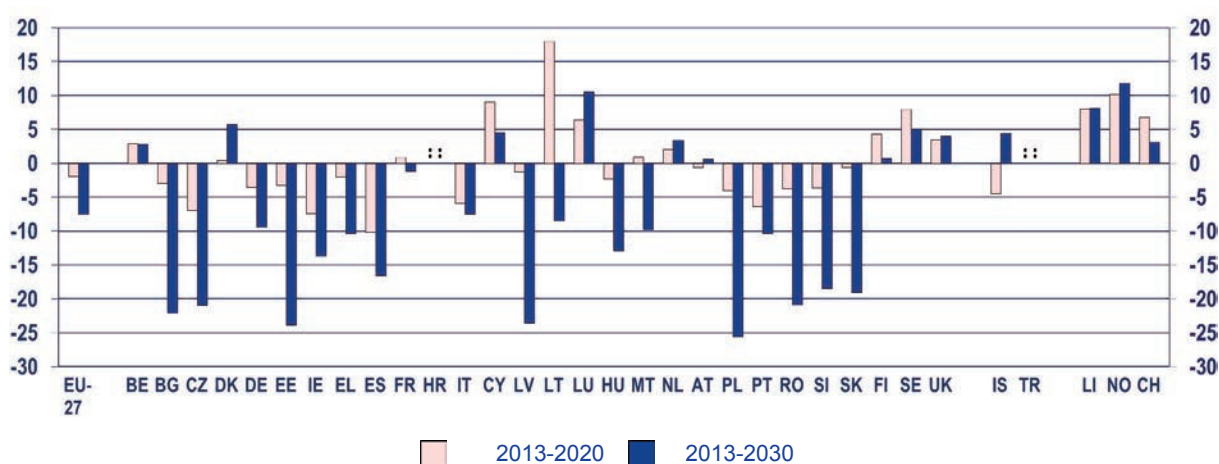
Slovenia and Slovakia, by 2030, the numbers of young children are expected to fall by between 17.0 and 22.0 %.

In contrast, the number of children under the age of 6 are expected to grow in four Nordic countries (except Finland), as well as in Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

The child population is likely to remain about the same in 2030 as in 2013 in France, Austria and Finland.

In most countries, the direction of population change is expected to be the same during the period 2013 to 2020, and 2013 to 2030. The main exception is Lithuania where, after an expected increase of 18.0 % from 2013 to 2020, there is expected to be a cumulative decline of 8.5 % by 2030.

**Figure A3: Projections for the change in the population of the 0-5 age group, 2013-2020 and 2013-2030**



	EU-27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2013-2020	-1.9	2.9	-2.9	-7.0	0.4	-3.6	-3.3	-7.4	-2.0	-10.2	0.8	:	-5.9	9.0	-1.3	18.0	6.4
2013-2030	-7.6	2.7	-22.1	-21.0	5.7	-9.5	-23.9	-13.7	-10.3	-16.6	-1.2	:	-7.5	4.5	-23.6	-8.5	10.5
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
2013-2020	-2.3	0.9	2.0	-0.6	-4.1	-6.4	-3.8	-3.6	-0.6	4.2	7.9	3.5	-4.5	:	8.0	10.2	6.8
2013-2030	-12.9	-9.8	3.4	0.6	-25.6	-10.4	-20.9	-18.4	-19.0	0.7	5.0	4.0	4.4	:	8.1	11.8	3.1

Source: Eurostat, Population statistics, Europop 2010 projections.

**Country specific notes**

**EU-27 and Italy:** Data for 2012, preliminary for total.

**Croatia** was not a member state in 2010 and therefore was not included in Europop 2010 population projections round.

## IN EUROPE, ONE IN FOUR CHILDREN IN THE 0-5 AGE GROUP IS AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION

In 2012, the number of people who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion was estimated to be 124.0<sup>(3)</sup> million for the EU-28. These statistics demonstrate that EU member states will have to redouble their efforts if the Europe 2020 Strategy headline target of lifting at least 20 million people<sup>(4)</sup> out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 is to be met.

<sup>(3)</sup> Eurostat: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe\\_2020\\_indicators/headline\\_indicators](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe_2020_indicators/headline_indicators)

<sup>(4)</sup> EUCO 13/10, European Council Conclusions 17 June 2010.

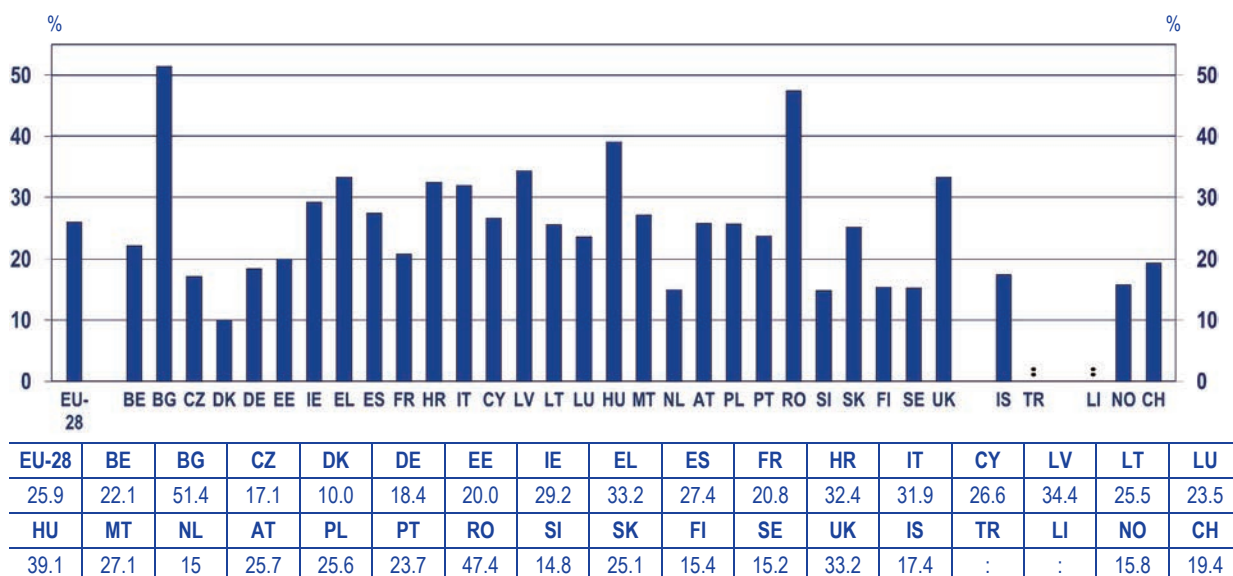
Recent European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) shows that in the European Union, nearly 26.0 % of children aged between 0 and 5 are at the risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that 8.4 million children targeted by ECEC services are either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived; or living in a household with a very 'low work intensity' (see Explanatory notes, Figure A4 for definition). Children can suffer from more than one dimension of poverty at the same time; however, those who do so have only been counted once.

There are children in this age group who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in all countries – the proportion being at or above 10.0 %. Denmark, with a level of 10.0 %, has the lowest rate of children affected by these phenomena. However, this still means that one in ten of these children is either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived; or living in a household with a very low work intensity. Rates are approximately 10.0-16.0 % in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

By contrast, nearly every second child in Bulgaria (51.4 %) and Romania (47.4 %) is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Other countries with considerably higher rates than the EU average are Greece, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Hungary and the United Kingdom, all exceeding 30.0 %.

The figures mentioned above are particularly significant as they indicate how many children in ECEC might need specific targeted measures to support their educational needs (see Chapter G).

**Figure A4: Percentage of children aged 0-5 at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2012**



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data extracted February 2014).

**Explanatory notes**

The 'At risk of poverty or social exclusion' indicator refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived; or living in a household with a very low work intensity.

For full definition of the 'At risk of poverty or social exclusion' indicator, see the Glossary.

**Country specific notes**

**EU-28:** Estimated.

**Ireland:** Data from 2011.

**Austria and United Kingdom:** Break in times series 2012.

## ONE IN TEN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6 IS JOBLESS

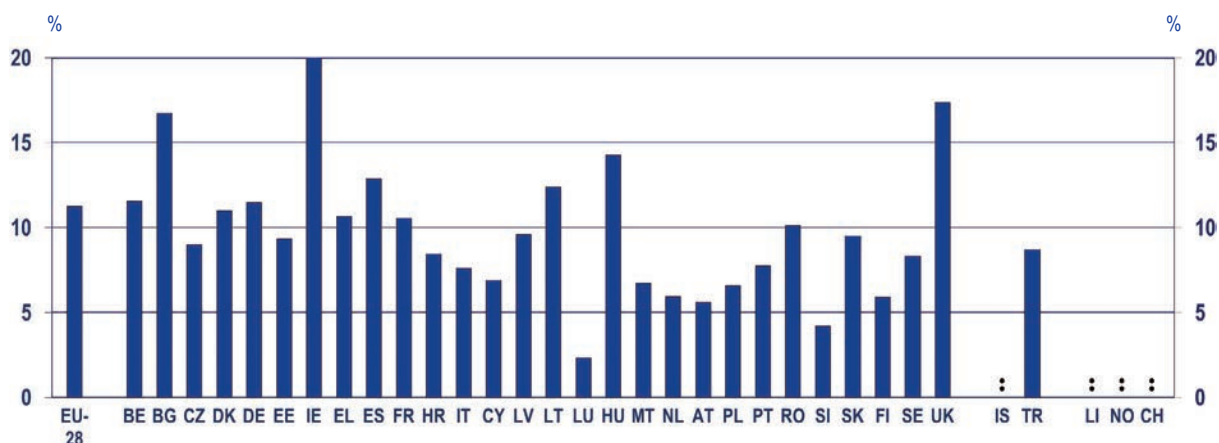
The following indicator shows the percentage of jobless households amongst the households with children under the age of 6. 'Jobless household' means that no member is in employment (i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive). Living in a household affected by unemployment may not only place a child at risk of poverty or social exclusion (see Figure A5), but also at risk of educational disadvantage.

The EU-28 average percentage of jobless households among households with children aged between 0 and 5 is 11.2 %. This means that just over one in ten households with children below the age of 6 in the EU is affected by this phenomenon. Children living in these households may be at risk of educational disadvantage due to unemployment and the financial insecurity of his/her guardians.

Two-thirds of countries are below the EU-28 average. Luxembourg has the lowest rate with 2.3 % of jobless households with children under 6. Other countries that display relatively low rates (of less than 6 %) are the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia and Finland.

However, three countries, namely Bulgaria (16.7 %), Ireland (20.1 %) and the United Kingdom (17.4 %), are well above the EU average.

**Figure A5: Percentage of jobless households among households with children aged 0-5, 2012**



EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
11.2	11.6	16.7	9.0	11.0	11.5	9.3	20.1	10.6	12.9	10.5	8.4	7.6	6.9	9.6	12.4	2.3
HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
14.3	6.7	5.9	5.6	6.6	7.7	10.1	4.2	9.5	5.9	8.3	17.4	:	8.7	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat, LFS (data extracted February 2014).

### **Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'household', see the Glossary. **Jobless households** are households where no member is in employment, i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive.

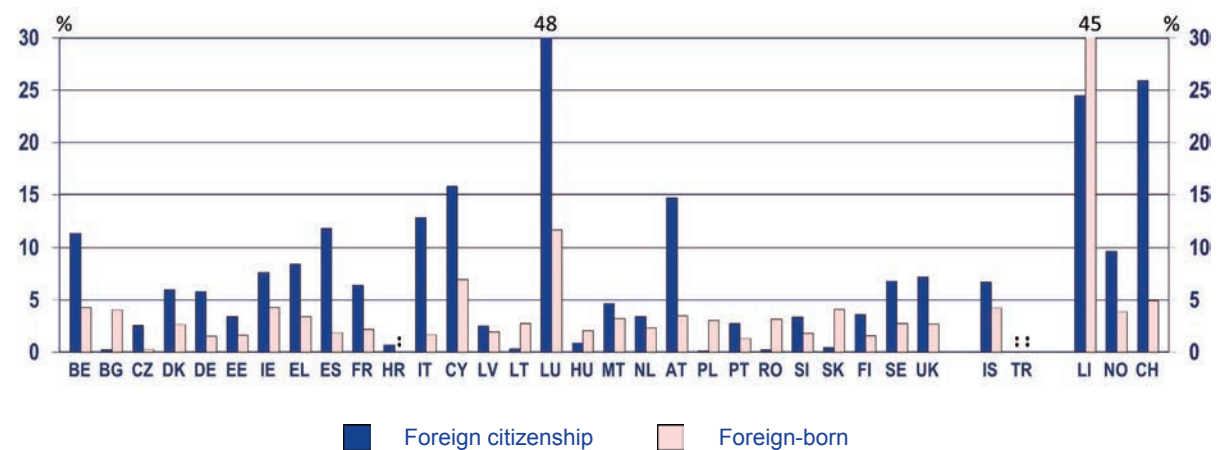
## MOST COUNTRIES HAVE MORE THAN FIVE PER CENT OF CHILDREN BORN ABROAD OR REGISTERED AS FOREIGN CITIZENS

The background of young children is important as it may not only have an impact on their participation in ECEC (see Figure C9), but it may also indicate whether they will need special support to enable them benefit fully from ECEC programmes (see Figures G1 and G2). The types of background which may impact children's education include their socio-economic grouping, their cultural and/or linguistic origin and whether they come from migrant families. Migration flows have contributed to the growing diversity of the European population and have considerably changed its dynamics in recent years. Different countries have different concepts of what it means to have a 'foreign background'; likewise all countries have their own ways of collecting information, which make comparable data difficult to gather. In order to have a better overview of the composition of this youngest population group (children aged 0-5) and to see the wide-ranging variations across countries, two sets of data pertaining to children with a potential migrant background are shown in Figure A6. These are the proportion of children having foreign citizenship and the proportion of children born abroad.

There is a wide variation between countries in the rates of children who have a potentially foreign origin. Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have the highest rates of children from a foreign background (children with foreign citizenship or foreign-born children). Other countries with notably high rates include Belgium, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Austria, all having rates of above 10.0 %.

At the other end of the spectrum are the Central and Eastern European countries, three Baltic states as well as Croatia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland, where the proportion of children aged between 0 and 5 that might have a migrant background is very low. The rate of children with foreign citizenship varies from 0.1 % in Poland to 4.6 % in Malta. The rate of foreign-born children in these countries is around or under 4.0 %, with the Czech Republic at 0.3 %.

**Figure A6: Percentage of children aged 0-5 with foreign citizenship, and born abroad, 1 January 2013**



%	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Foreign citizen	11.3	0.2	2.5	6.0	5.8	3.4	7.6	8.4	11.8	6.3	0.7	12.8	15.8	2.5	0.3	48.4	0.9
Foreign born	4.3	4.0	0.3	2.6	1.5	1.6	4.2	3.4	1.8	2.2	:	1.7	6.9	2.0	2.7	11.7	2.0
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH	
Foreign citizen	4.6	3.4	14.7	0.1	2.7	0.2	3.3	0.4	3.6	6.8	7.2	6.7	:	24.5	9.6	25.9	
Foreign born	3.2	2.3	3.5	3.0	1.3	3.2	1.8	4.1	1.5	2.7	2.7	4.2	:	45.6	3.8	4.9	

Source: Eurostat, Population statistics (data extracted March 2014).

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## ONE IN TEN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF 6 ARE SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

The type of household in which a child grows up is an important factor, which may have an impact on its participation in ECEC and even on its eventual educational outcomes (Kernan, 2012; de Lange, Dronkers and Wolbers, 2013). According to Eurostat, a household is defined as a group of two or more people living together in a house or part of a house, and sharing a common budget. Currently, approximately 25.8 million households in the EU-28 have children under the age of 6. Over 78.0 % of these households are two-parent households. A child living with both parents can have certain advantages compared with a child living in a single-parent household (the vast majority of whom are headed by women), especially when the single parent has limited financial resources. Being a single parent and having a reduced household income, may be taken into account when reductions in or exemptions from ECEC fees are granted to help parents meet their children's educational needs (see Figure D7). In the EU-28, one in ten households with children under the age of 6 (10.5 %) is a single-parent household. In other words, approximately 2.7 million households with children aged 0-5 in the EU-28 are single-parent families. Denmark registers by far the highest proportion of single-parent households with a rate of 30.0 %. The second highest rate, at 22.2 %, is in the United Kingdom.

In contrast, Mediterranean countries (Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal and Turkey) as well as some of the Central and Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia seem less affected by single parenting, with less than 8.0 % of all households with young children being single-parent households. Luxembourg (5.2 %), Austria (7.0 %) and Finland (3.1 %) are also below this threshold. The lowest rate occurs in Croatia where it is only 1.4 %.

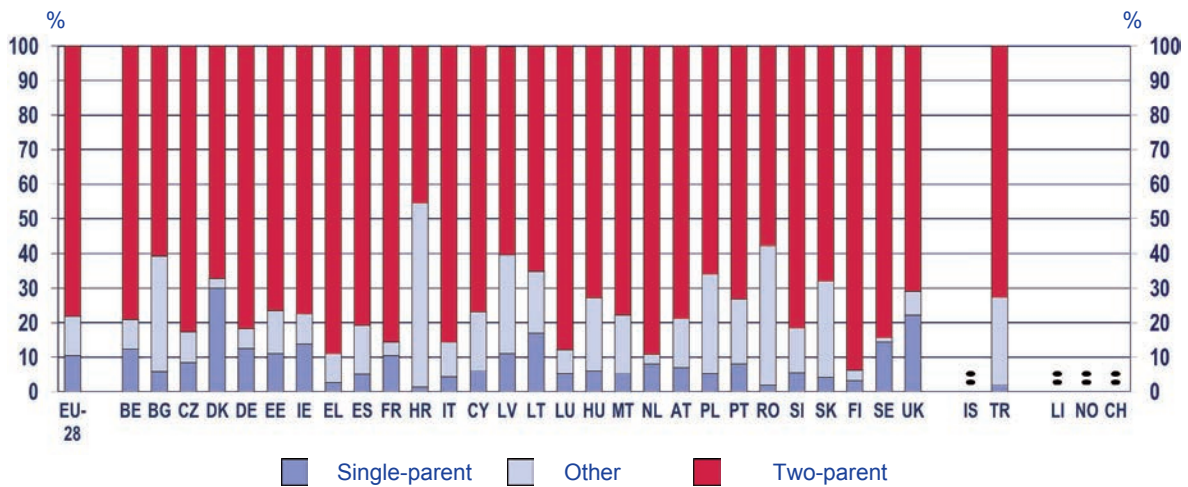
Croatia is also the country with the lowest proportion of two-parent households with children under the age of 6, with a rate of 45.6 %. Romania is the next lowest at 57.8 %. All the remaining countries, for which data is available, show respective rates above 60.0 %. More than a third of all countries have a rate over 80.0 %. The highest rates, however, are in Finland with 93.8 % of households with young children being two-parent households, followed by the Netherlands and Greece with slightly over 89.0 %.

According to Eurostat data, on average in the EU-28, 11.4 % of households with small children fell into the category 'other' than two-parent or single-parent households. The 'other' type of household is a broad category that encompasses all types of extended households; these include households where a parent or parents live together with other adults, as well as households where neither of the caregivers of the child is the child's parent, step-parent or foster parent. These could be grandparents and/or other relatives. Croatia has the highest proportion (53.0 %) of households with children under the age of 6 in the 'other' category. Six Central and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) as well as Turkey seem to follow this trend. The respective rates of households with children under the age of 6 categorised as 'other' types of households in those countries vary between 21.2 and 40.3 %.

The countries that have the lowest proportion of 'other' types of household accommodating children under 6 are three of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden), as well as France and the Netherlands, with rates at or below 4.0 %.



**Figure A7: Percentage of two-parent, single-parent and other type of households with children aged 0-5, 2012**



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Single-parent	10.5	12.4	5.9	8.4	30.0	12.5	11.0	13.8	2.5	5.1	10.5	1.4	4.3	6.2	11.0	16.9	5.2
Other	11.4	8.5	33.4	9.0	2.8	5.7	12.5	8.7	8.4	14.1	4.0	53.0	9.9	16.9	28.8	17.9	6.9
Two-parent	78.1	79.1	60.8	82.6	67.1	81.8	76.5	77.5	89.1	80.8	85.5	45.6	85.7	77.1	60.1	65.1	87.9
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
Single-parent	5.9	5.3	8.1	7.0	5.1	7.9	1.9	5.5	4.2	3.1	14.3	22.2	:	2.0	:	:	:
Other	21.2	16.8	2.7	14.2	28.8	18.9	40.3	12.9	27.8	3.1	1.3	6.9	:	25.3	:	:	:
Two-parent	72.8	77.9	89.2	78.8	66.0	73.1	57.8	81.6	68.0	93.8	84.4	70.9	:	72.7	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat, LFS (data extracted February 2014).

**Explanatory notes**

For a definition of 'household', see the Glossary.

The baseline for those percentages is the number of households with children aged 0-5. 100 % is the total number of households with children aged 0-5. The shares in the chart and commented in the text is the share of those households with one adult, two adults and other composition.



# ORGANISATION

## SECTION I – STRUCTURES AND ACCESS

Without exception, every country in Europe has set up a system of formal centre-based early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children below primary school age. However, the organisation of services varies across Europe.

This chapter describes the main features of ECEC systems. The first section describes the two most common forms of ECEC structure, highlighting the main characteristics of split and unitary ECEC systems. Countries with regulated home-based ECEC provision and its prevalence are also discussed. An indicator on the length of childcare leave provides complementary information on social policies and examines whether continuity is provided between paid leave for parents and ECEC services. The various ways of guaranteeing access to ECEC for all children are discussed, highlighting the countries that either provide a legal entitlement to ECEC or make enrolment compulsory. The criteria used to allocate the available places if the demand is higher than supply are also examined.

The second section focuses on ECEC quality and minimum standards of provision. The means used to ensure compliance with regulations are also described. The third section is devoted to capacity monitoring and presents an overview of the management of demand and supply of ECEC places in European countries. Various initiatives to increase supply are also discussed.

### IN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ECEC IS SPLIT INTO TWO SEPARATE PHASES ACCORDING TO AGE

There are two main forms of ECEC structure in Europe. In some countries, ECEC forms a unitary system or single phase, while in others ECEC provision is split into two separate phases. The **split system**, which is the most common, structures ECEC services according to the age of the children. Provision in the split system is delivered in separate settings for younger and older children. Usually, the transition from one setting to the next takes place when children are around 3 years old, but it can be at 2½ years or as late as 4 years in some countries. The division reflects a split between 'childcare' services with provision in some form of non-school centre and 'early education' services, where provision is sometimes based in the same building as primary schools.

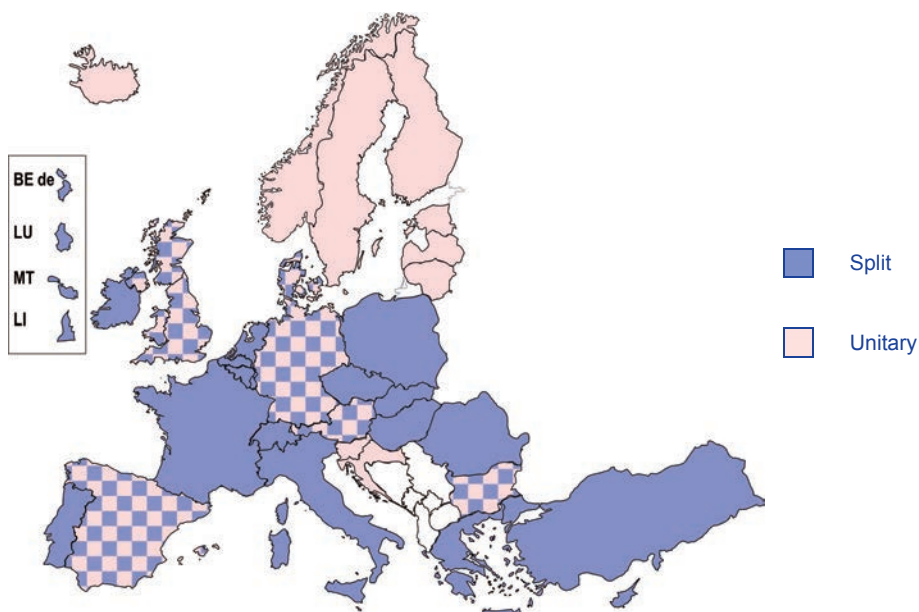
In the typical split system, the responsibility for ECEC governance, regulation and funding are divided between different authorities. The ministry responsible for health, welfare or family affairs is usually in charge of provision for younger children, while the ministry of education is responsible for the provision aimed at older children. Consequently, educational guidelines normally apply only to provision for older children (see Figure F1). In the split system, the requirements for staff qualifications also usually differ depending on the type of provision, with tertiary degrees in ECEC required mostly in settings for older children (see Figure E2). Moreover, conditions of access may vary greatly; with a legal entitlement usually applying to older children and not to younger children (see Figure B4). Split systems showing all the attributes mentioned above are in operation in Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), the Czech Republic, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovakia. Other countries classified as having split systems in Figure B1 might have one or more of the attributes that also characterise unitary ECEC systems. For example, in Malta, the Ministry for Education and Employment is responsible for ECEC both for younger and older children; while in Portugal a Master's degree is required for educational staff working in settings for children under 3 (*creches*) as well as for those working with older children.

In contrast, in **unitary systems**, ECEC provision for all children of pre-school age is organised in a single phase and delivered in settings catering for the whole age range. Children have no breaks or transfers between institutions until they start primary school. The ministry of education is responsible for ECEC governance, regulation and funding. All care and education for young children is considered to be part of 'early education' services and educational guidelines cover the entire ECEC phase. Unitary settings have a single management team running provision for children of all ages and the same level of staff qualification (usually tertiary level) is required for working with the entire age range. Furthermore, a legal entitlement to ECEC or free ECEC is often granted from a very early age in unitary systems. This type of system prevails in most Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, Croatia and Slovenia.

Not all unitary systems conform to the precise model outlined above. For example, some unitary systems have 1 or 2 years' pre-primary provision, which may be subject to different educational guidelines and be delivered in primary schools. In Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, the last year or two preceding compulsory primary education may take place either within the unitary setting or outside these settings, often in primary schools. In Sweden, the last year of ECEC – the pre-primary class for 6-year olds (*förskoleklass*) – takes place only in primary schools.

Several European countries have both unitary and separate settings. In Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Spain and Austria, ECEC services can be delivered either in separate settings for younger and older children, or in unitary settings catering for both age groups. However, some distinctions may be maintained between the two age groups even in unitary settings. For example, in Bulgaria and Spain, some settings offer both cycles of ECEC covering the entire pre-primary age. However, in these settings, while the management team is the same, the provision for younger and older children differs in terms of staff qualifications, curricula and funding arrangements. In all parts of the United Kingdom, children can stay in unitary settings (*day nurseries* or *children's centres*) until the beginning of primary education, but from age 3 children may also attend *nursery schools* or *nursery/reception classes* in primary schools.

**Figure B1: Organisation of centre-based ECEC, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

### **Explanatory note**

For definitions of 'centre-based provision', 'split' and 'unitary' ECEC, see the Glossary. Detailed descriptions of provision are provided in the National System Information Sheets in the Annex.

**Country specific notes**

**Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and Switzerland:** One or two years' pre-primary provision exists which is obligatory in some countries.

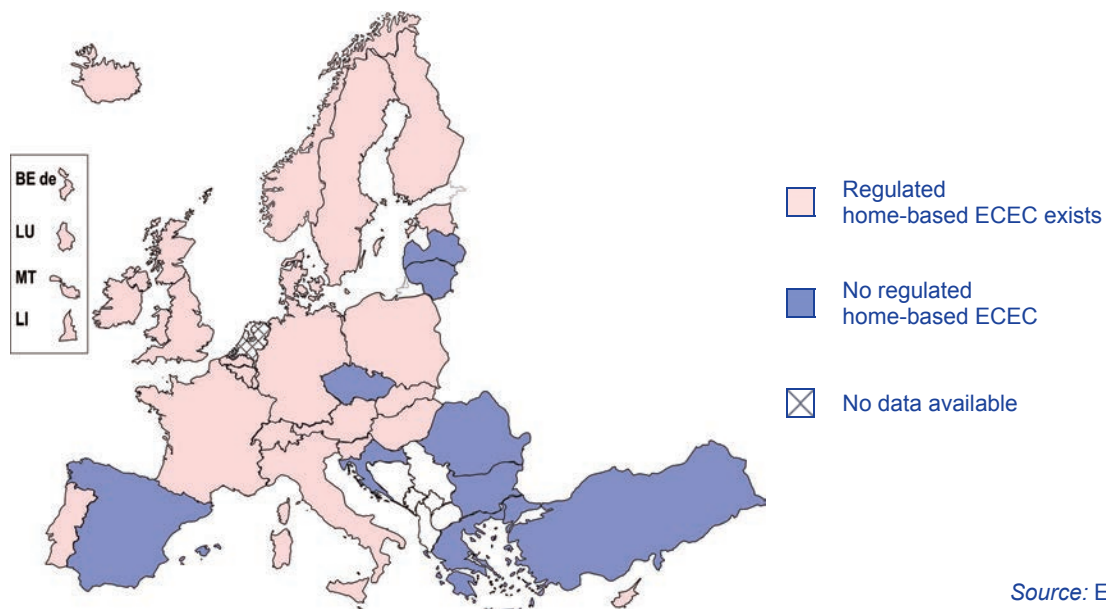
**Ireland:** In this report, Ireland is deemed as having the split model of ECEC as non-compulsory education is divided into two stages: provision for children under 4 and provision for children between 4 and 6. However, for the purpose of international statistical data collections, the provision for older children (in *infant classes*) is classified as primary education (ISCED 1).

**Czech Republic and Portugal:** Some private settings might include groups for both younger and older children.

## SOME REGULATED HOME-BASED PROVISION EXISTS IN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BUT IT IS WIDESPREAD ONLY IN A FEW

Alongside the ECEC provision in centre-based settings, the legal framework for ECEC may also provide for formalised home-based ECEC services, which must abide by established rules and quality standards. While it might be possible to deliver such services either in the child's or the provider's home, this report refers only to the latter type of ECEC provision, i.e. services offered in the provider's own home.

**Figure B2: Existence of regulated home-based ECEC, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'home-based provision', see the Glossary.

**Country specific notes**

**Czech Republic:** The Trade act allows home-based care, but there is no information available.

**Croatia:** Regulated home-based provision is currently being phased in, based on the 'Law on Childminders' approved by Parliament in April 2013.

**Italy:** Home-based provision is regulated at local and regional level.

**Latvia:** Regulated home-based ECEC was introduced in September 2013.

**Poland:** Legislation provides for regulated home based provision but currently only a few day carers are registered.

Regulated home-based provision exists in most European education systems. However, as participation data are only available in a dozen countries, it is often difficult to evaluate how widespread it is. Where national participation statistics are available, regulated home-based provision often appears insignificant compared to centre-based provision. Only in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, the United Kingdom and Iceland does regulated home-based provision represent a significant proportion of ECEC, in particular for younger children. In Denmark, for instance, around



50 % of 1-year-olds participate in centre-based provision, while around 40 % of children of the same age are in regulated home-based provision. In France, the participation rates for the 0-3 age group are around 15 and 28 % for centre- and home-based provision respectively. In Iceland, more children under 2 years old are taken care of by home-based *dagforeldri* than attend centre-based settings.

In some countries, there is more than one form of regulated home-based provision. For example, in Hungary, there are two distinct systems, which target different age groups and are subject to different regulations on the maximum number of children per provider (see Figures B7 and B8b). In Finland, home-based care is provided either by individual childminders, or as a group day-care service with two or three childminders. In the three Communities of Belgium, there are differences in the working status of childminders, who may be independent providers or providers affiliated to specific childminding organisations.

Home-based provision may be the main type of ECEC or it may play a supporting role; this varies largely according to the age of the children. In Germany and France, for instance, for children aged 0-3, legislation applies equally to home-based and centre-based provision. However, when children reach the age of 3, they become legally entitled to free or subsidised centre-based provision, and as a result, home-based provision for these children is mainly used as an additional source of care when the opening hours of centre-based settings are not sufficient.

## **IN HALF OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CHILDCARE LEAVE WHICH IS ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED LASTS LESS THAN FORTY WEEKS**

Giving children a good start in life by allowing new parents time to bond with their children and subsequently be able to find the right balance between work and home-life has been the driving force behind national and European efforts to establish family friendly social policies. A two-pronged approach has been taken to support employed parents in reconciling the demands of work and family. On the one hand, leave policies that enable parents to stay at home to look after their very young children have been implemented; on the other hand, ECEC services have been developed so that when parents return to work, good quality care and education is available. Ensuring synergy and continuity between these policies is very important.

The terms of childcare leave vary considerably between European countries due to differing priorities and approaches to childcare. Some countries place the focus on care by parents and create incentives to encourage them to look after their own children for a longer period. In others, an institutional approach to childcare is taken and more investment is put into the development of ECEC services.

Notwithstanding the substantial differences between countries in terms of approach, minimum standards for maternity and parental leave have been set at European level. Indeed, the existing European legislation (1992) <sup>(5)</sup> prescribes a minimum of 14 weeks' maternity leave (two weeks to be taken before the birth). In 2008, the European Commission introduced a proposal to reinforce the existing directive by extending the leave to 18 weeks and paying women their full salary during this period. This proposal is still under discussion but, in 2010, the Commission revised the directive on parental leave <sup>(6)</sup>, obliging countries to introduce at least four months' parental leave for each parent.

Figure B3 shows the duration of childcare leave which is 'adequately compensated'. The notion of adequate compensation implies that parents continue to receive a substantial part of their prior

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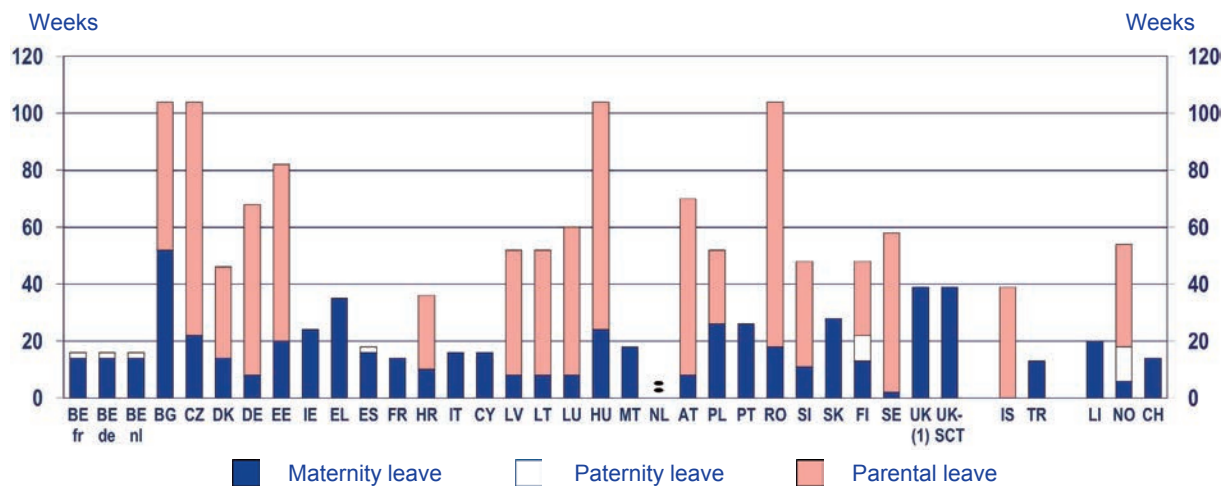
<sup>(5)</sup> Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding, OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

<sup>(6)</sup> Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC, OJ L 68, 18.03.2010, p. 13.

earnings during their leave and will not, therefore, face great financial hardship as a result of taking time off work to look after their children. In this report, leave is considered to be adequately compensated if parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings during this period. The total length of childcare leave takes into account all the different types of leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave) and is calculated from the child's birth until both parents return to work.

The longest periods of adequately compensated childcare leave are found in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania. In these countries, parents are able to take care of their child until it is 2 years old; Estonia comes next at 18 months. In 11 countries (Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway), parents may accumulate between 46 and 70 weeks' leave for caring a newborn child. Several countries provide adequate compensation to parents for childcare leave for between 20 and 39 weeks. This is the case in Ireland, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

**Figure B3: Length of adequately compensated post-natal maternity, paternity and parental leave (in weeks), 2013**



	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	HR	CY	LV	LT	LU
Maternity leave	14	14	14	52	22	14	8	20	24	35	16	14	10	16	16	8	8	8
Paternity leave	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parental leave	0	0	0	52	82	32	60	62	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	44	44	52
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
Maternity leave	24	18	:	8	26	26	18	11	28	13	2	39	39	0	13	20	6	14
Paternity leave	0	0	:	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
Parental leave	80	0	:	62	26	0	86	37	0	26	56	0	0	39	0	0	36	0

Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

### Explanatory notes

**Maternity leave** has normally two stages: pre-natal (before birth) and post-natal (after birth). This indicator focuses only on the second stage. The length of leave is calculated from the date of birth if the legislation indicates how many weeks before the birth a mother must take (usually two to eight weeks before). If this information is not precised in the legislation, the whole length of leave is shown.

**Paternity leave** is normally available only to fathers and is taken directly after the birth. Paternity leave is shown only if it may not coincide with maternity leave.

**Parental leave** is often taken directly after the end of maternity leave. Its length is calculated based on full-time leave for the maximum paid period of time possible. Parental leave may be an individual or a family right. If parental leave is an individual right and parents do not take their leaves at the same time, the leave is counted twice. Best situation possible (the longest parental leave) for parents is calculated.

The indicator shows the accumulated length of the three types of leave in calendar weeks (one year constitutes 52 weeks). Leave is considered **adequately compensated** if parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings



## ORGANISATION

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during this period. If they receive a flat rate, the payment is considered adequately compensated if it constitutes 65 % of the minimum monthly wage in the country. If several options of financing leave exist, one option is chosen according to its comparability with other countries.

Regular children's allowances are not taken into consideration.

The indicator reflects the most common situation for one child and does not take into account such cases as natal complications, a prolonged hospitalization, children with health problems, etc.

### **Country specific notes**

**Greece:** Maternity leave includes basic leave (nine weeks after birth) and special leave (26 weeks granted to insured mothers). Civil servants are entitled to 36 weeks of adequately compensated leave in total.

**Hungary:** The information on adequately compensated parental leave concerns only insured parents. The flat rate received by non-insured parents is not considered as adequately compensated leave.

**Czech Republic:** Various options of childcare benefits are available to parents.

**Austria:** Various options of childcare benefits are available to parents. The sum of payments depends on the period of time when parents receive the payments. The information in the figure is based on 80 % of earnings.

**Romania:** Two options of financing parental leave/payments of childcare benefits are available to parents: during one or two years. The minimum and maximum amounts of payments differ depending on the period of payments.

**Finland:** The child home care allowance is paid as a flat rate, which does not correspond to the adequately compensated rate of 65 % of previous earnings (or minimum wage). However, it may also include a supplement depending on the size and income of the family. Moreover, some local authorities pay municipal supplements. Around 88 % of families take advantage of such home care leave which may be taken directly after parental leave.

**Turkey:** The situation described in the Figure refers only to civil servants.

The shortest period of childcare leave that is adequately compensated, set at less than 20 weeks, is found in Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Switzerland. This period normally only includes maternity leave; although in Belgium and Spain maternity leave may be followed by two additional weeks of paternity leave.

Adequately compensated childcare leave largely comprising maternity leave (as is the case in many countries) commonly results in a gender imbalance in the provision of care. Even where adequately compensated parental leave exists and may be shared between parents, it is generally mothers who take it up. In Slovenia, for instance, only 6.3 % of fathers took a share of parental leave in 2010 (Moss, 2012). However, European countries such as Germany and Austria and some of the Nordic countries actively promote gender equality in the take-up of parental leave. In Sweden, for instance, a certain number of weeks is reserved for each parent. In Iceland and Norway, parental leave is divided into three parts: three months for each parent and three months' joint entitlement. In Germany and Austria, parental benefits are extended if both parents take care of a child. In the last two countries mentioned, this additional parental leave is taken into account in the figure below, as it presents the best-case scenario for families.

Finally, it is important to point out that in some countries where parental leave exists but does not meet the 65 % threshold of adequate compensation, other arrangements are in place to help families reconcile work and family life. For instance, parents may have the right to combine parental leave with working part-time. According to Eurostat data (Eurostat, 2013), in 2011 in the European Union, almost a third (32 %) of employed women with one child under the age of 6 worked part-time. This percentage tends to increase with the number of children. In case of men, the figure is substantially lower: only 4.5 % of European men with one child of this age work part-time.

## **IN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, CHILDREN ARE GUARANTEED A PLACE IN ECEC ONE OR TWO YEARS BEFORE PRIMARY EDUCATION**

The most common way to ensure the ECEC for all children is establishment of a legal entitlement. Legal entitlement to ECEC refers to a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require a place for their child. In this way, public authorities commit themselves to guarantee a place in ECEC settings for all children that are covered



by legal entitlement. Children, however, are entitled to ECEC provision, but are not obliged to participate in it. Legal entitlement does not necessarily imply that provision is free, only that provision is publicly subsidised and affordable (see Chapter D). Another way to ensuring availability of ECEC is establishing compulsory ECEC for the last one or two years. This consequently means that the responsible authorities have to ensure a sufficient number of pre-primary places for all children in the age-range covered by compulsory attendance. Children are obliged to attend, and ECEC is free.

Most European countries have committed themselves to provide an ECEC place for all children establishing either legal entitlement to ECEC or compulsory ECEC for at least the last pre-primary year. Only seven countries, namely Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Iceland and Turkey, have not established either a legal entitlement to or compulsory enrolment in ECEC. In Croatia, however, from September 2014, one year of pre-school ECEC programme will be compulsory. In Romania, the legal entitlement for 5-year-olds will be available from 2014 September.

In Europe, there are significant differences regarding the age from which children have a guarantee to a place in ECEC, regarding hours of entitlement and whether or not parents are expected to co-finance it. Only six European countries, namely Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway, guarantee a legal right to ECEC to each child soon after their birth, often immediately after the end of childcare leave(s). In most of these countries, the entitlement is not phrased in terms of hours of provision, but usually implies a full-time place. Typically, parents are expected to co-finance the provision until the beginning of compulsory education. However, the fees are rather low (see Figure D6) and means-tested reductions are offered (see Figure D7). In Denmark, for instance, since 2001, regulatory framework obliges municipalities to ensure ECEC provision for all children older than 26 weeks until the age of 6 (when compulsory schooling begins), but parents may be required to pay up to of 25 % of the operating expenditure. In Finland, children are legally entitled to a publically subsidised ECEC place after the parental leave period (when the child is about 9-10 months old), but only the pre-primary education for 6-year-olds is free of charge for parents. In Sweden, all children from age 1 are legally entitled to 15 hours of publically subsidised ECEC per week, and if parents work or study children are entitled to a full time provision. From the age of 3, universal pre-primary education is free for all children for 525 hours per year (which is approximately 15 hours per week during a school year). Children whose parents are working or studying have the right to a publically subsidised place in an after-school centre (*fritidshem*).

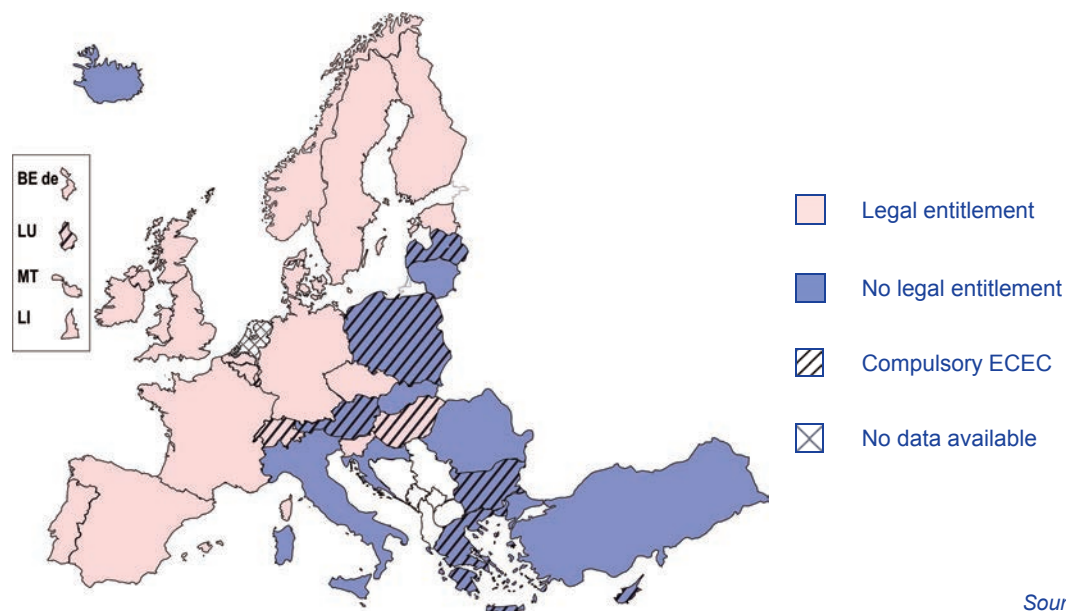
In all other countries, the gap between the end of adequately compensated childcare leave and the legal entitlement to ECEC is more than two years. In around one third of European education systems (three Communities of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Portugal and all parts of the United Kingdom), legal entitlement to publically subsidised ECEC starts when children are 3-years old, or a few months before they reach this age. In all of these countries except Germany, children are entitled to free of charge ECEC. Usually, the length of free ECEC provision corresponds to a typical school day, except in Ireland and all parts of the United Kingdom, where free entitlements cover only 10-15 hours a week (see Figure D5). Germany and Malta have a specific position in this group as in these countries legal entitlement is being extended. In Germany, all 1-year-old children are entitled to ECEC from August 2013, while in Malta, entitlement to free ECEC provision has been extended to all children of working/studying parents from April 2014.

In the Czech Republic, Liechtenstein and some cantons in Switzerland, the legal entitlement to pre-primary education starts slightly later, when children are, respectively, 5- and 4-years old and mainly concerns pre-primary classes. In nine countries, the last one or two years of pre-primary education are compulsory. In Luxembourg and most cantons in Switzerland, education is compulsory from the age of 4, while primary education only starts when children reach the age of 6. In Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Austria and Poland, compulsory education starts when children are 5-years

old or around 5, whereas primary education only starts when they reach the age 6 or 7. The minimum weekly duration of compulsory pre-primary education is defined centrally in seven countries – namely Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary, Austria, Luxembourg and Poland – and it varies between 16 hours per week in Austria and 27.5 hours per week in Cyprus.

Ireland is the only country where primary education (ISCED 1) starts prior to the beginning of compulsory schooling. In this country, children start compulsory education when they are 6-years old, but as from the age of 4 they can participate in *infant classes* – the provision already viewed and classified as primary education (ISCED 1). The legal entitlement is available from 3 years and 2 months.

**Figure B4: Legal entitlement and/or compulsory ECEC, including starting age and weekly hours, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Starting age of legal entitlement (years)	2½	3	2½		5	½	3	1½	3½/6		3	3	-	-			-	3	3
Starting age of compulsory ECEC (years)				5						5					4½	5		4	5
Weekly duration (hours)	28	28	28	20 (24)	40	40	40	40	15	22.5	25	24	-	-	27.5	⊗	-	26	40
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
Starting age of legal entitlement (years)	2¾	:			3	-	11/12	-	¾	1	3	3	3	3	-	-	4	1	
Starting age of compulsory ECEC (years)			5	5															4
Weekly duration (hours)	30	:	16-20	25	25	-	40	-	40	40	15	10	12.5	(12.5)	-	-	28	40	⊗

⊗ No central regulations

Source: Eurydice.

### Explanatory note

Legal entitlement or compulsory ECEC that applies only to certain categories of learners (e.g. disadvantaged learners) is not considered. For a definition of 'legal entitlement', see the Glossary. Weekly hours are truncated at 40.

### Country specific notes

**Bulgaria:** Compulsory ECEC: 5-year-olds – 20 hours; 6-year-olds – 24 hours.

**Germany:** From August 2013, the legal entitlement to subsidised ECEC is from age 1.

**Croatia:** From September 2014, one year of pre-school ECEC programme will be compulsory.

**Malta:** In April 2014, the entitlement to free ECEC provision was extended to all children of working/studying parents.

**Hungary:** compulsory ECEC 20 weekly hours.

**Austria:** Weekly hours of compulsory ECEC vary between *Länder*.

**Poland:** From September 2015, all 4-year-olds will have a legal entitlement to ECEC.

**Romania:** From September 2014, all 5-year-olds will have a legal entitlement to ECEC.

**Finland:** In November 2013, the government decision on the implementation of a structural policy programme included the introduction of compulsory pre-primary education.

**Sweden:** 525 yearly hours were divided by a common length of school year (178 days) and then multiplied by 5 to reach a weekly figure.

**United Kingdom:** In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in the most economically deprived areas, legal entitlement is extended to 2-year-olds. In Scotland, the entitlement is extended for 2-year-olds who are looked after or under a kinship care order. In England and Wales, children reach compulsory school age at the start of the school term following their fifth birthday. For autumn and spring born children, therefore, part of the reception year (classified as ISCED 0) is compulsory. In Scotland, 475 yearly hours were divided by 38 weeks, which is a common length of school year.

**Switzerland:** In 19 cantons (out of 26) attendance of pre-primary education is compulsory. Depending on the canton, compulsory pre-primary provision lasts one or two years. In those cantons where pre-primary education is not compulsory, children from the age of 4 or 5 are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised place.

Usually, legal entitlement and/or compulsory ECEC have been introduced gradually, step-by-step lowering the age from which a child is guaranteed a place. For example, in Malta, legal entitlement for 4-year-olds has been available since 1975 and has been extended to lower age groups in 1998, 2007 and 2014. In Poland, ECEC is compulsory for 6-year olds since 2004 and for 5-year-olds since 2011. In some countries, like Belgium, France, Sweden and Liechtenstein, legal entitlement to the first age groups ECEC has been already established in the middle of 20th century or even earlier. There were further steps either to extend the eligible age groups or to reinforce the guarantee. For example, in Sweden since 1995, the municipalities are obliged to supply places without reasonable delay.

Countries which have only recently introduced or extended the guarantee to ECEC provision (either through a legal entitlement or by making attendance compulsory) include: Bulgaria (2010), the Czech Republic (2005), Germany (2013), Estonia (2009), Ireland (2010), Greece (2006), Cyprus (2004), Malta (2014), Austria (2010), Poland (2011) and Romania (2014).

## ALLOCATION OF ECEC PLACES IS OFTEN SUBJECT TO LOCAL AUTONOMY

Figure B4 has shown that many European countries have established either compulsory pre-primary education or a legal entitlement to ECEC provision. In both cases, there is a formal commitment by the responsible authorities to ensure the number of places meets parents' demand (although in reality, this might not always be the case, as Figure B12 shows). Figure B5 considers only the provision to which children are *not* legally entitled, and it examines the criteria which are used to allocate available places if the demand is higher than supply. Therefore, the six European countries (Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and Norway) that guarantee a legal right to ECEC for each child from a very early age are not considered in this section.

Data show that around half of Europe's central-level steering documents do not address the allocation of ECEC places, meaning that places are allocated on the basis of selection criteria defined either by local authorities or directly by heads of ECEC settings. In the other half of countries, some central-level criteria for the allocation of ECEC places are defined. However, this matter is usually addressed through recommendations rather than regulations, which means that local authorities or heads of ECEC settings have significant autonomy when taking decisions.

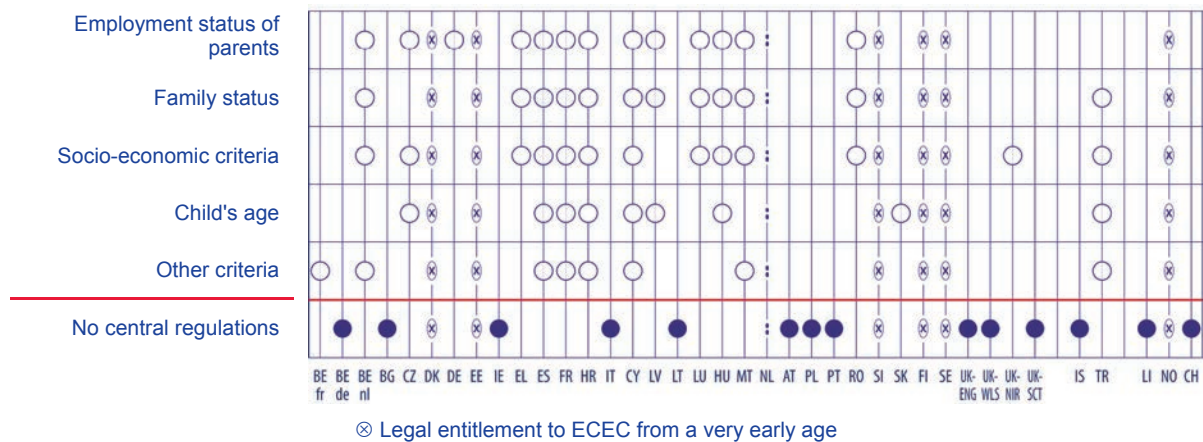
In the 16 education systems, where the allocation criteria are defined at central level, they usually make reference to parents' employment status, family status or socio-economic status. With regard to

employment status, most countries give priority to working parents, but some also refer to parents who are actively seeking employment or to parents who are in education or training (e.g. the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Spain and Malta). In Latvia, priority is given to parents working in specific professions, including the armed services and government officers in internal affairs or border authorities.

When taking family status into account, countries often give priority to orphans, children from single-parent families, large families as well as to siblings of children already in the setting. The age of children is less frequently referred to, but when this is the case, countries commonly prioritise older children. France is an exception in that *crèches* (i.e. settings targeting younger children) are advised to give priority to children below the age of 1, rather than to slightly older children.

Steering documents also refer to other criteria, prioritising children with disabilities, special needs or health problems (e.g. in Spain (some Autonomous Communities), Croatia, Malta and Turkey), or certain ethnic groups (e.g. Roma children in Cyprus). Specific categories of parents are also given preference in some countries, including war veterans or victims of conflicts (Croatia and Turkey), political refugees (Cyprus), parents who are victims of domestic violence (some Autonomous Communities in Spain) or teenage parents who need to work or continue their studies (Malta). A slightly different approach to prioritisation is used in the French Community of Belgium and in France, where the heads of ECEC settings are required to take into account the order in which applications arrive (i.e. the priority should be given to earlier applications). Nevertheless, in the French Community of Belgium, 10 % of places should be kept to meet specified family needs (e.g. placement of siblings in the same ECEC setting).

**Figure B5: Criteria for the allocation of places in centre-based settings when demand is higher than supply, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory notes**

Only central (top level) regulations/recommendations are considered. Provision to which children are legally entitled or which is compulsory (see Figure B4) is not considered. The indication 'no regulations/recommendations' refers to countries with no central regulations/recommendations related to any type of centre-based ECEC setting.

Where regulations/recommendations apply to some settings and not to others, or where different criteria apply to different settings, they are all included without specifying the type of settings to which they apply. Upcoming reforms are not considered.

## SECTION II – STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

**THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CHILDREN ALLOWED PER ADULT  
OFTEN DOUBLES WHEN CHILDREN REACH 3 YEARS OF AGE**

The majority of European countries have introduced central regulations covering the maximum number of children allowed per staff member and/or per group in centre-based settings. Although, in practice, the actual numbers of children may be lower than the stated maximums, the levels set by these regulations provide a useful indication of the standards operating across Europe.

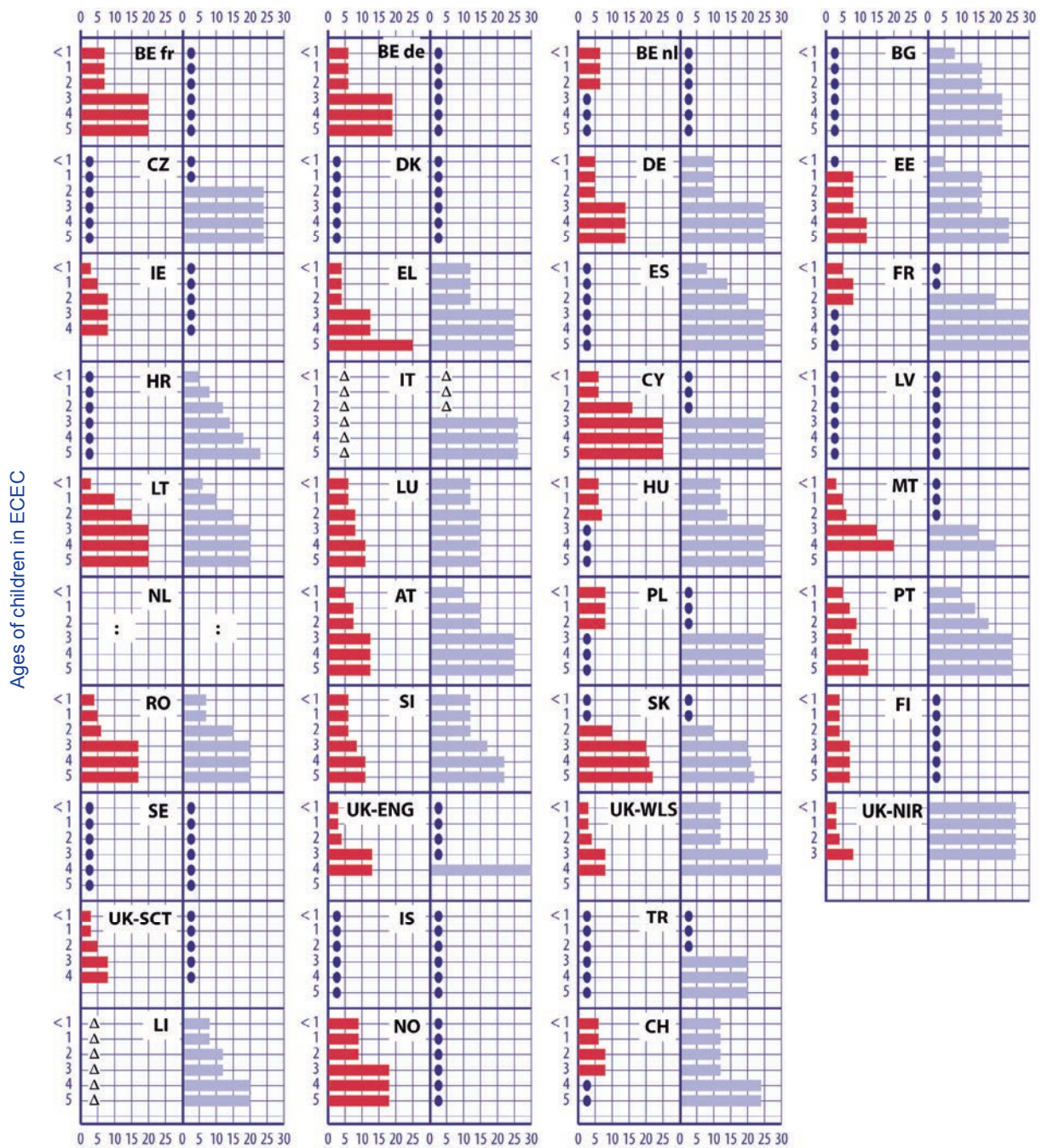
Most countries specify both the maximum number of children per staff member and per group. A few education systems define only staff/child ratios and leave settings to determine group sizes accordingly. This is the case in all Communities of Belgium, Ireland, Cyprus, Finland, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Norway. In contrast, some countries define the maximum number of children per group, and ECEC settings have the freedom to recruit the necessary staff (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic (*mateřské školy only*), Spain, Croatia, Turkey and Liechtenstein). However, a few countries (Denmark, Latvia, Sweden and Iceland) have no regulations on either the number of children per staff member or group sizes, and trust ECEC institutions to make appropriate decisions. Turkey has no regulations in this area for children under 3 years old in ECEC, nor does Belgium (Flemish Community) for the over-3s.

The difference in children's ages is important with respect to the limits set for the number of children per adult (regardless of staff category). A distinction is generally made between younger children (up to the age of 3) and older children. Furthermore, the tightest regulations are applied to infants, for example, in Ireland, Lithuania and Malta, one staff member cannot look after more than three children under the age of 1, and in the United Kingdom, this limit applies to all children under 2. At the other end of the spectrum is Norway, where regulations set the maximum number of infants per staff member at nine. However, these regulations only refer to the maximum number of children for each member of educational staff, without mentioning the care staff who assist them. Therefore, the overall number of children per adult is lower.

As children get older and more independent, the maximum number of children allowed per staff member increases. In many countries/regions where regulations exist (namely the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Germany, Greece, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Norway), the maximum numbers double or triple when children are around 2-3 years old. In some of these countries, this is probably linked to the fact that children move from one ECEC setting to the next around this age. For example in Belgium, the maximum number per member of staff increases from 6/7 to 19/20 as children move from day-care centres for under-3s to school based settings. Nevertheless, in a few countries (Ireland, Finland and the United Kingdom (Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland)), the maximum number is still below 10 children per staff member the year before entering primary education.

In addition, it is interesting to compare the maximum numbers in groups, where regulations exist, as there are significant differences between countries, particularly with respect to infants. For example, while in Estonia, Croatia and Lithuania, a group cannot include more than 5 or 6 children under the age of 1, in the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), up to 26 infants can be included in a group but a staff/child ratio of 1:3 must be maintained. However, when comparing the size of groups for 5-year-olds, the situation across Europe appears much more homogenous, with the maximum group size usually varying between 20 and 30 children. These numbers are already close to the size of classes in primary schools (for more details see EACEA/Eurydice, 2012, Figure F8).

**Figure B6: Maximum number of children per staff member and/or per group in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**



- Maximum number of children per staff member
- No regulations
- Maximum number of children per group
- △ Variable

Source: Eurydice.

#### **Explanatory note**

The figure refers to the maximum number of children per member of staff/group during the core hours of a working day as defined in regulations/recommendations. If no regulations/recommendations exist in this area, a symbol is indicated in the figure. Possible reductions in the maximum number of children per staff/group for to specific categories of children (e.g. children with disabilities) are not considered. The Figure does not take into account the fact that groups may be age-heterogeneous.

## SECTION II – STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

	Maximum number of children per staff member						Maximum number of children per group					
	Ages of children						Ages of children					
	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5
BE fr	7	7	7	20	20	20	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
BE de	6	6	6	19	19	19	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
BE nl	6.5	6.5	6.5	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
BG	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	8	16	16	22	22	22
CZ	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	24	24	24	24
DK	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
DE	5	5	5	14	14	14	10	10	10	25	25	25
EE	nr	8	8	8	12	12	5	16	16	16	24	24
IE	3	5	8	8	8	na	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
EL	4	4	4	12.5	12.5	25	12	12	12	25	25	25
ES	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	8	14	20	25	25	25
FR	5	8	8	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	20	30	30	30
HR	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	5	8	12	14	18	23
IT	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	26	26	26
CY	6	6	16	25	25	25	nr	nr	nr	25	25	25
LV	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
LT	3	10	15	20	20	20	6	10	15	20	20	20
LU	6	6	8	8	11	11	12	12	15	15	15	15
HU	6	6	7	nr	nr	nr	12	12	14	25	25	25
MT	3	5	6	15	20	na	nr	nr	nr	15	20	na
NL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
AT	5	7.5	7.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	10	15	15	25	25	25
PL	8	8	8	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	25	25	25
PT	5	7	9	7.5	12.5	12.5	10	14	18	25	25	25
RO	4	5	6	17	17	17	7	7	15	20	20	20
SI	6	6	6	8.5	11	11	12	12	12	17	22	22
SK	nr	nr	10	20	21	22	nr	nr	10	20	21	22
FI	4	4	4	7	7	7	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
SE	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
UK-ENG	3	3	4	13	13	na	nr	nr	nr	nr	30	na
UK-WLS	3	3	4	8	8	na	12	12	12	26	30	na
UK-NIR	3	3	4	8	na	na	26	26	26	26	na	na
UK-SCT	3	3	5	8	8	na	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	na
IS	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
TR	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	20	20	20
LI	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	8	8	12	12	20	20
NO	9	9	9	18	18	18	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr	nr
CH	6	6	8	8	nr	nr	12	12	12	12	24	24

Source: Eurydice.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE nl):** The Figure refers to public settings. In private settings, the staff child ratios are 1:7 for children under 18 months and 1:10 for those between 18 months and 3 years.

**Czech Republic:** Regulations exist only for older children in *materšské školy*. An exception is often made to allow an increase in the number of children by up to 4 (up to 28 children per group).

**Germany:** Regulations are set at *Länder* level. The Figure shows the situation for the Rhineland-Palatinate, which can be considered as average.

**Greece:** The Figure refers to *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* up until the age of 4. For children aged 5 it refers to public pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*). In private *nipiagogeio*, the number is set at 28. However, children of different ages carry different weightings, e.g. 1-year-olds correspond to 1.5.

**France:** The norms are specified as developmental criteria (e.g. learning to walk) rather than age.

**Spain:** Data for children under 3 refer to the most common regulations among the Autonomous Communities.

**Italy:** Regulations are issued at regional level and not at central level. They vary between regions.

**Cyprus:** The Figure refers to kindergartens (*nipiagogia*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*). In *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, the maximum number of children is 24 and 28 children per staff member (ages 3 and 4).

**Luxembourg:** The Figure refers to the *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*; in settings for the older age group (*éducation précoce* and *éducation préscolaire*), regulations exist only for age 3 (10 children per staff member and 20 children maximum in a group).

**Slovenia:** Depending on their circumstances, municipalities may raise the maximum number of children per group by 2. 78 % of groups/classes have two additional children (source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport).

**Norway:** The Figure refers to kindergarten educational staff working in *barnehager*. In addition, assistants also work in ECEC, but regulations do not take them into account. Statistical evidence shows that the average ratio of kindergarten teachers and assistants to children is 4.9 (BASIL, 2012/13).

**Liechtenstein:** The Office for Social Affairs determines the maximum number of children per staff member based mainly on the age and special needs of children. An internal guideline states that groups should be mixed-age. An infant under 18 months is counted as 1.5 children. There may not be more than three infants per group and groups with infants only are not allowed.

**Switzerland:** The Figure refers to day-care centres (*Kindertagesstätte* or *Krippe/Structure d'accueil de jour* or *crèche/Struttura di custodia collettiva diurna*) for children until age 4. In *Kindergärten/Ecoles enfantines/Scuole dell'infanzia*, which cater for children from age 4, only the maximum number of children per group is regulated (24). As the regulations vary between cantons, the information provided represents the maximum based on an analysis of regulations in several cantons.

The information analysed on staff child ratios and group sizes reveals that several adults, who may belong to different staff categories (see Chapter E), are often involved in the care and/or education of a single group. For example in Austria, groups in kindergartens include one qualified pedagogue and one assistant, and in Portugal, groups in all types of centre-based ECEC settings include staff qualified in education (teachers or educators) as well as assistants. A similar situation can be observed in countries that define the maximum number of children per group, but not the maximum number of children per staff member. In Hungary, for instance, regulations related to kindergartens (*óvoda*) stipulate that there should be one educator in the morning and another one in the afternoon (with 2 hours overlap) and, in addition, a kindergarten nurse in each group. In Bulgaria, part-time groups in settings for young children (*detska yasla*) include one nurse and one assistant, while full-time groups in the same settings include two nurses and two assistants. Groups in settings for children over 3 years (*detska gradina*) include two teachers and one assistant.

## CHILDMINDERS WORKING IN REGULATED HOME-BASED SETTINGS USUALLY LOOK AFTER A MAXIMUM OF FIVE OR SIX CHILDREN

In almost all countries where regulated home-based provision exists (see Figure B2), the maximum number of children per childminder is subject to control. Only a few countries (Italy, Slovakia and Sweden) do not apply any centralised standards in this area.

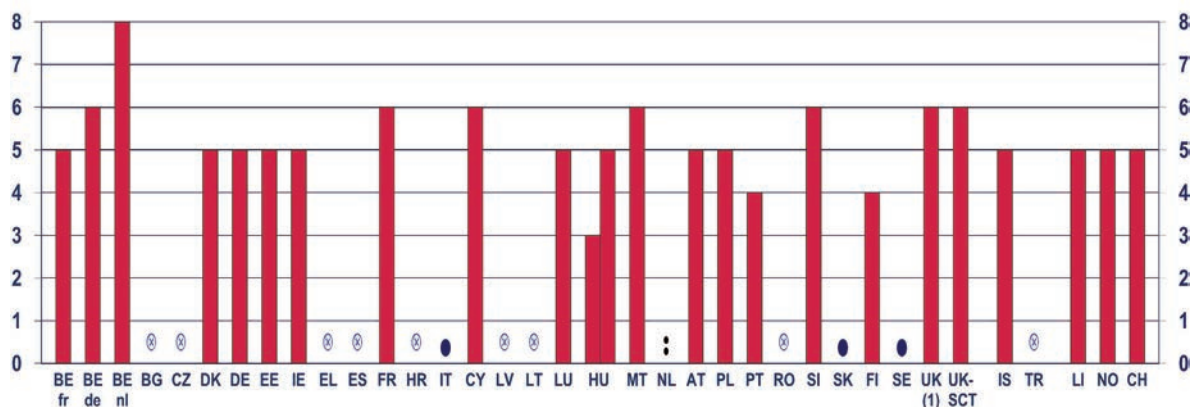
The maximum number of children per childminder, without taking into account the age of children or any other criteria, varies between three in Hungary (provision *családi gyermekfelügyelet*) and eight in the Flemish Community of Belgium. The majority of countries set the maximum at either five or six children per childminder. This number normally includes the childminder's own children, if they are also being looked after.

However, regulations covering this field are often quite complex, as they attempt to take many factors into account. For example, the children may differ greatly in age: from completely dependent infants or toddlers to quite independent older children that need care for just a few hours after school. Therefore, regulations commonly include further age-related restrictions, in particular, with stricter rules on the maximum number of small children in the group. For example, in Ireland, Malta and all parts of the United Kingdom, childminders cannot look after more than one or two infants (up to 1 or 2 years old), but they may still include some older children in the group. In Cyprus, the maximum is set at three



children up to 2 years of age. The German-speaking Community of Belgium and France provide further specifications on the maximum number of slightly older children (e.g. the maximum number of children under 3 is limited to four). In Norway, regulations are more general, stating that the number should be reduced when the majority of children in the group are under the age of 3.

**Figure B7: Maximum number of children per childminder in regulated home-based settings, 2012/13**



⊗ Not applicable (no regulated home-based provision) ● No central regulations on maximum numbers

BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
5	6	8	⊗	⊗	5	5	5	5	⊗	⊗	6	⊗	●	6	⊗	⊗	5
HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
3/5	6	:	5	5	4	⊗	6	●	4	●	6	6	5	⊗	5	5	5

Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

### Explanatory note

Data in the figure do not show any of the more detailed specifications that may be included in legislation (e.g. stricter rules regarding the maximum number of small children and/or children with disabilities/special needs in the group). Where applicable, these are mentioned in the text.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE nl):** The Figure refers to public settings, for private settings, the maximum number is set at seven.

**Germany:** Data refer to national regulations. Additional regulations may exist at *Länder* level.

**Croatia:** Regulated home-based provision is currently being phased in, based on the 'Law on Childminders' approved by Parliament in April 2013.

**Hungary:** There are two types of home-based provision: a) refers to *családi gyermekfelügyelet* and b) refers to *családi napközi*.

**Finland:** Four children under age 6. Additionally, part-time care for one child aged 6 or more can be provided.

**Liechtenstein:** Following recent guidelines issued but not yet implemented, a childminder's own children are included in the maximum. Children below 18 months count as 1.5.

**Switzerland:** Data refer to the most representative regulations in cantons.

As well as age, other factors may also affect maximum numbers. For example, further reductions in the size of groups may be required if a childminder looks after children with disabilities or special needs (e.g. Hungary and the United Kingdom – Scotland), or if he/she is a new or recently established provider (Iceland).

Finally, regulations may also offer a certain degree of flexibility, allowing childminders to look after one or two additional children. This mainly happens when there are specific family situations such as multiple births, or when there is a lack of adequate ECEC provision in a local community or region.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY IN ECEC SETTINGS IS HIGHLY REGULATED

Ensuring the health, safety and physical well-being of children is one of the key issues when considering the quality of ECEC provision. Data show that in most European countries, central regulations/recommendations address a wide range of issues in this area. These include the size and layout of indoor facilities and outdoor spaces and the range and type of equipment provided. Most importantly, regulations address child protection issues surrounding the suitability of staff for working with children. The issue of suitability goes beyond the qualification requirements addressed in Chapter E.

There are only a few countries where health and safety in ECEC settings is either not regulated by central authorities (Italy – provision for children under 3 years) and Austria, or where regulation is limited (Germany and Sweden). This goes hand in hand with the fact that ECEC in most of these countries is highly decentralised and, consequently, health and safety is subject to regional and/or local regulations.

As might be expected, different countries have different priorities with respect to health and safety matters in centre-based ECEC. For example, virtually all countries have child protection regulations relating to the suitability of staff for working with children. In two of these countries (Germany and Sweden), child protection is the main health and safety issue regulated at national level. This shows that central authorities pay particular attention to this issue, banning anyone from working with children who has a criminal record of any kind (the situation in most countries) or, more specifically, anyone with a criminal record related to child sex abuse (Denmark). Countries also sometimes specify that staff who are in direct contact with children should be in good physical and mental health, as is the case in the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg.

At the other end of the spectrum, a matter that few countries regulate is the mix of indoor and outdoor activities. The regulations that do exist in this area are sometimes very general, stipulating only that children should have access to outdoor activities on a daily basis. However, no further details are provided regarding the proportion or duration of these activities (e.g. as is the case in Ireland).

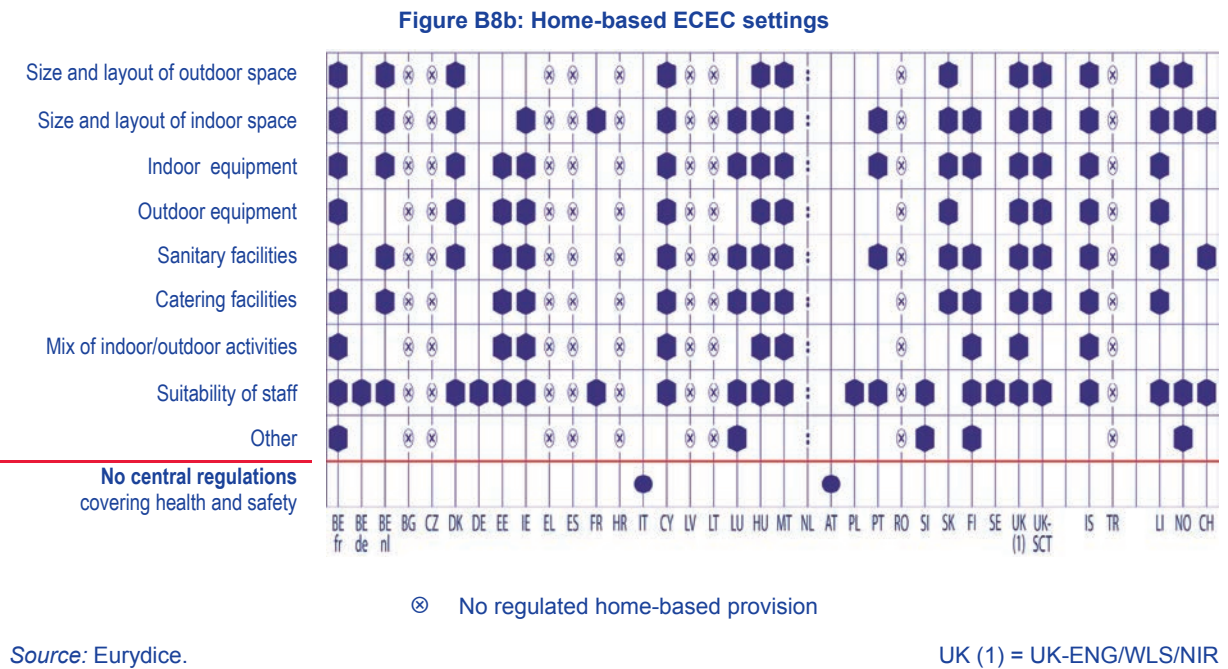
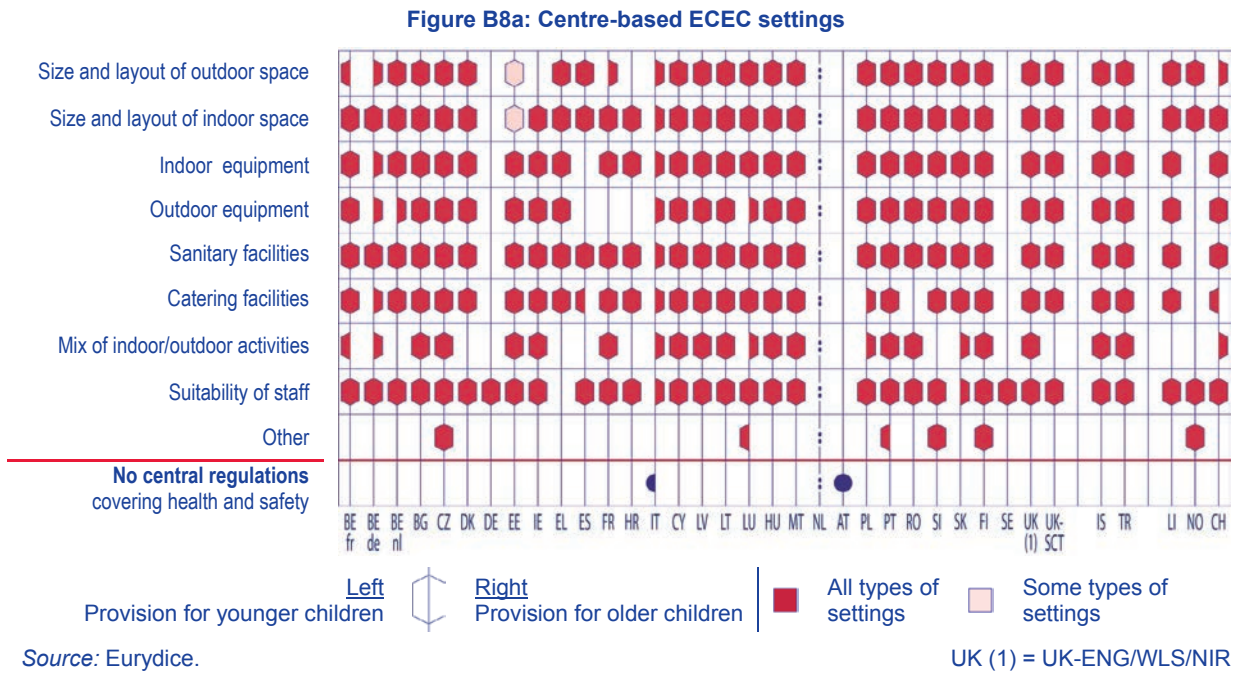
Besides the health and safety aspects listed in Figure B8, regulations can also cover other issues, including the general suitability of the environment for children (e.g. Finland and Norway) or more specific environmental issues such as acoustic quality, ventilation or lightening (e.g. the Czech Republic, Greece (private settings), Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia). The facilities provided for educational staff may also be covered (e.g. Slovenia).

A comparison of health and safety requirements in home-based and centre-based settings shows many similarities. For example, virtually all countries address the suitability of staff for working with children in home-based settings. The aspects that are unregulated with respect to home-based provision are usually linked to the nature of these settings, which may have limited indoor space and sometimes no direct access to outdoor space (for example, if the setting is based in a private apartment). Therefore, the organisation of outdoor space and equipment, as well as the mix of indoor and outdoor activities are rarely regulated.

Overall, health and safety in ECEC, particularly in centre-based settings, appears to be a highly regulated field, with detailed requirements for the size, layout, facilities and equipment considered necessary to foster the healthy development of children. However, when the demand for ECEC places is higher than supply (which is the case for younger children in almost all European countries, as Figure B12 shows), national authorities may sometimes be obliged to revise their standards for

settings. For example, in Slovenia, in 2010, the central authorities amended the Kindergarten Act (i.e. the main ECEC legislation) to allow buildings originally constructed for purposes other than ECEC (e.g. residential, administrative or office buildings) to be used as ECEC settings. During the same year, 118 buildings of this type were brought into use, allowing the provision of 2 700 additional ECEC places.

**Figure B8: Aspects covered by health and safety regulations, 2012/13**



**Explanatory notes**

The figure refers to health and safety requirements specific to educational settings/provision, and, in particular, ECEC settings/provision. It does not take into consideration those requirements that are common to all public buildings (e.g. fire protection requirements). 'Suitability of staff' refers to regulations to ensure that staff have no criminal convictions which make them unsuitable for working with children, or that they are in good physical and mental health.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE nl):** Health and safety regulations indicated for home-based settings only apply to childminders who are not affiliated to a service, as each service sets its own recommendations.

**Germany:** Regulations vary at *Länder* level. However, only a few *Länder* have detailed regulations, others have none.

**Estonia:** 'Some settings' refer to *koolieelne lasteasutus* only.

**Ireland:** The information provided in the figure does not cover *infant classes* (i.e. provision for children aged between 4 and 6) because the latter are classified as primary education (ISCED 1) within the ISCED classification.

**Spain:** For younger children, central regulations mean regulation by the Autonomous Communities; for older children central regulations mean regulation by the national Ministry of Education.

**Croatia:** The Figure refers to 'no regulated home-based provision'. However, home-based provision is currently being phased in, based on the 'Law on Childminders' approved by Parliament in April 2013.

**Switzerland:** Data refer to regulations at national level in combination with the most common regulations in the cantons.

## IN MOST COUNTRIES, SEVERAL LEVELS OF AUTHORITY SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION OF SETTINGS

A fundamental aspect of quality management is the extent to which standards and regulations are enforced by the responsible authorities. The vast majority of countries employ two separate processes to ensure that all ECEC settings meet the required standards. New settings must undergo a process of accreditation (see Glossary), while existing settings are subject to regular evaluation, which is nearly always carried out by authorities outside the setting ('external evaluation').

Data show that responsibility for both accreditation and external evaluation is usually shared between authorities at different levels. The process might therefore involve central and regional authorities, central and local authorities or regional and local authorities. In some countries, or regions within countries, all three levels are involved.

As accreditation and evaluation of ECEC settings are usually separate processes, they often fall under the responsibility of different authorities. The picture is even more complex in countries with split ECEC provision (see Figure B1), where settings for younger and older children commonly operate under the authority of different ministries, which may assign the responsibility for each process to a different body. For instance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the accreditation of ECEC settings for younger children falls under the responsibility of the agency 'Child and Family' (*Kind en Gezin*), while the evaluation of these settings falls under the Flemish Care Inspectorate (*Zorginspectie*). Both agencies operate under the Ministry of Welfare. The accreditation of settings for children aged over 2½ (*kleuteronderwijs*), is the responsibility of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, while their evaluation falls under the Inspectorate for Education, which works independently from the ministry.

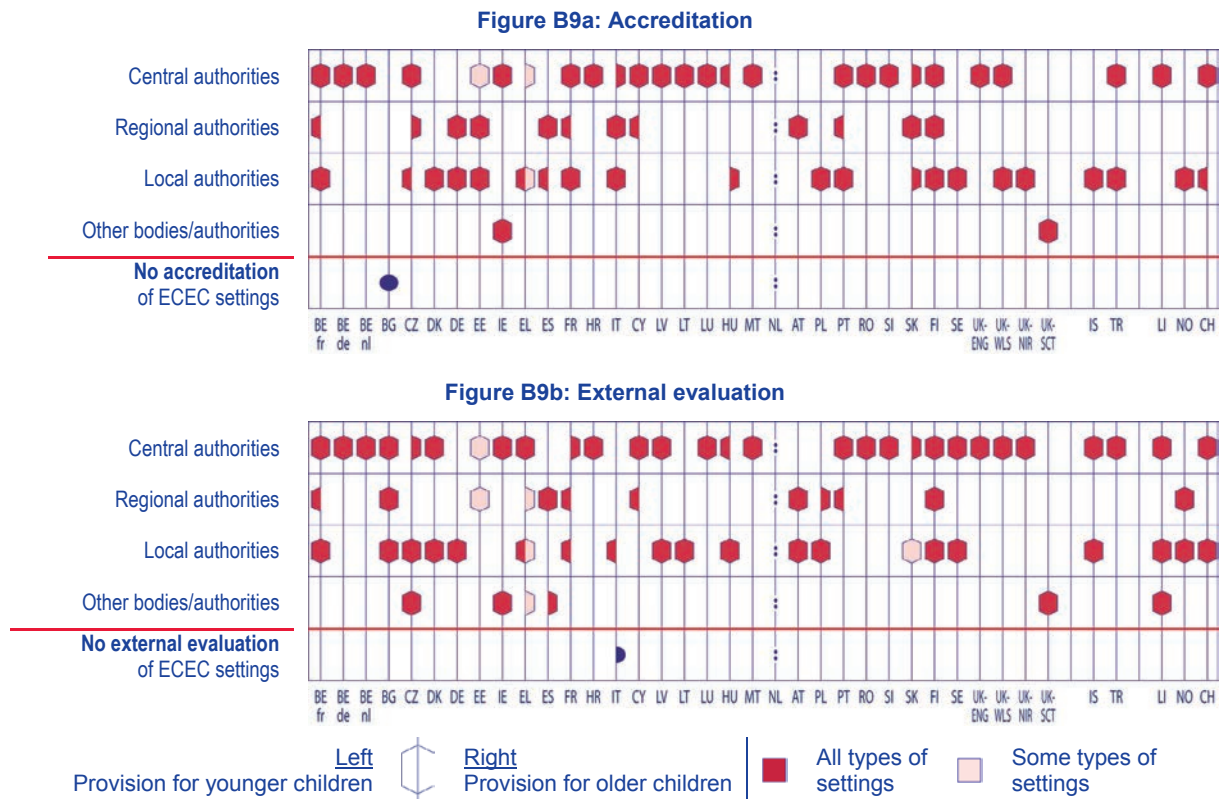
Apart from central, regional and local authorities, the process of accreditation and/or evaluation can also involve other bodies, including independent agencies (Greece, Spain, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Liechtenstein) or non-profit companies operating on behalf of central authorities (Ireland).

In Germany, the primary responsibility for evaluating ECEC settings rests with the providers themselves who are free to choose what tools and procedures they use. The accreditation process, however, requires them to inform the local Youth Welfare Office about how they plan to evaluate their quality. Procedures may be internal and/or external evaluation.

Overall, the indicator shows that despite the complexity in the distribution of responsibilities, virtually all European countries have put systems in place for the accreditation and evaluation of ECEC settings. The exceptions are Bulgaria, which has no system for the accreditation of new ECEC settings, and Italy, where there is no evaluation of settings for older children (*scuola dell'infanzia*).

While Figure B9 does not show the processes for regulated home-based settings, the bodies involved in the accreditation and evaluation of this type of provision are usually the same as for centre-based settings. In the systems with separate ECEC provision for younger and older children (see Figure B1), home-based settings usually follow the same patterns of accreditation and evaluation as the centre-based settings for younger children.

**Figure B9: Bodies responsible for the accreditation and evaluation of centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory notes**

For a definition of 'accreditation of ECEC settings' and 'external evaluation of ECEC settings', see the Glossary. The Figure refers only to authorities that deal specifically with ECEC settings/provision. Authorities that enforce general requirements common to all public buildings or institutions (e.g. fire regulations, food chain control) are not considered. See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Germany:** Local authorities are responsible and must ensure that providers carry out evaluation processes. The only exception is Berlin where external evaluation is carried out by an independent evaluation institute (*Berliner KiTa-Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung*).

**Estonia:** 'Some settings' refer to *koolieelne lasteasutus* only.

**Greece:** Accreditation – central authorities' involvement is limited to pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*). Accreditation and evaluation – local authorities' involvement is limited to infant and child centres (*vrefonipiakos stathmos and paidikos stathmos*), not pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*). Other bodies' involvement is limited to pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*).

**Italy:** Central regulations on the evaluation of the education system have been issued in March 2013, but their implementation has not started yet.

**Slovakia:** External evaluation involves the municipality when it is a founder of the setting.

**Finland:** The primary responsibility for evaluating ECEC settings rests with providers, which are, in most cases, municipalities. Private ECEC providers are obliged to submit a notification to the municipality before setting up services. Regional authorities guide and oversee the ECEC services in their respective regions. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (VALVIRA) ensures that the guidance given by regional agencies is consistent throughout the country and maintains a register of private ECEC providers.

**Latvia, Lithuania and Finland:** These ECEC systems do not refer to the term 'accreditation'. However, there are procedures to ensure that new ECEC settings comply with existing regulations.

**United Kingdom (SCT):** Other – the Care Inspectorate – the independent scrutiny and improvement body for care and children's services.

**Switzerland:** Central authorities correspond to the cantons.

## SETTINGS FOR OLDER CHILDREN ARE OFTEN SUBJECT TO MORE THOROUGH EVALUATION THAN THOSE FOR YOUNGER AGE GROUPS

Figure B9b has shown that virtually all European countries have put in place a system for the external evaluation of ECEC settings. Figure B10 indicates that most countries' central regulations/recommendations stipulate which aspects of provision should be taken into account when evaluating ECEC settings. Only in Germany, Italy and Austria are these not centrally defined. Greece stipulates the elements to be evaluated in settings for children over 4 years old, operating under the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (*nipiagogeio*). However, there are no such specifications for other ECEC settings (*vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos*).

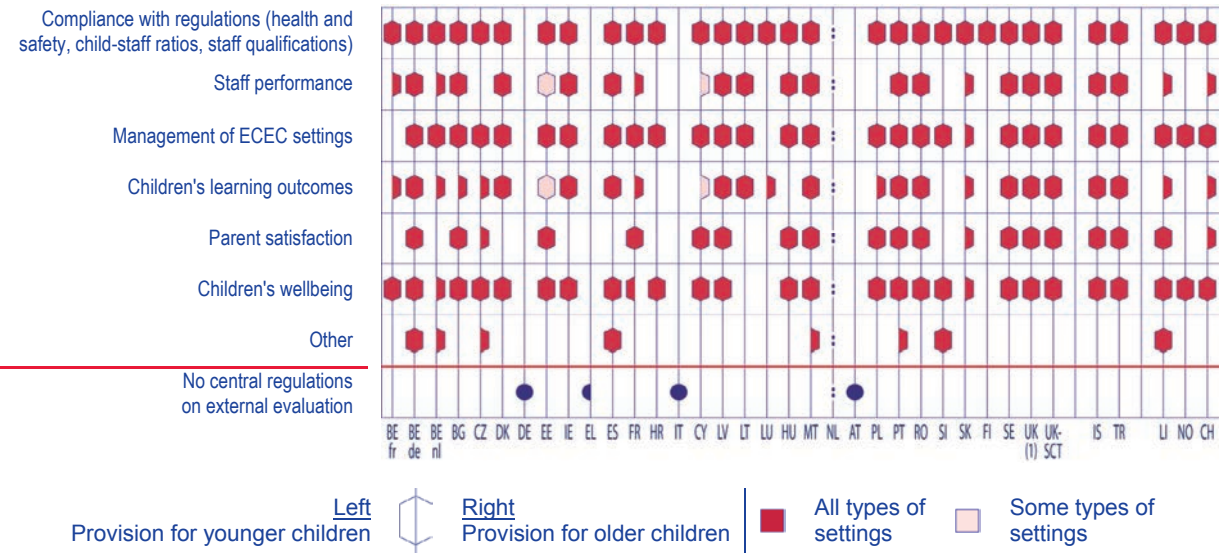
Where the central level defines the aspects of provision to be evaluated, they commonly include compliance with regulations, particularly in respect of health and safety (e.g. premises, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors), child-staff ratios, as well as staff qualifications. However, there are wide variations both between countries and types of setting with respect to any other aspects that might be covered. In particular, in countries with a split system of centre-based ECEC provision (see Figure B1), the evaluation of settings for older children is usually more comprehensive than it is for settings for the younger age group. In Slovakia, for instance, settings for younger children must only comply with general health and safety regulations, whereas settings for older children undergo much wider ranging evaluations covering many other aspects, including staff performance, management, parent satisfaction, children's wellbeing and their learning outcomes. In other countries with the split system of ECEC provision, however, the differences are generally fewer. Children's learning outcomes are often subject to evaluation only in settings for older children (French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). This is consistent with the fact that in split systems, only the settings for older children have a clearly defined educational mission (see Chapter F).

Regardless of the main model of ECEC provision operating in countries (i.e. unitary or split system, see Figure B1), parent satisfaction is rarely considered when evaluating ECEC settings. Similarly, staff performance is taken into account less frequently.

Apart from the aspects listed in the Figure B10, some countries or Communities include additional elements in their evaluation processes. For example, the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic (*mateřské školy* only), Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Liechtenstein all check whether ECEC settings deliver the educational content (i.e. programme or curriculum) set by central authorities (this applies to the ages for which educational guidelines are set). In settings for older children, the German-speaking Community of Belgium evaluates staff wellbeing, extra-curricular cooperation, class councils' activity reports, documents such as school rules and the school education plan, etc. Spain monitors the degree of family participation in ECEC settings.

Although the figure does not represent the situation in regulated home-based settings, countries generally cover the same aspects when evaluating both centre- and home-based settings. Where the system has separate centre-based settings for younger and older children (see Figure B1), the evaluation of home-based settings is often aligned with the evaluation of settings for younger children. Only in Hungary, Portugal and Slovenia, is centre-based provision subject to a significantly greater in-depth evaluation than home-based provision.

**Figure B10: Aspects covered in the external evaluation of centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Explanatory notes**

For a definition of 'external evaluation of ECEC settings', see the Glossary.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Estonia:** 'Some settings' refers to *koolieelne lasteasutus* only.

**Greece:** The specific framework for the external evaluation of pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*) is the responsibility of the newly established central Quality Assurance Agency (2013) but, as yet, it has not been drafted.

**Spain:** The level of family participation in ECEC settings is evaluated.

**Italy:** Central regulations on the evaluation of the education system have been issued in March 2013, but their implementation has not started yet.

**Cyprus:** 'Some settings' refer to kindergardens (*nipiagogeio*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*).

**Finland:** Evaluation is municipalities' responsibility. Parent satisfaction is often taken into account.

**Switzerland:** Central authorities correspond to cantons.





## ORGANISATION

### SECTION III – CAPACITY MONITORING AND DEVELOPMENT

#### PLANNING AND MONITORING CAPACITY IN ECEC INVOLVES DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

The growing demand for increased access to ECEC calls for the implementation of well-structured and comprehensive systems to assess existing capacity, and to plan and develop future provision. In a few countries, central authorities play the dominant role in these processes; this occurs in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Malta and Turkey. However, as Figure B11 shows, across most of Europe, the responsibility for planning and monitoring capacity in ECEC is shared between central and local authorities. In a dozen countries, regional authorities are also involved. In addition, there are a few ECEC systems, including those of Denmark, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Iceland, where the responsibility for both forward planning and capacity monitoring is highly decentralised.

In countries with different types of ECEC provision, in particular, in those which have separate settings for younger and older children (see Figure B1), the authorities involved may vary depending on the type of provision. For example in Spain, the planning and capacity monitoring of ECEC places for younger children involves regional and local authorities, whereas for older children, these processes involve central and regional bodies. The systems with separate ECEC settings may also involve different central authorities in each process. This is, for instance, the case in Turkey, where capacity monitoring and forward planning of provision for younger children fall under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, while the provision for older children is the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education. Similarly, in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the two processes are carried out separately – by the Ministry of Employment, Health and Social Affairs for younger children, and by the Ministry of Education for older children.

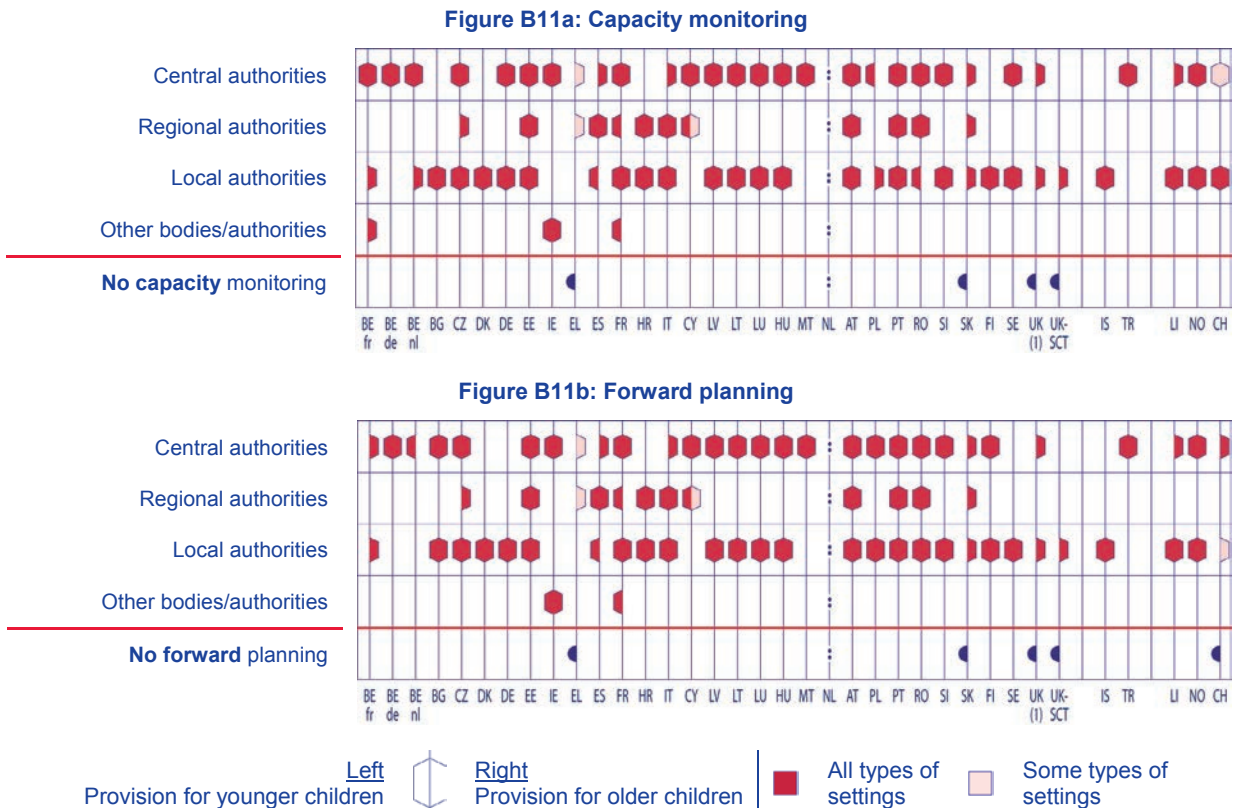
Figure B11 also shows that capacity monitoring is not necessarily carried out by the same authorities who are engaged in forward planning. In Bulgaria and Finland, local authorities are fully responsible for capacity monitoring, while the process of forward planning also involves central bodies. In Finland, for example, central authorities define targets for future education capacity, including the education of future ECEC staff. In contrast, the distribution of responsibilities is reversed in Germany and Sweden, with capacity monitoring shared between central and local authorities, and forward planning carried out largely by local bodies. The process is even more complex in Germany, where the federal level, within its expansion policy, currently supports capacity planning by authorising studies to monitor demand and setting quantitative targets for the expansion of services for children aged 0-3 years.

In addition to central, regional or local authorities, capacity monitoring and planning may involve other bodies. This is the case in Ireland, where both processes involve a non-profit company with charitable status (POBAL) working on behalf of the government to support communities and local agencies. Similarly, in France, capacity monitoring and forward planning of ECEC for young children involves *Le Haut Conseil de la Famille* – an independent body which submits its recommendations to the government. In the French Community of Belgium, founder organisations monitor capacity in their pre-primary schools (*écoles maternelles*).

Overall, the indicator shows that all countries carry out planning and capacity monitoring of provision for older children. However, in a few systems (Greece, Slovakia and all parts of the United Kingdom) neither process is carried out in relation to provision for the younger age group. For example, in Greece, capacity monitoring and forward planning are only carried out in relation to ECEC for the

over-4s, operating under the educational authorities (*nipiagogeio*), but not for other ECEC settings (i.e. *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos*). As there is no publicly subsidised ECEC for younger children in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), there can be no monitoring of supply and demand. In Scotland, such data exists only in relation to provision made under the free ECEC entitlement. In Switzerland, forward planning is carried out only for pre-primary education for the over-4s (*Kindergarten/ecole enfantine/scuola dell'infanzia*).

**Figure B11: Bodies responsible for capacity monitoring and forward planning of centre-based ECEC, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

### **Explanatory notes**

For a definition of 'capacity monitoring' and 'forward planning', see the Glossary.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### **Country specific notes**

**Germany:** The main responsibility lies with the local authorities. However, within the current process of expanding services for children aged 0-3 years, the federal (*Bund*) level has also been involved in both capacity monitoring and forward planning.

**Ireland:** Other bodies/authorities: a non-profit company with charitable status (POBAL) working on behalf of the government.

**Greece:** 'Some settings' refer to pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*).

**France:** Other bodies/authorities: *Le Haut Conseil de la Famille*.

**Cyprus:** 'Some settings' refer to day nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*).

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** As there is no publicly subsidised ECEC for younger children, there can be no monitoring of supply and demand.

**United Kingdom (SCT):** Capacity monitoring and forward planning are carried out by local authorities for publicly subsidised pre-school education (3- and 4-year-olds, 475 hours per year), no capacity monitoring or forward planning is carried out for ECEC provision paid for by parents/carers.

**Switzerland:** Central authorities correspond to cantons. Provision for younger children: most of the cantons (and/or the local authorities) apply some sort of capacity monitoring; the level of detail however differs. Seven cantons also carry out forward planning.

## A SHORTAGE OF ECEC PLACES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN EXISTS IN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Figure B11 has shown that almost all European countries have put systems in place to allow them to monitor whether the supply of publicly subsidised ECEC places meets parental demand. Most countries, therefore, collect data to support these systems.

Where data on the relationship between demand and supply are available, they generally show the same pattern: the demand for publicly subsidised ECEC places is higher than supply, especially for the younger children. Only Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway do not report any significant imbalances between demand and supply for the entire ECEC age range. These four Nordic countries belong to the group of countries where the legal entitlement to publicly subsidised ECEC starts very early, often immediately after the end of parental leave (see Figure B4). Estonia and Slovenia also belong to the group of countries with an early start to legal entitlement, but despite their efforts to widen access to ECEC, the number of places for younger children still does not meet parental demand. For example, recent data show that in Estonia the demand for ECEC for younger children is 5 % higher than supply.

Parents of older children generally face fewer difficulties in finding a publicly subsidised ECEC place. This is linked to the fact that, in many countries, older children are either legally entitled to ECEC, or they are obliged to participate for one or two years before primary education (see Figure B4). However, in one third of European countries, there are imbalances between the demand and supply of places in ECEC for older children. In some cases, only certain types of settings are affected. For example,

In **Cyprus**, the lack of places only affects kindergartens (*nipiagogia*), whereas demand and supply in compulsory pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*) is balanced.

In **Poland**, demand is higher than supply for 3-year-olds in kindergartens (*przedszkole*) and younger children.

The relationship between demand and supply may also vary within countries. For example, in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal and Slovenia, it is easier to find an ECEC place in rural areas than in big cities.

In **Portugal**, geographical imbalances in demand and supply affect mainly older children.

In **Germany**, the availability of ECEC services varies significantly between *Länder*, moreover, there is a shortage of full-time provision.

In **Austria**, demand is greater in rural areas.

Similarly, in **Lithuania**, the greatest problem with access to ECEC is in rural areas, where there is often no provision available. In addition, demand exceeds supply in the major cities, but in smaller towns, provision is stable.

Many European countries are taking measures to ensure that the supply of ECEC places meets demand. The usual approaches include the creation of new programmes by central authorities or the provision of additional funds to the authorities normally responsible for ECEC funding (see Figure D2). Central authorities have been contributing substantial funds for the expansion of ECEC infrastructure in Germany, Spain, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Turkey and Switzerland.

In **Germany**, the federal level has offered the *Länder*, who are normally responsible for ECEC funding, PPS 5.2 billion to cover investment and operational costs for the expansion of ECEC services between 2008-2014. The federal level will continue to contribute PPS 812 million yearly to operational costs from 2015.

In **Spain**, the Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities invested PPS 1 187 million for creating high quality ECEC places for children under 3 years old.

In **Poland**, since 2011, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has been implementing the programme 'Toddler' (*Maluch*) which seeks to help local authorities increase the number of ECEC places for the under-3s. This targeted subsidy cannot exceed 50 % of the costs incurred to provide care for children. In addition, since 2011 in Poland, tax relief has been offered to employers to encourage them to establish settings for the under-3s.

Currently, **Portugal** is building an additional 500 pre-primary education classrooms for children aged between 3 and 6 years old. This programme is partially funded by the Portuguese Central Government and by European funds.

In **Turkey**, all newly built primary schools that have at least six classrooms have to include one to two nursery classrooms. Moreover, the General Directorate of Basic Education has several ongoing national projects to support pre-primary education, in particular, for the purchase of furniture, for setting up parent-child education programmes and developing pre-school social skills.

In **Switzerland**, a Confederation incentive programme has been in operation since 2003 and will run until 2015. It has funded new child day-care facilities, organisations for the co-ordination of care by 'day-care families', and public care facilities which complement school provision. Between 2005 and the end of November 2013, PPS 146 million was invested and 42 695 new places were created.

Some initiatives are planned for the future. For example,

in **Estonia**, the state budgetary strategy 2014-2017 will allow local governments to receive external assistance from the central level for investment in kindergartens.

Latvia, Portugal and Turkey, among other countries, make use of **European Funding programmes** to construct new ECEC settings and extend existing ones. Estonia benefits from support from Norway.

Several countries try to balance ECEC supply and demand by **relaxing standards** or **lightening the administrative** burden.

In the **Czech Republic**, permission to increase the number of children in a group is often issued in order to cope with demand (see Figure B6).

In **Greece**, since 2002, ECEC settings have been allowed to take in children 20 % beyond their designated capacity, if there are sufficient staff and the necessary space.

In **France**, in 2010, the number of places in existing settings was increased by 28 % by allowing them to enrol more children by relaxing the norms set by regulations.

In **Lithuania**, the rules were relaxed in 2010 to facilitate the establishment of private pre-schools, e.g. through a simplification of requirements for sanitary facilities. Furthermore, in 2011, requirements on the use of buildings and premises were eased for newly established ECEC settings, and partial funding (not exceeding 20 hours per week) has been provided. In addition, multifunctional centres, which also deliver ECEC, are being established in rural areas around schools.

**Portugal** also introduced changes to lighten the burden of regulations and encourage the setting up and operation of new ECEC settings.

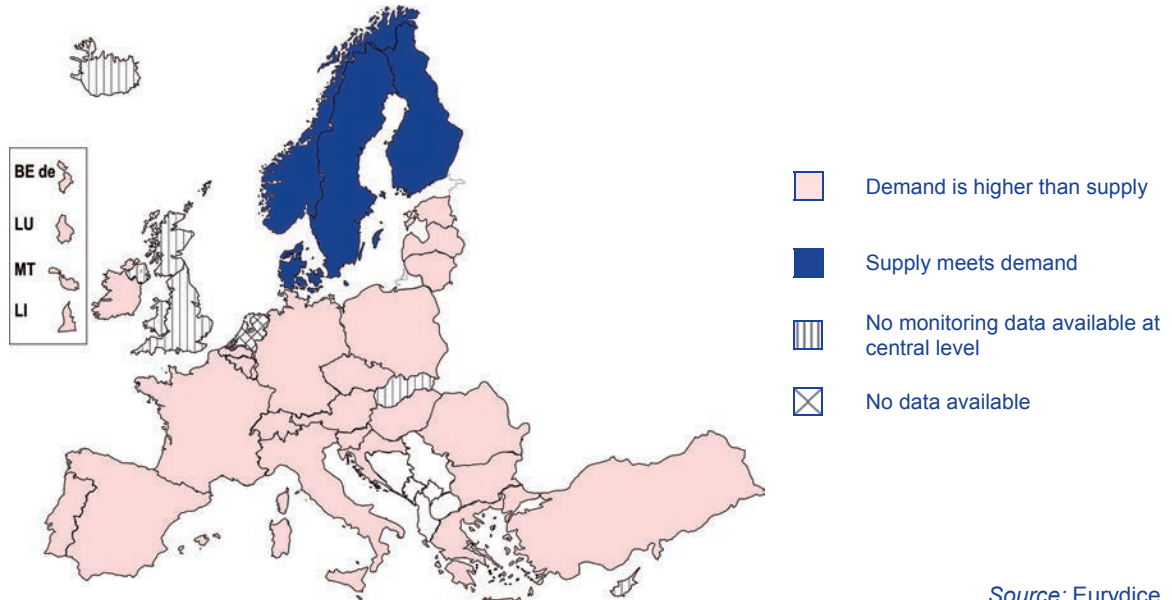
In **Slovakia**, new ECEC places are being created by increasing the number of classes in settings for children over 3 years old (*materská škola*) by adapting other suitable rooms for classroom use.

In **Slovenia**, municipalities can create new ECEC places by raising the maximum number of children per group by two children (see Figure B6). This has been applied in 78 % of groups. Municipalities can also reduce the required size of indoor playrooms. This relaxation of standards is in effect until September 2017.

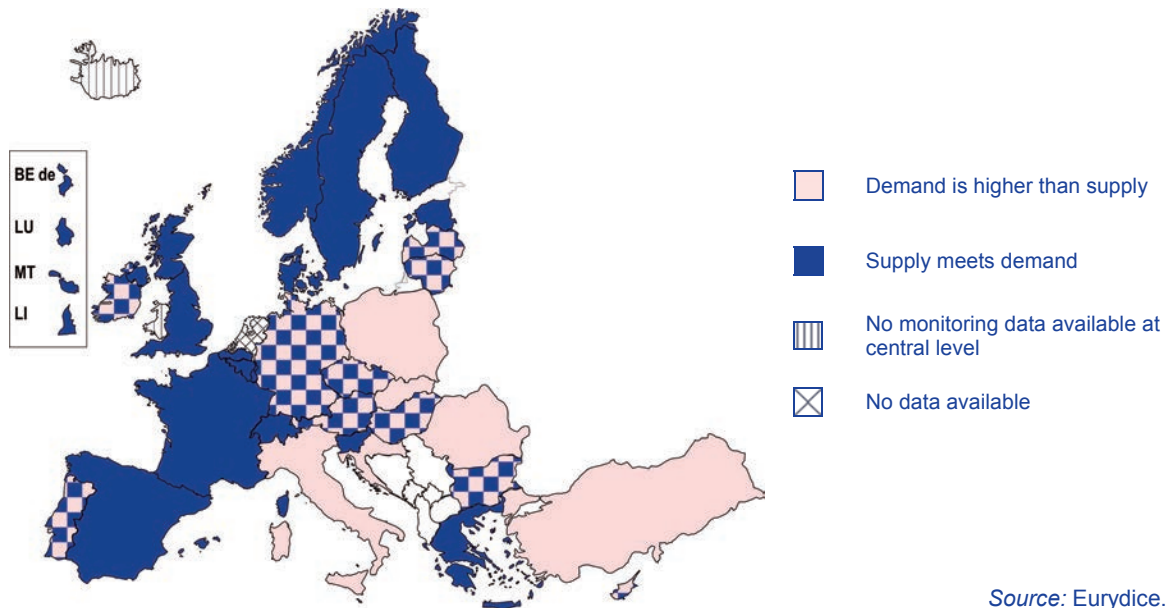
In the Czech Republic and Turkey (pre-primary classes – *Anasınıfları*), ECEC in some settings may be delivered in shifts, with different children in morning and afternoon classes. In addition, in the Czech Republic children can attend nursery schools (*mateřské školy*) part-time, on different days of the week and, in this way, take up only one place.

**Figure B12: Demand and supply of places in publicly subsidised centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure B12a: Younger children**



**Figure B12b: Older children**



### **Explanatory notes**

For a definition of 'capacity monitoring', see the Glossary.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### **Country specific notes**

**Czech Republic:** Demand and supply should be in balance for the last year of ECEC to which children are legally entitled.

**Greece:** Supply meets demand in settings falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (*nipiagogeio*). There are no official central-level data that would allow establishing a relationship between demand and supply in other ECEC settings (*vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos*). However, due to the financial crisis, the demand for publicly subsidised places in these settings is higher than supply.

**Cyprus:** No data for settings operating under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (i.e. *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*). Demand is higher than supply in kindergartens (*nipiagogia*), demand is met in compulsory pre-primary classes (*prodimitiki*).



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**Portugal:** Supply meets demand only for 5-year-olds.

**Sweden:** No data available at national level. However, a recent governmental report (SOU, 2013) shows that supply meets demand in most municipalities. Only approximately 2 % of children have to wait two to three months for a place.

**United Kingdom (ENG/NIR):** The publicly subsidized pre-school provision considered here is the part-time entitlement for children aged 3 and 4 (15 and 12.5 weekly hours respectively). Supply meets demand in terms of places but not necessarily in terms of the number of hours or location of setting.

### Some countries encourage the creation of **alternative structures** or **diversifying provision**.

**Germany** is trying to expand and improve family day care (Tagespflege); a minimum training period of 160 hours for childminders has therefore been recommended.

Similarly, **France** has been trying to diversify ECEC by promoting home-based childminders (introducing 120 hours' mandatory training, see Figure E3) and through subsidies to the private sector (especially to small settings, 'mini-crèches').

**Latvia** passed a regulation establishing subsidised home-based ECEC from September 2013.

The **Hungarian** National Reform Programme 2014-2020 promotes the establishment of home-based ECEC.

### **Other measures** to reconcile supply and demand are in place in some countries.

**Latvia** offers financial support for families whose children are on waiting lists for a place in a public setting and attend private pre-school institutions.

The **United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)** introduced a two-stage application process in 2011/12 in order to ensure that ECEC places are secured for target-age children instead of providing them to underage children.

**Turkey** offers summer pre-school and mobile classrooms to reach more of the children who do not attend regular ECEC settings.



# PARTICIPATION

## SECTION I – STATISTICS: PARTICIPATION RATES

A growing body of research recognizes that participation in high quality ECEC brings significant benefits for children. Good quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is the foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, and personal development <sup>(7)</sup>.

One of the general aims of ECEC is preparing children for compulsory education, and this becomes more important in the educational process the closer children are to starting school (see also Chapter F). The European Commission has highlighted the importance of early entry to the education system and, in 2011, established an EU benchmark on pre-school participation. This benchmark stipulates that by 2020 at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education, which varies across Europe, should be participating in early childhood education <sup>(8)</sup>.

This chapter presents the main statistics on ECEC participation rates currently available for European countries. Using the Eurostat UOE data collection of education statistics, reliable data on enrolment in education institutions from age 3 to 7 is presented for each age group. A combined indicator on ECEC participation of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education is provided to show the progress towards the European benchmark. Another dataset – the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) – is used to show childcare arrangements for children under and over 3 years of age. The number of hours children attend ECEC and the percentage of children not in ECEC (children cared for only by their parents) are also discussed.

The second part of the chapter explores the connections between ECEC participation, student outcomes and student background. The data is based on two international student achievement surveys (Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)). Both surveys clearly show the benefits of ECEC attendance. Unfortunately, students from disadvantaged backgrounds seem less likely to attend ECEC than children from better off families.

### 93 PER CENT OF CHILDREN ATTEND ECEC BEFORE STARTING COMPULSORY EDUCATION

According to the most recent data (2011), the Europe-wide benchmark i.e. by 2020 at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education should be participating in early childhood education, has almost been achieved. On average in the EU-28, 93 % of children in this age group are already in ECEC. In more than one third of European countries, the participation rate is higher than the EU benchmark. Latvia, Austria and Hungary are very close to the target with rates between 90 and 95 %.

However, a few countries still have a long way to go to achieve the target participation rate. In 2011, the participation of children in the specified age group in centre-based ECEC programmes, defined as ISCED 0, was between 70 and 79 % in Greece, Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Finland and Switzerland. The lowest participation rate in early education was in Turkey, reaching around 43 %. However, there has been a sharp rise in the participation rate in Turkey: compared to 2001, the rate has increased by more than 31 %.

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<sup>(7)</sup> COM(2011) 66 final.

<sup>(8)</sup> Ibid.



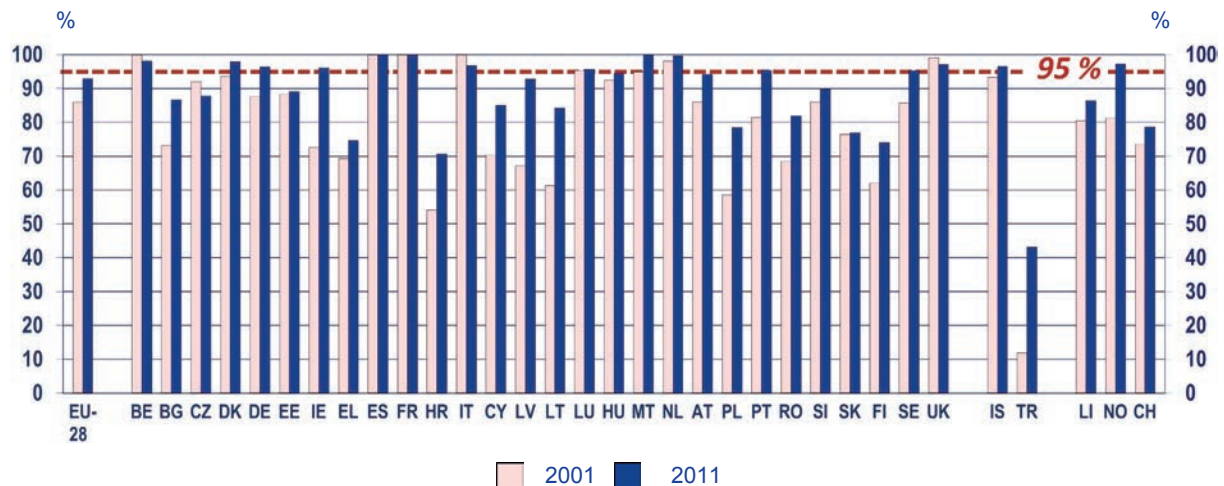
## PARTICIPATION

Over the period 2001 to 2011, on average in the EU-28, the participation rate for this age group in early education increased by 7 percentage points. There has been a year-on-year percentage growth in participation over the last ten years.

In most countries, between 2001 and 2011, there was an increase in ECEC participation rates among children in this age group. Alongside Turkey, sharp increases during the last ten years were also observed in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (ranging between 20-25 %). In Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Portugal, Romania, Finland and Norway, the participation rates in ECEC for this age group rose by 12-17 %.

There were very few cases where the participation rates had declined. However, in Belgium and Italy, there was a very small reduction which might be due to the 'ceiling effect,' when 100 % participation was recorded in 2001. In the Czech Republic, the participation rates decreased by 4 % over the ten year period.

**Figure C1: Participation rates in ECEC (children between 4-years-old and the starting age of compulsory education) as a percentage of the corresponding age group, 2001, 2011**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
<b>2001</b>	85.9	100.0	73.2	92.0	93.7	87.7	88.3	72.6	69.3	100.0	100.0	54.1	100.0	70.4	67.2	61.2	95.3
<b>2011</b>	92.9	98.1	86.6	87.8	97.9	96.4	89.1	96.1	74.6	100.0	100.0	70.6	96.8	85.0	92.7	84.2	95.6
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
<b>2001</b>	92.5	95.0	98.1	86.0	58.5	81.5	68.5	86.0	76.4	62.0	85.7	99.0	93.3	11.9	80.4	81.3	73.5
<b>2011</b>	94.5	100.0	99.6	94.3	78.4	95.4	82.0	89.8	76.9	74.0	95.3	97.0	96.5	43.1	86.3	97.2	78.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Explanatory note

Population data refer to 1 January, data on enrolment refer in general to the count on a given date at the beginning of the school/academic year.

### Country specific notes

**Croatia** and **Liechtenstein**: 2003 data instead of 2001.

**United Kingdom**: Break in series due to change in methodology between 2001 and 2011.

**Switzerland**: 2002 data instead of 2001.





## **ECEC ATTENDANCE IS AT ITS PEAK WHEN CHILDREN ARE 4 YEARS OLD**

As ECEC is usually voluntary, participation gradually increases with children's age and, of course, rapidly diminishes as children start compulsory primary education. Unfortunately, it is difficult to acquire reliable and comparable data by age for European countries for the entire period when children attend ECEC. UOE data collection of education statistics provides reliable data on enrolment in education institutions starting at age 3, while European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) provides data on childcare arrangements (see Figure C3). Both these datasets have shortcomings with respect to ECEC, as defined in this report. The UOE data are restricted to educational centre-based programmes classified as ISCED 0 (according to UNESCO 1997 classification). Although EU-SILC data covers the entire spectrum of childcare arrangements, it has low sample sizes and therefore data for each age is not available in many countries.

The UOE data shows that participation rates in educational programmes steadily increase with each year of age. In 2011, on average in the EU-28, the participation rate of 3-year-old children in pre-primary education was 82 %. The participation rate of 4-year-old children in educational programmes (pre-primary and primary education) was 91 %, and the rates for 5-year-olds, 6-year-olds and 7-year-olds rose with age from 95 % to 98 % and 99 % respectively. Although most children in the majority of European countries already attend centre-based pre-primary education programmes when they are 3 years old, ECEC participation is at its peak at the age of 4, when it reaches 87 % in the EU-28. Afterwards, with each year of age, gradually more children are enrolled in primary education. In 2011, on average in EU-28, 16 % of 5-year olds attended ISCED 1. The numbers reached 75 % for 6-year-olds. Finally, virtually all 7-year-olds (99 %) attended primary education.

There are some exceptions to this general trend. Children aged 3 did not attend educational centre-based programmes in Greece, Turkey, Liechtenstein and Switzerland (the participation rate of this age group was less than 5 %). In most of these countries, ECEC programmes classified as ISCED 0 are normally not available for children younger than 4 years. Approximately 50 % of 3-year-olds attended ISCED 0 in Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Poland and Finland.

Ireland and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) have the earliest start of enrolment in ISCED 1. In Ireland, from age 4, children may be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools, which are formally regarded as primary education (ISCED 1). In the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), children start compulsory primary school between 4 years and 2 months and 5 years and 2 months. Therefore, 30 % of 4-year-olds in the United Kingdom and 39 % of 4-year olds in Ireland are already enrolled in ISCED 1.

In contrast, most 6-year-olds attend pre-primary educational programmes in Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Finland and Sweden. However, in Poland, over the period 2009-2014, the age of entry into primary education is being gradually lowered from 7 to 6 years. In 2015, all 6-year-olds will be obliged to start primary education.

Moreover, 6-8 % of 7-year-olds attend pre-primary education in the Czech Republic, Latvia and Romania. In Romania, although the official age of starting primary school was 6, parents could choose to enrol their 6-year-old child either in ECEC or in primary school. Therefore, many children started primary school at age 7. Only since 2012, it is mandatory to start primary education at age 6.

A percentage of 6- and 7-year-olds or, in some exceptional cases, even older children remain in ECEC in those education systems that apply maturity, readiness for school or language criteria for admission to primary education (see Figure F6).

Figure C2: Participation rates in pre-primary and primary education (ISCED 0 and 1), by age, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

**Explanatory note**

This indicator gives the participation rates in ISCED 0 and 1 for single years from ages 3 to 7 and shows the enrolment pattern in education at the early ages. For some countries, enrolment rates appear to exceed 100 %. This is because they are calculated on the basis of two data sets (population and education) derived from different surveys carried out at different dates in the year. The figure has been proportionally rounded down to show 100.

Population data refer to 1 January 2011, data on enrolment refer in general to the count on a given date at the beginning of the school/academic year 2010/11.

**Country specific notes**

**Belgium:** Data exclude independent private institutions and the data for the German-speaking Community.

**Greece:** Participants at ISCED 0 aged 6 years include those aged 7 or more.

**Poland:** Participants at ISCED 0 aged 7 years include those aged 8 to 10. Participants at ISCED 1 aged 6 years include those aged 5.

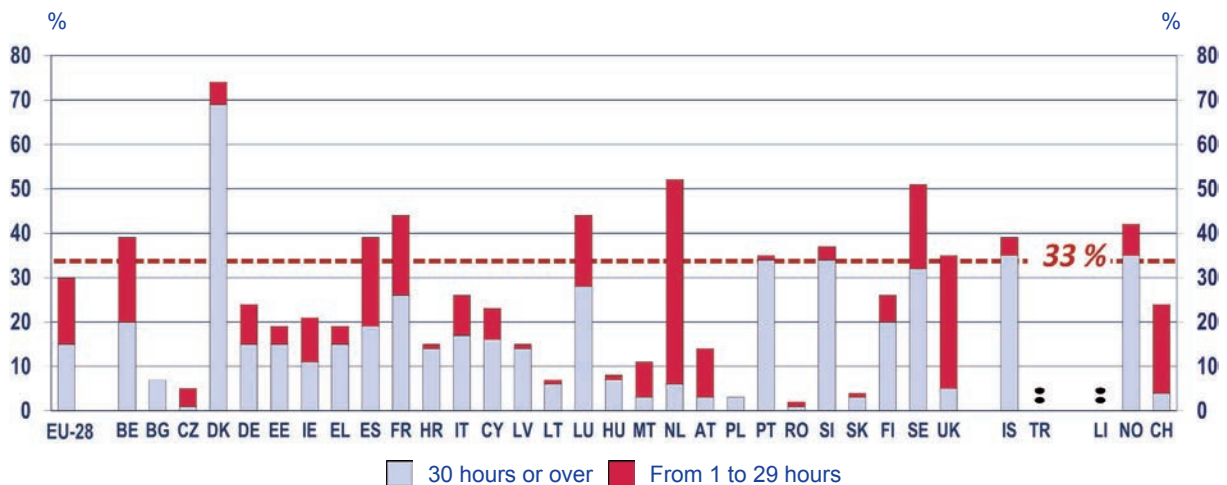
**Turkey:** Participants at ISCED 0 aged 5 years include those aged 6.

## ECEC PARTICIPATION AMONG CHILDREN UNDER 3 IS VERY LOW

Early childhood education and care arrangements for the youngest children vary in different countries (see Chapter B and National System Information Sheets) and families have a range of options from which to choose. Formal provision may include various centre-based settings as well as home-based childminders. Other less formal possibilities, which are not within the scope of this report, include babysitters, nannies and child minding by relatives or other adults). Moreover, European countries have established varying childcare leave policies, with well-paid childcare leave (including maternity, paternal and parental leave) lasting from 12 weeks to two years (see Figure B3).

Comparable data on ECEC attendance of the youngest children in European countries has, up to now, only been available via the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions. The indicator on the proportion of children in 'formal care' (see Figure C3) includes pre-school or compulsory education, childcare at centre-based services outside school hours and childcare at day-care centres. It is important to note that 'formal care' does not include regulated home-based ECEC<sup>(9)</sup>, which constitutes an important part of childcare in several countries (see Figure B2 and National System Information Sheets).

**Figure C3: Participation rates of children under the age of 3 in ECEC, by hours per week, 2011**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
30 hours or over	15	20	7	1	69	15	15	11	15	19	26	14	17	16	14	6	28
From 1 to 29 hours	15	19	0	4	5	9	4	10	4	20	18	1	9	7	1	1	16
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
30 hours or over	7	3	6	3	3	34	1	34	3	20	32	5	35	:	:	35	4
From 1 to 29 hours	1	8	46	11	0	1	1	3	1	6	19	30	4	:	:	7	20

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data extracted November 2013).

### Explanatory note

This indicator shows the percentage of children in 'formal care' over the population of each age group. Formal care includes pre-school or compulsory education, childcare in centre-based services outside school hours and childcare at day-care centres organised/controlled by a by public or private structure. This excludes home-based care.

<sup>(9)</sup> EU-SILC estimates of home-based care are unreliable in most countries.



The data shows that ECEC attendance among children under 3 is very low. In 2002, the ‘Barcelona target for childcare facilities’ was agreed, with the aim that by 2010 childcare should be provided for 33 % of children under 3 years old <sup>(10)</sup>. However, in 2011, only ten European Union countries (as well as Iceland and Norway) had reached the Barcelona target. Denmark stands out with 74 % of under-3s in ECEC, 69 % of which attend formal care for 30 hours or more per week. In the Netherlands and Sweden, every second child under 3 years old is enrolled an ECEC programme. In the Netherlands, as part-time work is widespread (Eurostat, 2013), most young children attend ECEC part-time.

In Belgium, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Iceland and Norway, ECEC attendance rates of children under 3 range between 40 and 45 %. In Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, approximately every third child under 3 is in formal care at least some hours per week.

In contrast, ECEC participation among under-3s was especially low (approximately 10 % or less) in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The rates were approximately 15 % in Croatia, Latvia and Austria, and approximately 20 % in Estonia, Ireland and Greece.

### **CHILDREN SPEND 26-29 HOURS PER WEEK IN ECEC**

The proportion of children attending ECEC reflects the accessibility and coverage of the ECEC network, but another important dimension to consider is whether programmes cover the working day, the school day, or provide care for only several hours a week. This has implications for children, parents, and, in case of publicly subsidised services, public funding. A longer day enables children to receive more individualised instruction, as well as more time interacting with their peers – both of which can lead to long-term benefits (Ackerman, Barnett and Robin, 2005). A longer day enables parents to engage in gainful employment and, often, save money on childcare services. However, a longer day of subsidised ECEC implies higher public expenditure.

On average, in the EU-28, in 2011, children under 3 years of age attended ECEC for 26 hours per week, while children over 3 years of age spent 29 hours per week in ECEC. These figures include after-school childcare. The longer hours for children aged over 3 might be related to the fact that pre-primary education is free of charge for this age group, for at least some hours per week, in most European countries (see Figure D5).

For the youngest children, the United Kingdom stands out with relatively low average weekly hours in centre-based ECEC, namely 14 hours (which is less than 3 hours per day). Under 3s attend ECEC only for 18-21 hours during a typical week in the Czech Republic, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland. In contrast, the youngest ones spend more than 35 hours per week in centre-based ECEC in Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia and Iceland. The typical weekly attendance is close to 40 hours in Latvia, Poland and Portugal.

Although on average, older children attend centre-based ECEC for longer hours, the typical week includes only ca. 19-22 hours in Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. Children over 3 spend approximately 25-27 hours in ECEC in Luxembourg, Malta, Austria and Romania. The typical number of hours spent in ECEC per week is close to 40 in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Portugal.

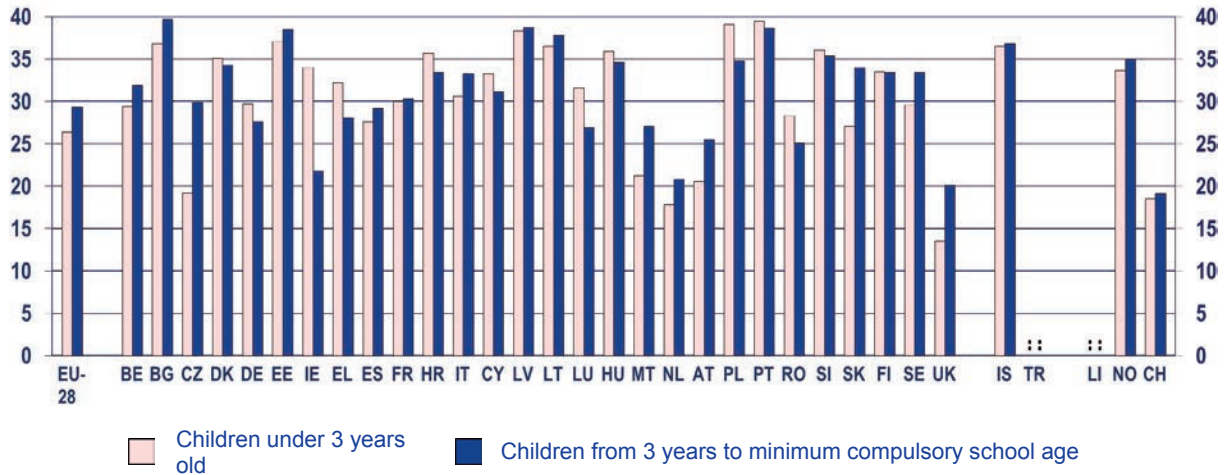
In most European countries, the weekly hours of attendance in ECEC do not differ much between ages (the difference was less than an hour per day or five hours per week). However, there are a few exceptions. For example, in Ireland, children under the age of 3 spend, on average, 12 hours more in

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<sup>(10)</sup> SN 100/1/02 REV 1, Barcelona European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 2002

ECEC than children over 3. The trend is the reverse in the Czech Republic, where older children spend almost 11 hours more per week in ECEC than the younger ones. Children above the age of 3 spend on average six to seven hours more per week in ECEC than children up to the age of 2 in Slovakia, Malta and the United Kingdom.

**Figure C4: Average number of hours spent per week in ECEC, by age group, 2011**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
< 3 years old	26.4	29.4	36.8	19.2	35.1	29.7	37.1	34.0	32.2	27.6	30.0	35.7	30.6	33.3	38.3	36.5	31.6
> 3 years old	29.3	31.9	39.7	29.9	34.3	27.6	38.5	21.8	28.0	29.2	30.3	33.4	33.3	31.1	38.7	37.8	26.9
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
< 3 years old	35.9	21.2	17.8	20.6	39.1	39.5	28.3	36.0	27.1	33.5	29.6	13.5	36.5	:	:	33.6	18.5
> 3 years old	34.6	27.1	20.8	25.5	34.8	38.6	25.1	35.4	34.0	33.4	33.4	20.1	36.8	:	:	35.0	19.1

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data extracted November 2013).

**Explanatory note**

Only children attending ECEC are included when counting the average number of hours per week in ECEC. The data is based on a typical (usual) week around the reference period. A 'typical week' should be understood as one which is representative of the period as a whole. Where it is difficult to identify a typical week because they vary too much, then the information should be given for the first week of the reference period not affected by holidays or other special circumstances (e.g. illness).

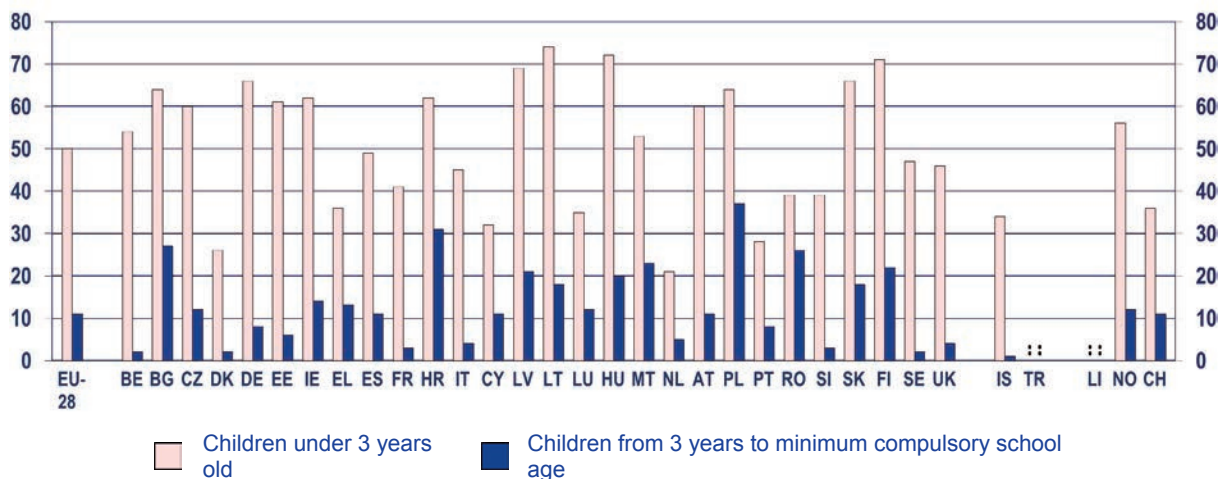
## IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES MANY CHILDREN OVER 3 YEARS OF AGE ARE TAKEN CARE OF ONLY BY PARENTS

After discussing participation in ECEC, in order to fully understand the childcare picture in Europe, it is worth considering how many children are taken care of solely by their parents. On average, in the EU-28, in 2011, 50 % of children under the age of 3 were not in any form of centre- or home-based ECEC, nor taken care of by any other adults such as grandparents, other household members (outside parents), other relatives, friends or neighbours. The number was considerably smaller – only 11 % – for children aged between 3 years and compulsory school age.

Approximately 70-74 % of children under 3 years old were cared for only by their parents in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Finland. The numbers were approximately 60-66 % in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Croatia, Austria, Poland and Slovakia.

The situation is very different for older children, most of whom are in some form of centre-based ECEC (see Figure C2). Still, remarkably, in Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania, more than 25 % of children over the age of 3 were cared for only by their parents.

**Figure C5: Children cared for only by their parents, by age group, 2011**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
< 3 years old	50	54	64	60	26	66	61	62	36	49	41	62	45	32	69	74	35
> 3 years old	11	2	27	12	2	8	6	14	13	11	3	31	4	11	21	18	12
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
< 3 years old	72	53	21	60	64	28	39	39	66	71	47	46	34	:	:	56	36
> 3 years old	20	23	5	11	37	8	26	3	18	22	2	4	1	:	:	12	11

Source: Eurostat, SILC (data extracted November 2013).

### Explanatory note

This indicator shows the percentage of children cared for only by their parents in relation to the total population of each age group.



## PARTICIPATION

### SECTION II – RELATIONSHIP WITH OUTCOMES AND BACKGROUND

This section explores the connections between ECEC participation, student outcomes and student background. The data is drawn from two international student achievement surveys – PISA and PIRLS. These surveys examine student abilities in various fields of knowledge and gather a vast array of data on student characteristics such as their educational background (including ECEC participation), family background, attitudes, etc. International student achievement data make it possible to examine whether students who attend ECEC achieve higher results than their peers who do not, and whether children from some families are more likely to attend ECEC than others.

The two surveys analysed differ slightly in their focus and target group. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. In most countries, students of this age are approaching the end of compulsory education. While monitoring student performance in these three main subject areas, each PISA survey also has a particular focus on a single area. This section presents the results from the latest PISA survey from 2012, which focuses on mathematics.

The IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) measures the reading achievement of pupils largely in the fourth year of schooling – described in the survey as 'fourth graders'. In most countries, the pupils are approximately 10 years old and attend primary education. The section presents results from the last PIRLS survey, which was administered in 2011.

PISA addressed the question on ECEC participation directly to students, while PIRLS asked parents or guardians, in the context of a larger set of questions about preparations for primary schooling. PISA provides information only on whether a student attended ECEC for (i) a year or less than a year, (ii) longer than a year, or finally (iii) not at all. PIRLS, however, allows greater precision in specifying the exact number of years' participation in ECEC. Both surveys clearly show the benefits of ECEC participation.

#### STUDENTS ATTENDING ECEC FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS

The benefits of early childhood education are evident in most European education systems. PISA 2012 reveals that 15 year-old students who attended ECEC for more than one year tended to achieve better results in mathematics than those who attended ECEC for up to one year or not at all. On average in participating EU-28 countries, those students who attended ECEC outperformed those who did not by 35 points – the equivalent of almost one full year of formal schooling.

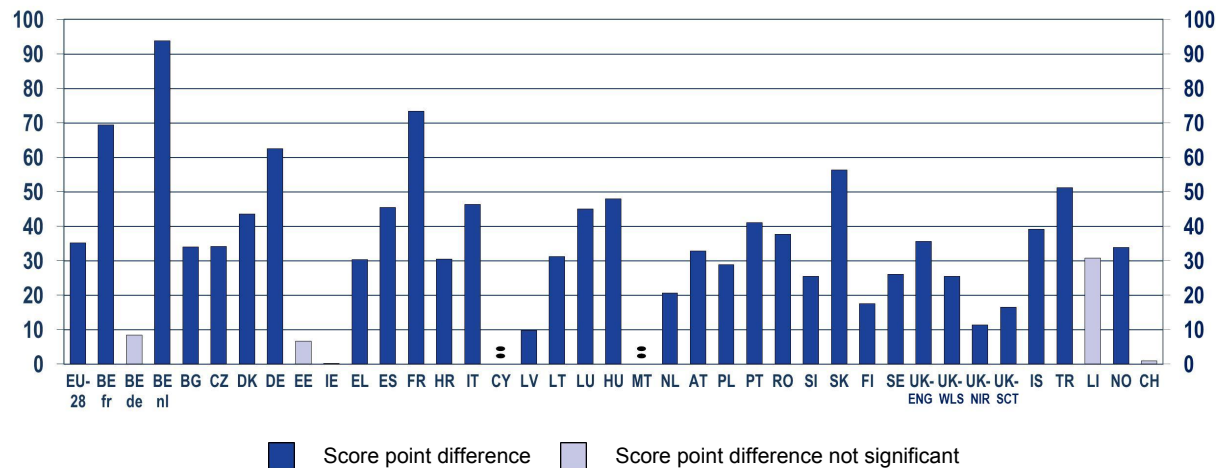
The difference between students who had attended ECEC for more than one year and those who had attended ECEC for up to one year, or not at all, was especially high – almost 94 points – in Belgium (Flemish Community). It was approximately 60-70 points higher in Belgium (French Community), Germany, France and Slovakia. In most of these education systems, attending pre-primary education for at least one year is almost universal.

Attending pre-primary education has little or no relationship to later performance in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Estonia, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

However, it is important to note that ECEC attendance seems to have less influence on the educational results of 15-year-old students than many other variables, for example socio-economic background, gender or student motivation. On average, in participating EU-28 countries, ECEC attendance explained only about 2 % of variation in student results. Still, the results suggest

that there is a significant relationship between earlier entry to the education system and mathematics results even after approximately ten years of schooling.

**Figure C6: Score point difference in mathematics associated with attending ECEC for more than one year, 15-year-olds, 2012**



	EU-28	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
2012	35.3	69.4	8.5	93.8	34.0	34.2	43.5	62.5	6.7	0.2	30.3	45.5	73.3	30.5	46.3	:	9.7	31.2	45.1	47.9
S.E.	1.33	7.62	7.77	9.97	4.61	7.25	2.97	4.75	4.27	2.99	3.65	2.78	5.61	4.55	2.95	:	4.50	3.13	3.77	9.32
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH	
2012	:	20.7	32.9	28.9	41.0	37.6	25.5	56.3	17.6	26.1	35.6	25.5	11.4	16.6	39.1	51.2	30.8	33.8	0.9	
S.E.	:	8.13	5.97	4.27	3.91	5.05	3.19	6.39	3.29	3.28	4.31	3.44	5.50	4.11	6.97	8.66	17.64	4.11	5.52	

S.E.: Standard errors x = Score point difference not significant

Source: OECD, PISA 2012 database.

**Explanatory note**

This indicator is based on linear regression analysis with one variable introduced at student level, namely a dichotomous variable whether a student attended ECEC programmes for more than a year. Not attending ECEC and attending for a maximum of one year were merged into one category.

Results from PISA are reported using scales with an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100, set for students from all OECD countries participating in PISA.

Statistically insignificant score point differences are marked in lighter shades. Comparisons are based on statistical significance testing on p<.05 level. This means that the probability of making a false statement is set at less than 5 %.

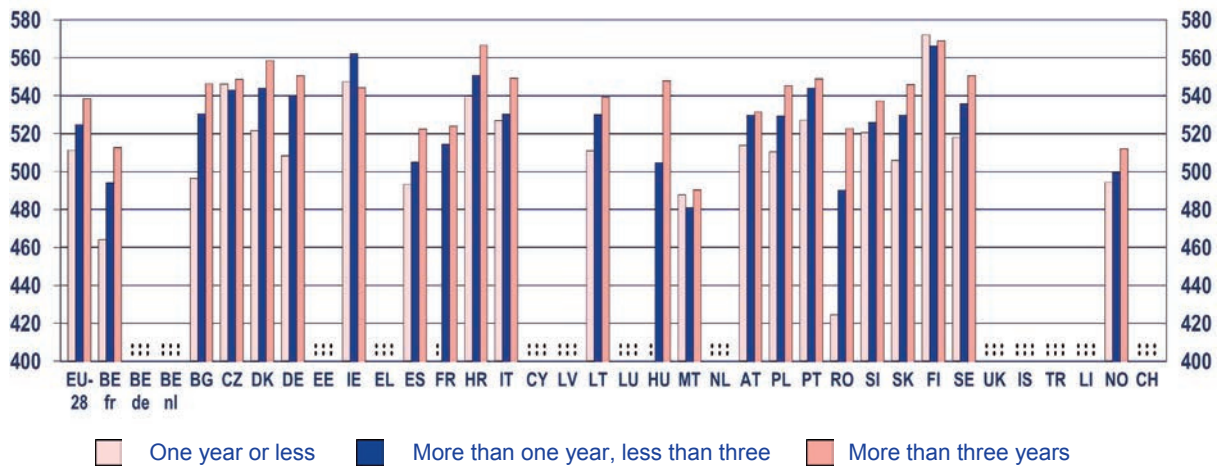
**CHILDREN WHO SPEND LONGER PERIODS OF TIME IN ECEC READ BETTER WHEN IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Evidence from PIRLS 2011 indicates that students who have spent longer periods of time in ECEC are better prepared to enter and succeed in primary education. For most of the European countries participating in PIRLS 2011, the data shows that the longer the child spends in ECEC, the better the reading results. On average, in participating EU-28 countries, fourth grade students attending ECEC for one year or less, scored the lowest on the PIRLS scale (511 points). The children attending ECEC for more than one year, but less than three years, had slightly better results (525 points), and those who spent three years or more in ECEC scored the highest (536 points). Reading achievement results differed statistically significantly between the three analysed participation in ECEC periods in Denmark, Croatia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The length of ECEC attendance does not correlate to reading achievement results of fourth graders in the Czech Republic, France, Malta, Austria and Finland.



**Figure C7: Average reading achievement scores by length of ECEC attendance, for fourth graders, 2011**



Source: IEA, PIRLS 2011 database.

	EU-28	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT
<= 1 year	511	464	:	:	496	546	522	508	:	547	:	493	516	540	527	:	:	511
S.E.	2.03	16.81	:	:	8.49	5.86	8.21	7.57	:	3.08	:	5.72	20.31	2.39	8.73	:	:	3.73
1-3 years	525	494	:	:	530	543	544	540	:	562	:	505	514	551	530	:	:	530
S.E.	1.04	4.68	:	:	5.08	2.64	3.05	2.97	:	2.38	:	3.01	3.43	2.79	3.13	:	:	3.77
> 3 years	539	513	:	:	546	549	558	551	:	544	:	522	524	567	549	:	:	539
S.E.	1.05	2.82	:	:	3.32	2.47	1.70	2.46	:	7.24	:	2.47	2.82	2.12	2.24	:	:	2.32
	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
<= 1 year	:	461	488	:	514	510	527	425	521	506	572	518	:	:	:	:	494	:
S.E.	:	29.98	8.54	:	6.31	2.90	4.69	10.26	4.07	6.70	2.94	7.40	:	:	:	:	9.27	:
1-3 years	:	505	481	:	530	529	544	490	526	530	566	536	:	:	:	:	500	:
S.E.	:	5.76	1.89	:	3.01	3.01	3.10	5.09	3.41	3.35	2.69	2.98	:	:	:	:	3.47	:
> 3 years	:	548	490	:	532	545	549	523	537	546	569	551	:	:	:	:	512	:
S.E.	:	2.44	5.74	:	2.09	2.91	2.52	3.88	1.96	2.05	2.20	2.35	:	:	:	:	2.41	:

Source: IEA, PIRLS 2011 database.

**Explanatory note**

PIRLS uses the centre point of the scale (500) as a point of reference that remains constant from assessment to assessment. Cells with less than 50 students (unweighted data) have been marked as missing.

**Country specific notes**

**Netherlands** and **United Kingdom (NIR)** were excluded from the analysis due to low response rates. **United Kingdom (ENG)** did not administer the questions on ECEC.

**ECEC PARTICIPATION HAS A STRONGER EFFECT ON DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN’S READING SCORES**

It has been widely acknowledged that participation in ECEC is very important for disadvantaged children. PIRLS 2011 data supports this view, but it also shows that pre-primary programmes can give all children, regardless of background, a good start in their lifelong learning.

PIRLS 2011 data show that the beneficial impact of ECEC on reading achievement is stronger for children from families with a low level of education, than for those children who have at least one parent with tertiary level education. On average, in the EU-28, the reading achievement of children who attended ECEC for more than one year and came from families with low levels of education was 18 points (standard error 2.6) higher than the scores for children from the same background who



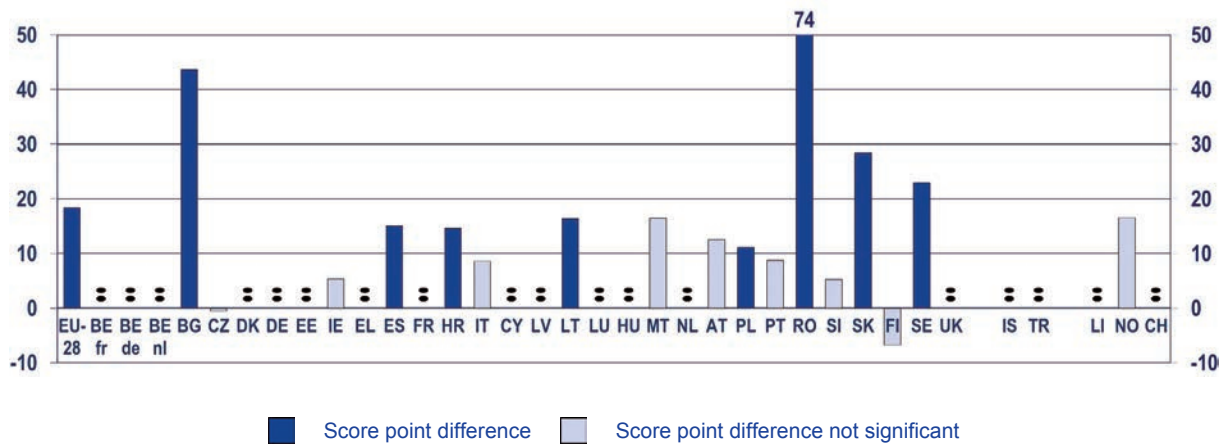
PARTICIPATION

attended ECEC for only one year or not at all. The impact of ECEC on children from highly educated families corresponded to 9 points (standard error 2.6).

In half of the European countries with available data, fourth grade children whose parents had no tertiary education achieved better results after attending ECEC for at least one year. Score point difference in reading achievement associated with attending ECEC for more than one year for children from families with low educational levels was especially high in Romania – reaching 74 points. In Bulgaria, it was 44 points. The difference was also pronounced in Slovakia and Sweden – over 20 points.

The higher impact of ECEC on academic achievement for children from disadvantaged families seems to diminish as they progress through school. PISA 2012 results in mathematics indicate that in almost all countries, ECEC attendance seemed to make no significant difference to the performance of disadvantaged 15-year-olds in comparison with their better off peers (OECD, 2013).

**Figure C8: Score point difference in reading achievement associated with attending ECEC for more than one year, for fourth graders from families with low levels of education, 2011**



	EU-28	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT
No tertiary	18.4	:	:	:	43.7	-0.5	:	:	:	5.4	:	15.0	:	14.6	8.5	:	:	16.3
S.E.	2.62	:	:	:	10.46	8.60	:	:	:	5.27	:	7.21	:	3.61	10.05	:	:	5.26
	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
No tertiary	:	:	16.5	:	12.5	11.1	8.7	74.1	5.2	28.4	-6.7	23.0	:	:	:	:	16.5	:
S.E.	:	:	13.82	:	7.86	3.83	5.85	11.26	5.36	7.08	5.49	9.11	:	:	:	:	11.56	:

S.E.: Standard errors x = Score point difference not significant

Source: IEA, PIRLS 2011 database.

**Explanatory note**

PIRLS uses the centre point of the scale (500) as a point of reference that remains constant from assessment to assessment. Cells with less than 50 students (unweighted data) have been marked as missing.

Statistically insignificant score point differences are marked in lighter shades. Comparisons are based on statistical significance testing on p<.05 level. This means that the probability of making a false statement is set at less than 5 %.

**Country specific notes**

**Netherlands** and **United Kingdom (NIR)** were excluded from the analysis due to low response rates. **United Kingdom (ENG)** did not administer the questions on ECEC.

## DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN HAVE LOWER ECEC PARTICIPATION RATES

As this chapter revealed, ECEC participation, especially during the few last years before primary education, is very high in most European countries (see Figures C1 and C2). However, PISA 2012 results indicate that disadvantaged students were less likely to have attended ECEC for longer than one year.

Figure C9 shows difference in ECEC attendance rates between 15-year olds having different background characteristics. However, only the variables which affect ECEC participation rates are presented here. Gender is not discussed as no differences between girls' and boys' participation rates were evident in European countries. The first chart shows students who come from families with a combination of disadvantages (socio-economic, educational and cultural), while the other charts that make up the indicator focus in on students from families with low levels of education, followed by students from immigrant families. It is important to note that, in some cases, a student could be in all three categories – being from a disadvantaged family with low educated parents can sometimes coincide with being a first- or second-generation immigrant.

On average, in the EU-28, the difference in participation rates in ECEC between those 15-year-olds who have a combination of disadvantages (score in the lowest quartile on PISA index of economic, social and cultural status) and those who do not, was 12 %. In all countries (except Belgium (German-speaking Community) and Hungary), 15-year-olds from better off families were more likely to have attended ECEC for more than one year than those from disadvantaged families. In Croatia and Poland, the difference in ECEC participation rates was especially high – approximately 30 %. In Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, the difference was approximately 20 %. In most of these countries, participation rates in ECEC were rather low in the early years of 2000 (see Figure C1), suggesting a general problem of access. Children from more affluent families might have had more opportunity to secure a place in ECEC even when supply was very low.

On average, in the EU-28, the difference in participation rates in ECEC between 15-year-olds from families with low levels of education and those who have at least one highly educated parent, was 7 %. In Poland, the difference in ECEC participation rates was especially high – 34 %. It was approximately 20 % in Croatia, Latvia and Turkey. There was no significant difference in ECEC participation rates between children from well-educated and those from poorly educated families in about a quarter of European education systems.

Non-immigrant 15-year-old students were more likely to attend ECEC for more than one year than first- or second-generation immigrants. On average, in the EU-28, the difference in participation rates was 12 %. In Italy, the United Kingdom (Wales) and Iceland, it was especially high – about 30 % or more. There was no significant difference in ECEC attendance rates between immigrants and non-immigrants in about one third of European education systems.

There was no difference in ECEC attendance rates between 15-year-olds from the disadvantaged backgrounds previously discussed in Belgium (German-speaking Community) and Hungary.

### **Explanatory note (Figure C9)**

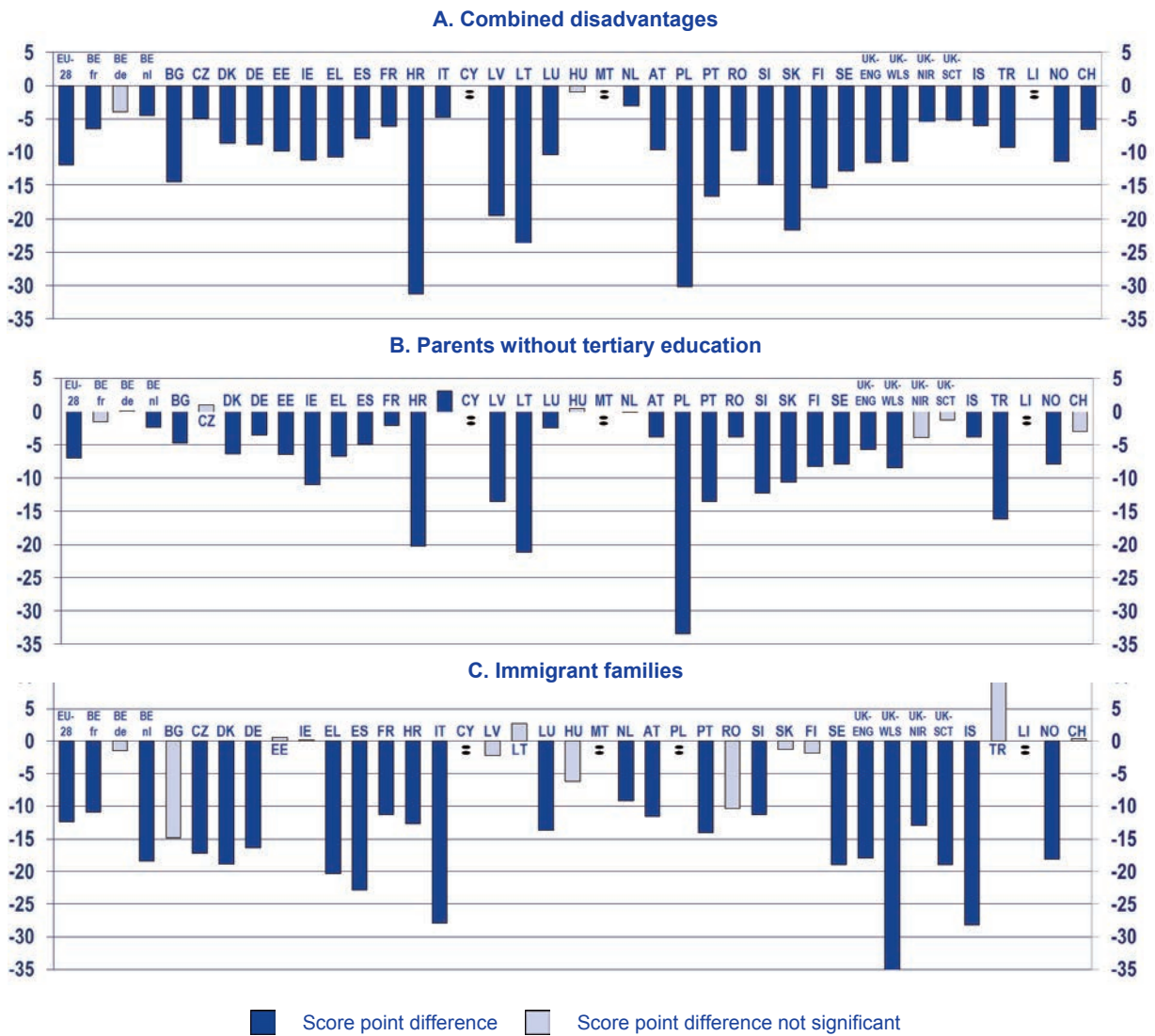
Cells with less than 50 students (unweighted data) have been marked as missing. Statistically insignificant score point differences are marked in lighter shades. Comparisons are based on statistical significance testing on  $p < .05$  level. This means that the probability of making a false statement is set at less than 5 %.

Combined disadvantages: students scoring in the lowest quartile on index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS index). For definition of PISA ESCS index, see Glossary.



PARTICIPATION

**Figure C9: Difference in ECEC attendance rates between 15-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds, 2012**



	EU-28	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH		
<b>A</b>	-11.9	-6.5	<u>-4.0</u>	-4.5	-14.5	-4.9	-8.6	-8.8	-9.8	-11.2	-10.8	-7.9	-6.1	-31.2	-4.8	:	-19.5	-23.6	-10.4	<u>-1.0</u>																					
<b>S.E.</b>	0.53	1.46	4.29	1.33	2.15	1.93	1.34	1.70	1.79	1.81	2.13	1.02	1.14	2.08	0.76	0.00	2.43	1.95	1.37	0.85																					
<b>B</b>	-7.0	<u>-1.5</u>	<u>0.1</u>	-2.4	-4.8	<u>1.1</u>	-6.4	-3.5	-6.4	-11.0	-6.7	-4.9	-2.1	-20.2	3.0	:	-13.5	-21.2	-2.5	<u>0.5</u>																					
<b>S.E.</b>	0.40	1.28	3.96	1.03	1.65	1.49	1.27	1.33	1.39	1.62	1.74	0.83	0.90	1.92	0.61	:	1.74	1.97	1.11	0.69																					
<b>C</b>	-12.4	-11.0	<u>-1.5</u>	-18.4	<u>-14.8</u>	-17.1	-18.8	-16.3	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.2</u>	-20.3	-22.8	-11.3	-12.7	-27.9	:	<u>-2.2</u>	<u>2.7</u>	-13.8	<u>-6.1</u>																					
<b>S.E.</b>	0.77	1.87	4.73	3.33	10.74	4.72	1.73	2.24	2.52	2.89	2.77	1.91	1.74	2.77	1.59	:	3.31	5.39	1.06	3.73																					
<b>A</b>	:	-3.1	-9.7	-30.2	-16.6	-9.7	-14.9	-21.6	-15.3	-12.9	-11.6	-11.4	-5.5	-5.2																											
<b>S.E.</b>	0.00	1.04	1.90	2.62	1.92	1.87	1.79	2.43	1.70	1.74	2.08	2.06	2.71	2.40																											
<b>B</b>	:	<u>0.0</u>	-3.8	-33.5	-13.5	-3.8	-12.2	-10.6	-8.2	-7.8	-5.7	-8.5	-3.9	-1.3																											
<b>S.E.</b>	:	0.76	1.27	2.38	1.90	1.44	1.43	1.58	1.74	1.80	1.44	1.75	2.62	2.18																											
<b>C</b>	:	-9.2	-11.6	:	-14.1	<u>-10.3</u>	-11.3	<u>-1.2</u>	<u>-1.8</u>	-18.9	-17.9	-35.1	-13.0	-18.9																											
<b>S.E.</b>	:	1.72	1.85	:	3.39	15.92	2.79	8.52	2.94	2.23	2.42	4.44	5.02	3.01																											

S.E.: Standard errors x = Score point difference not significant

A. Combined disadvantages B. Parents without tertiary education C. Immigrant families

Source: OECD, PISA.

## FUNDING

There has been a growing recognition among governments across Europe of the importance of investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC). High quality ECEC that is accessible to all children requires substantial investment – be it from public or private sources. Private provision limits the demand on the public purse, but it is often beyond the means of the low-income families.

The funding of ECEC varies significantly across European education systems. Many countries consider it an essential public service and provide substantial amounts of public funding. Some countries leave ECEC provision for younger children (below ISCED 0) to the private sector and expect parents to bear all the costs of these services; while in others, children may attend ECEC free of charge from the earliest age. In a few countries, parents pay fees throughout the early years until the beginning of primary education. ECEC may, however, be subsidised via payments to families (through tax relief, allowances or vouchers), via payments to ECEC providers, or through a combination of both.

This chapter aims to give an overview of the funding arrangements for ECEC in European countries. It begins by outlining the funding structure, showing the distribution of public and private provision and listing the authorities responsible for funding. The actual costs of ECEC for public authorities are provided, showing recent trends in total public expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Data on direct public expenditure per unit allows the investment in ISCED 0 to be compared with that of other levels of education.

Figures on the monthly fees charged to parents for younger children are provided, and the availability of free public ECEC provision is discussed. In order to get a clearer overview of the costs for families, the criteria that must be met in order to qualify for fee reductions are discussed, as are the types of specific financial support available to parents with children in ECEC. Eurostat data on the proportion of educational expenditure from private sources at ISCED 0 serves as a summary indicator for this chapter. A final indicator shows whether countries support parents' in their choice of early childhood care by providing financial compensation to those who decide not to enrol their child in formal ECEC provision.

### **PUBLIC SECTOR PROVISION PREDOMINATES IN ECEC, ESPECIALLY DURING THE PRE-PRIMARY (ISCED 0) PHASE**

Early childhood education and care may be provided by public or private bodies. Public settings are owned and operated by public authorities at central, regional or local level. They are not profit-driven but aim to provide a public service. Private settings may be self-financing – drawing their funds from private sources; or they may be publicly subsidised – receiving some funding from public authorities. Private settings may be owned by businesses, which are profit-oriented, or by the voluntary (non-profit) sector which may include charitable organisations. Figure D1 shows that ECEC provision in most European countries is a mixed economy with both public and private funding. It is important to note, however, that in many countries the private (self-financing) sector enrolls rather low percentages of older children.

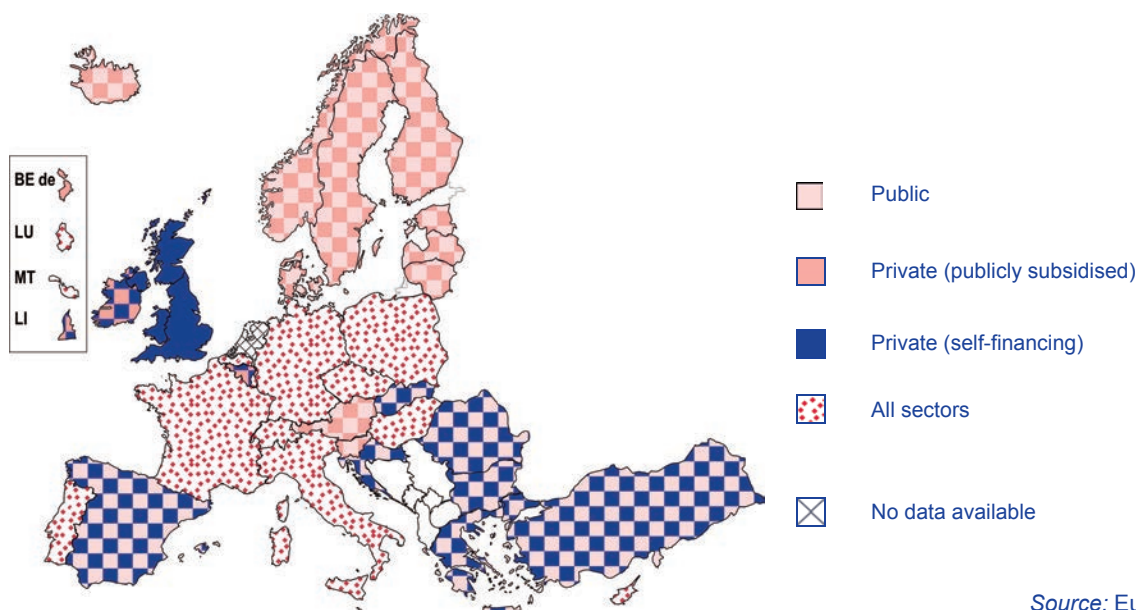
In most European education systems, the ownership and funding structure of ECEC is the same for both younger and older children. Naturally, this applies to all unitary systems that have integrated provision (see Figure B1). They have only public and publicly subsidised centre-based ECEC. In other education systems, more public funding is usually provided to support ECEC for older rather than younger children.

Centre-based ECEC is entirely public or publicly subsidised in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway.

Ireland is the only country that has no public ECEC provision for either age group. In Belgium (French- and German-speaking Communities), all parts of the United Kingdom and Liechtenstein, there is no public ECEC provision for younger children.

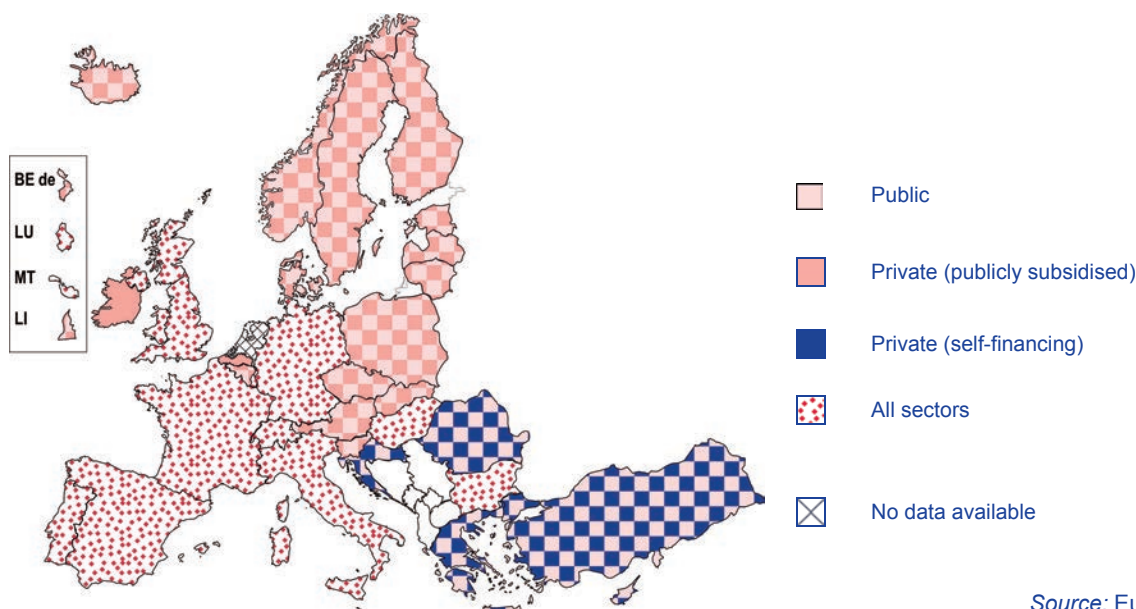
**Figure D1: Existence of public and private centre-based ECEC, 2012/13**

**Figure D1a: Younger children**



Source: Eurydice.

**Figure D1b: Older children**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory notes**

This Figure shows all types of provision legally available regardless of the number of children enrolled. For definitions of 'public ECEC setting' and 'private ECEC setting', see the Glossary.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific note**

**United Kingdom** (younger children): Publicly subsidised provision is offered to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds.



The provision of education and care for younger children is largely delivered by private providers, who depend mainly on parental fees in Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). In these countries, between 60 % and 100 % of children attend private (self-financing) ECEC, where fees are relatively high (see Figure D6). However, some of these countries subsidise ECEC indirectly via payments to families (through tax relief, allowances or vouchers, see Figure D8).

In some countries, home-based provision forms an important part of ECEC for younger children. In Belgium (German-speaking Community), Germany, France and Iceland, this type of care is private, but subsidised by public authorities. Private (publicly subsidised) home-based provision also predominates in Belgium (French Community). Public home-based provision is prevalent in Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark and Finland.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITIES OFTEN FINANCE ECEC FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN WHILE THEY SHARE COSTS WITH THE CENTRAL LEVEL FOR OLDER CHILDREN**

The most common pattern for financing ECEC is a **combination of central and local funding**. This type of approach is used in 11 education systems for financing ECEC for younger children, and in 21 education systems for supporting the settings for older children. Often a split is made between infrastructure and operational costs, although which level is responsible for which element varies between countries. For example, in Estonia, the central authorities allocate support to local authorities for the maintenance of buildings and the development of the learning environment in ECEC institutions. Operational costs (management costs, staff remuneration, social taxes and costs of teaching materials) are partly covered by local authorities and partly by parental fees. In contrast, in Latvia and Romania in settings for older children, the ministries of education cover the costs of staff remuneration, while local authorities are responsible for infrastructure.

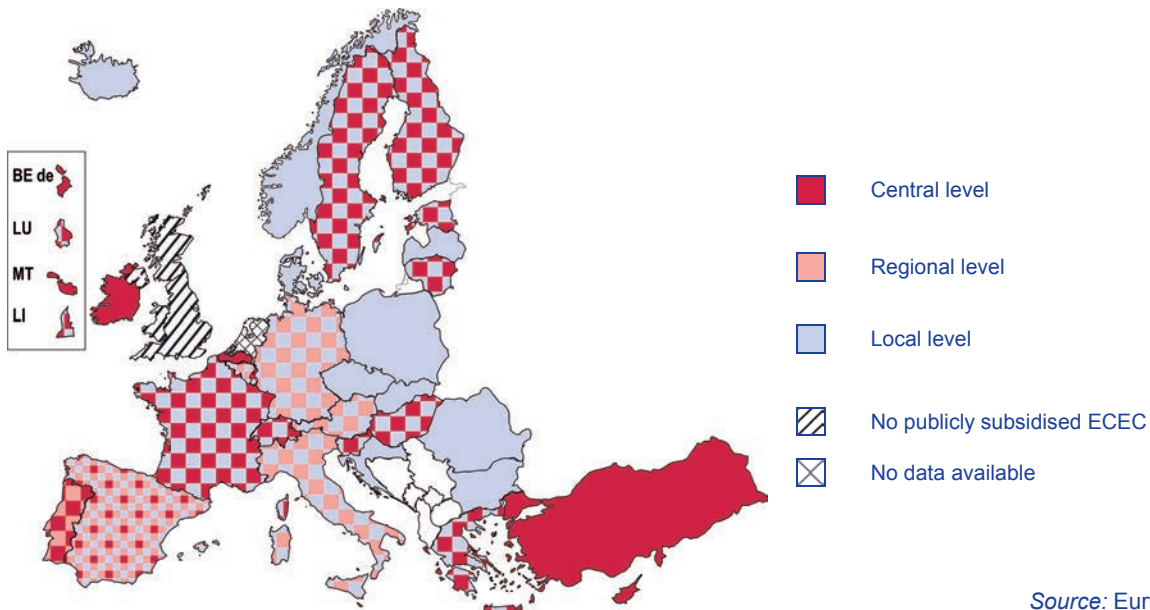
Sometimes funding is allocated for a certain number of hours. In Lithuania, central authorities finance 20 hours per week ('the pupils' basket'), while local authorities cover the rest. In the United Kingdom, local authorities fund the annual entitlement of pre-primary education for children over 3 years old (which varies between 10 and 15 hours per week, see Figure D5).

**Local authorities** are the sole source of funding for the entire ECEC phase in Denmark, Croatia, Poland, Iceland and Norway. They are the only source of support for the settings for younger children in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, and for older children in the United Kingdom (Scotland). In Germany, although the *Länder* are involved, the local authorities bear the major part of ECEC costs. In Sweden, ECEC is also mainly financed by local authorities. However, in Poland, a targeted subsidy from the central budget for pre-school education has been available since September 2013.

**Regional authorities** play an important part in ECEC funding in Germany, Spain, Italy and Austria (note that the *Länder* in Germany are considered the regional level in this report). In Belgium (French Community) and Portugal, the regions co-fund ECEC for younger children, while in the Czech Republic, the regions are involved in funding pre-primary education. In Austria, the regional government sets a base rate for all public and private (publicly subsidised) ECEC settings. The bulk of the costs are covered by the provider (local authorities). The proportional distribution of costs between regional, local and parent contributions varies substantially throughout Austria.

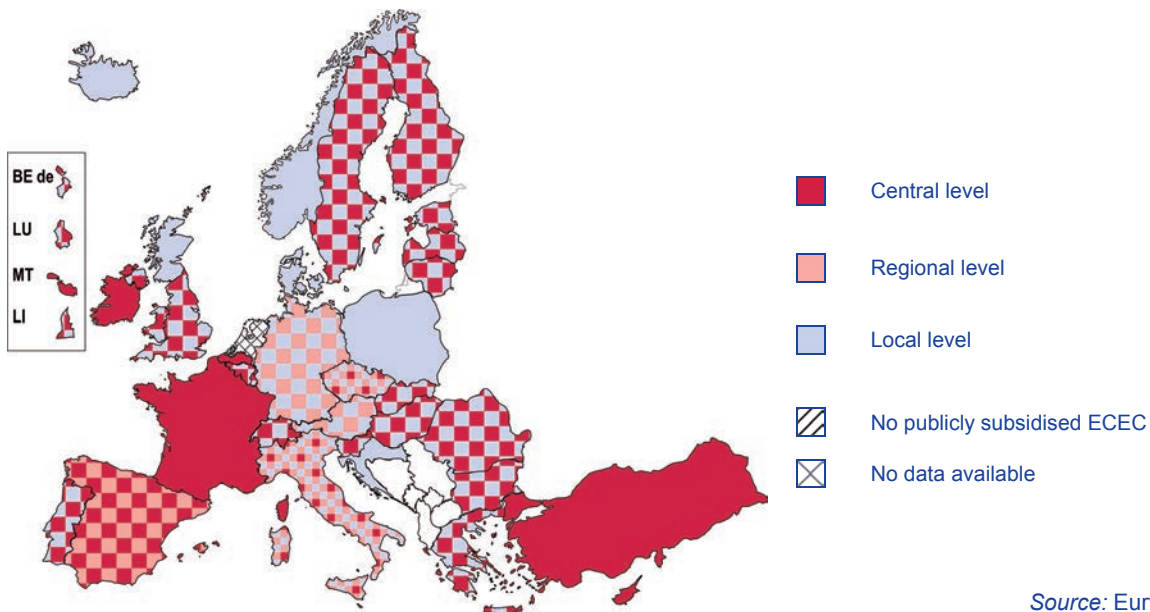
Figure D2: Authorities responsible for funding centre-based ECEC, 2012/13

Figure D2a: Younger children



Source: Eurydice.

Figure D2b: Older children



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Germany:** Regional level – *Länder*.

**Poland:** Since September 2013, a targeted subsidy from the central budget for pre-school education (older children) has been made available.

**United Kingdom (younger children):** Publicly subsidised provision is available to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds. In such case, the authorities responsible correspond to those for older children.

**Switzerland:** Central level – cantons. For centre-based ECEC for younger children: in 13 cantons, cantonal and local authorities are responsible; in 2 cantons it is the cantonal authorities; and in 11 cantons the local authorities. Funding for settings for children over 4 years (pre-primary) is shared between the cantons and local authorities.





**All three levels** are involved in funding ECEC for younger children in Belgium (French Community) and Spain, and in supporting education at ISCED 0 in the Czech Republic and Italy. In these cases, the formula for the division of costs is quite complex. For example, in the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports sets national per capita amounts of direct non-investment expenditure per child in public nursery schools (*mateřská škola*), individual regions then set regional per capita amounts based on the financial resources allocated to schools. Municipalities cover mainly operational and investment expenses.

ECEC funding derives solely from the **central budget** in Belgium (Flemish Community), Ireland, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. It is the only source of support for settings for younger children in Belgium (German-speaking Community), and for the settings for older children in France. Sometimes several ministries can be involved at the central level. For example, in Portugal, the education component is supported by the Ministry of Education and Science, and the social component is supported by the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security.

In addition, in some countries, governments have recently been contributing substantial funds towards the expansion of ECEC infrastructure. The most prominent example is in Germany, where between 2008 and 2014, the federal level (as the top-level authority) provided PPS 5.2 billion to the *Länder*, who are normally responsible for ECEC funding, to cover the investment and operational costs of expanding ECEC services. The federal level continues to contribute to operational costs for the newly created places. In addition, in Poland, since 2011, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has been implementing a programme *Toddler (Maluch)* aiming to help local authorities increase the number of ECEC places for under-3s. This targeted subsidy cannot exceed 50 % of the costs incurred to provide care for children. From September 2013, further subsidies from the central budget are intended to limit the fees charged to parents for additional hours in *przedszkole* for older children.

In addition, in many countries (for example, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Finland, and the United Kingdom), supplementary funding for children with additional educational needs (see more in Chapter G) comes from central authorities.

## **IN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON PROVISION AT ISCED 0 AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP HAS INCREASED**

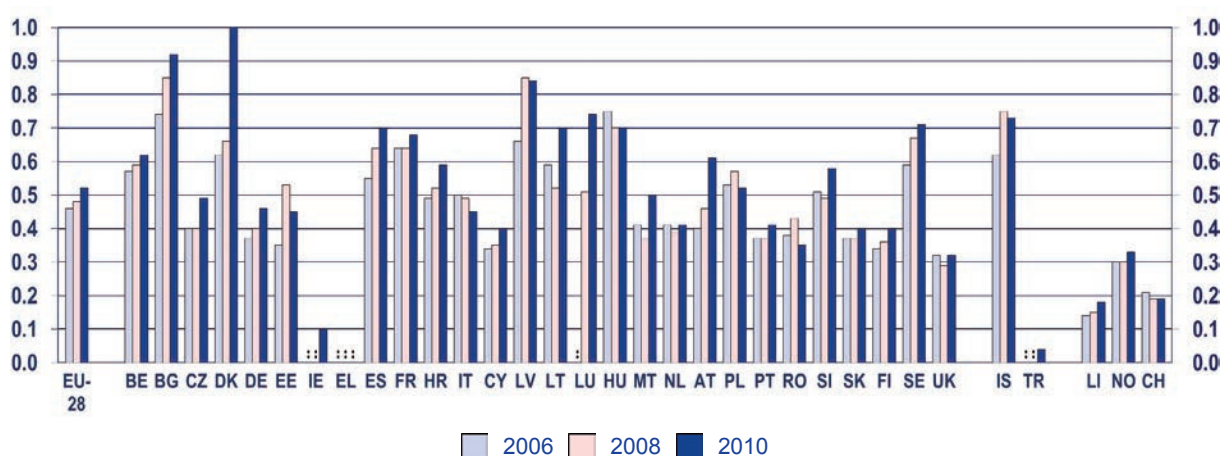
It is difficult to find clear and meaningful ways of comparing expenditure over time across different countries with different economies, currencies and standards of living. The common measure of expenditure as a percentage of GDP shows the relative commitment of countries to certain areas, but it is heavily influenced by fluctuations in GDP. Therefore, when GDP is shrinking, the same annual expenditure appears as an increase in the percentage of GDP. Moreover, in rich economies with a high GDP, a rather small proportion of expenditure on ECEC in relation to GDP might mean a higher investment in absolute terms, than a higher proportion in poorer countries.

Bearing in mind the relativistic nature of this indicator, it is nevertheless possible to say that expenditure on pre-primary education (ISCED 0), on average in the EU, was increasing as a percentage of GDP between 2006 and 2010. In the European Union, the average total public expenditure on pre-primary education rose from 0.46 % of GDP in 2006 to 0.52 % in 2010. The highest increases were observed in Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, Latvia and Austria (0.15 % or higher increase in 2010 compared with 2006), while the greatest decline occurred in Italy and Hungary (-0.05 %). Nevertheless, in Hungary, expenditure as a percentage of GDP at ISCED 0 was still higher than the EU-28 average. Expenditure as a percentage of GDP also slightly decreased in Poland, Romania and Switzerland.

In some countries, the changes in expenditure are easy to explain. For example, an increase in ISCED 0 expenditure in Spain was due to the introduction of a new programme (*Plan Educa 3*) to enhance the quality and increase the number of places for younger children. In Latvia, the change can be related to the fact that the amount of funding for teachers' salaries was increasing at the same time as GDP was shrinking. In Austria, the increase in ISCED 0 expenditure can be linked to the introduction of a compulsory pre-primary year in 2010.

There are quite large differences in the relative investment in provision at ISCED 0 across European countries. Ireland, Turkey, Liechtenstein and Switzerland spend less than 0.20 % of their GDP on pre-primary education. In contrast, Bulgaria, Denmark and Latvia stand out with total public expenditure on pre-primary education (ISCED 0) higher than 0.80 % of each country's GDP. Spain, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Sweden and Iceland spend approximately 0.70 % of their GDP on this level of education.

**Figure D3: Trends in total public expenditure on pre-primary education (ISCED 0) as a percentage of GDP, 2006, 2008, 2010**



	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2010	0.52	0.62	0.92	0.49	1.01	0.46	0.45	0.10	:	0.70	0.68	0.59	0.45	0.40	0.84	0.70	0.74
2008	0.48	0.59	0.85	0.40	0.66	0.40	0.53	:	:	0.64	0.64	0.52	0.49	0.35	0.85	0.52	0.51
2006	0.46	0.57	0.74	0.40	0.62	0.37	0.35	:	:	0.55	0.64	0.49	0.50	0.34	0.66	0.59	:
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
2010	0.70	0.50	0.41	0.61	0.52	0.41	0.35	0.58	0.40	0.40	0.71	0.32	0.73	0.04	0.18	0.33	0.19
2008	0.70	0.37	0.39	0.46	0.57	0.37	0.43	0.49	0.37	0.36	0.67	0.29	0.75	:	0.15	0.30	0.19
2006	0.75	0.41	0.41	0.40	0.53	0.37	0.38	0.51	0.37	0.34	0.59	0.32	0.62	:	0.14	0.30	0.21

Source: Eurostat, UOE and National Accounts, February 2014.

**Explanatory notes**

Total public expenditure includes the direct funding of: current and capital costs of public educational institutions; subsidies for educational activities to private ECEC providers or non-profit organisations; and transfers to private households. For definitions of 'current', 'capital expenditure' and 'ISCED 0', see the Glossary.

**Country specific notes**

**Belgium:** Expenditure excludes independent private institutions in the German-speaking Community.

**Ireland (2008, 2006):** Figures for ISCED 0 refer to only a very small proportion of overall ISCED 0 provision, so they could not be considered as representative of the sector.

**Portugal:** Public transfers to private bodies are not available.

**United Kingdom:** Adjustment of GDP to the financial year that runs from 1 April to 31 March.



## **ANNUAL PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE IS LOWER AT PRE-PRIMARY LEVEL THAN AT OTHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION**

Another way to compare educational expenditure across different countries is to examine annual public expenditure per child. The differences in living standards and price levels are accounted for when using an artificial common reference currency unit, namely, the purchasing power standard (PPS). PPS thus buys the same given volume of goods and services in all countries.

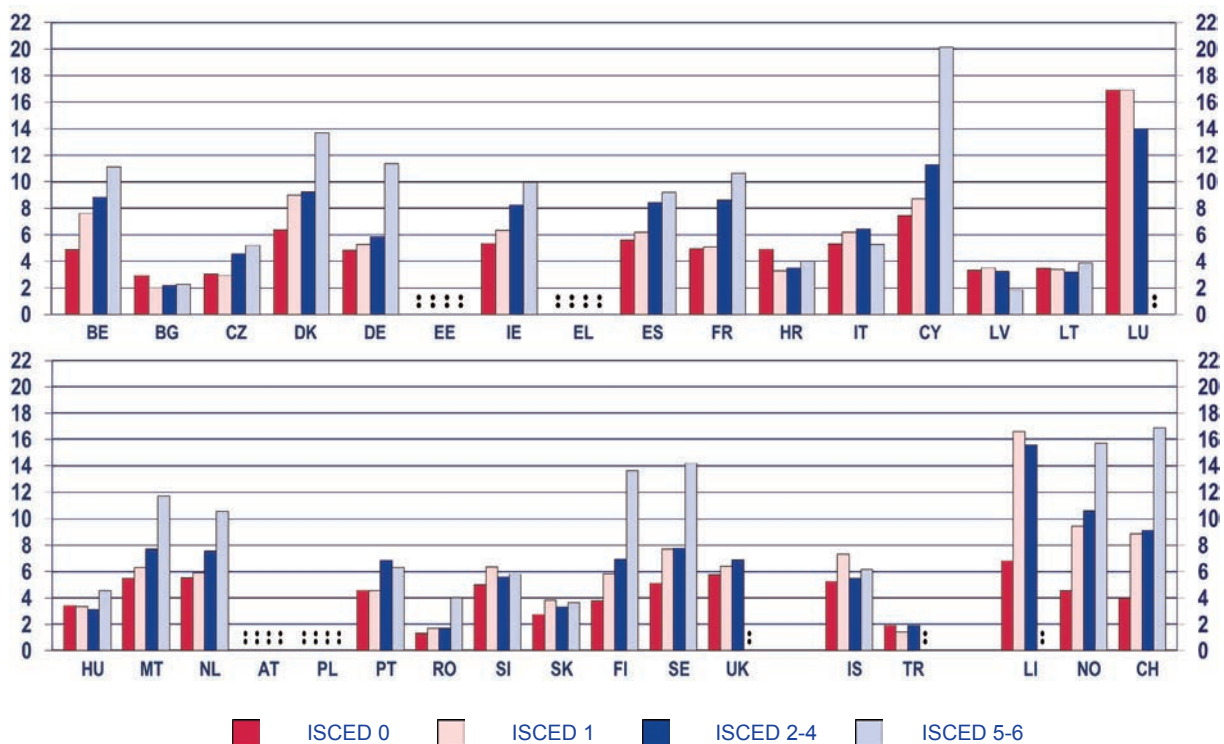
Direct public expenditure per child/pupil/student in PPS tends to increase with each educational level in most European countries. Steep differences between unit costs in pre-primary and tertiary levels of education are quite usual. The difference in annual direct public expenditure per pupil in ISCED 0 and per student in tertiary education was more than PPS 9 000 in Cyprus, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland.

In some countries, there is also a significant difference between the cost of pre-primary and primary education. For example, the annual cost per child in pre-primary amounts to half or less of the annual cost of a pupil in primary education in Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. However, in several countries, the unit costs at the first two education levels are almost identical. For example, in the Czech Republic, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary and Portugal, the differences between public expenditure per child in pre-primary and primary education were around or less than PPS 200. Interestingly, in some countries the annual cost per child in pre-primary is higher than that in primary education. In Bulgaria, Croatia and Turkey, public expenditure per child for one year of education at ISCED 0 is 30-50 % higher than one year of ISCED 1.

Comparison of expenditure at ISCED 0 shows that the lowest levels of direct public investment per child are observed in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey. These countries spend PPS 3 000 or less per year on ISCED 0 education per child.

In contrast, in Luxembourg, where ISCED 0 teacher salaries are among the highest in Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014), one year of education at ISCED 0 costs PPS 16 900 per child. Denmark, Cyprus and Liechtenstein also stand out with annual direct public expenditure per child between PPS 6 400 and 7 400.

**Figure D4: Direct public expenditure per child/pupil/student and educational level (ISCED 0, ISCED 1, ISCED 2-4, ISCED 5-6) in public educational institutions, in PPS (thousands), 2010**



	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
ISCED 0	4.9	2.9	3.0	6.4	4.8	:	5.4	:	5.6	5.0	4.9	5.3	7.4	3.3	3.5	16.9	3.4
ISCED 1	7.6	2.0	2.9	9.0	5.3	:	6.3	:	6.2	5.1	3.3	6.2	8.7	3.5	3.4	16.9	3.3
ISCED 2-4	8.8	2.2	4.6	9.2	5.8	:	8.2	:	8.4	8.6	3.5	6.4	11.3	3.3	3.2	14.0	3.1
ISCED 5-6	11.1	2.3	5.2	13.7	11.4	:	10.0	:	9.2	10.6	4.0	5.3	20.2	1.9	3.9	:	4.6
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH	
ISCED 0	5.5	5.5	:	:	4.6	1.3	5.0	2.8	3.8	5.1	5.7	5.3	1.9	6.8	4.5	4.0	
ISCED 1	6.3	5.9	:	:	4.6	1.7	6.4	3.8	5.8	7.7	6.4	7.3	1.4	16.6	9.5	8.9	
ISCED 2-4	7.7	7.6	:	:	6.8	1.7	5.6	3.3	6.9	7.8	6.9	5.5	1.9	15.6	10.6	9.2	
ISCED 5-6	11.7	10.5	:	:	6.3	4.0	5.8	3.7	13.6	14.2	:	6.2	:	:	15.7	16.9	

Source: Eurostat, UOE and National Accounts.

**Explanatory notes**

This indicator measures how much is spent per child/pupil/student by central, regional and local authorities on staff costs, current expenditure and capital expenditure in public educational institutions. Direct public expenditure does not include tuition payments received from students (or their families) enrolled in public schools.

The indicator has been calculated by dividing the total amount of annual direct public expenditure by the number of full-time equivalent students. The annual expenditure figures have been converted into purchasing power standard (PPS) based on the Euro to eliminate price differences between countries. For PPS equivalents in national currencies, see the National System Information Sheets in the annex. For definitions of 'total public expenditure on education', 'current', 'capital expenditure' and 'ISCED 0', see the Glossary.

**Country specific notes**

**Estonia:** Data highly unreliable and not presented.

**Italy:** ISCED 4 excluded.



## EDUCATION AT ISCED 0 IS FREE OF CHARGE IN HALF OF ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Affordability is a very important factor in ensuring that all children have access to ECEC, especially those in most need, i.e. children from low-income families. Most European countries, therefore, offer at least one year of free pre-primary education, while in approximately half of European education systems, the entire period of ISCED 0 (centre-based educational programmes for over 3 year olds) is provided free of charge. For the very early years prior to ISCED 0, parents generally have to pay and these costs vary considerably between countries (see Figure D8).

Availability, however, is just as important as affordability. Typically, in countries where ECEC is provided free of charge, there is also a legal entitlement to a place, or a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents require it (see Figure B4). Employment, socio-economic or family status does not generally affect this entitlement to a place in ECEC. Another way countries ensure availability, affordability and, indeed, total participation, is to make ECEC both free of charge and compulsory for a year or two before primary education (see Figure B4).

Children from age 2½ are guaranteed a free ECEC place in Belgium (French and Flemish Communities). In Malta, public authorities secure free ECEC for all children from age 2 years and 9 months. Age 3 is the start of the legal entitlement to free ECEC in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Spain, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal and the United Kingdom (all parts). In Ireland, free entitlement begins slightly later at 3 years and 2 months. Age 4 is the start of free entitlement in Liechtenstein; while at the same age, free compulsory pre-primary education begins in many cantons in Switzerland. At age 5, a compulsory pre-primary year starts in Bulgaria, and children in the Czech Republic become legally entitled to free pre-primary education.

There are some exceptions to the general principle of free entitlement. In Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, although the entire phase of publicly subsidised ECEC is free, there is no public commitment to guarantee a place for every child (no legal entitlement). The demand is higher than supply (see Figure B12) and many children still cannot access ECEC. A similar situation exists in Hungary for children under 3, where many municipalities offer free ECEC, but do not guarantee a place for every child.

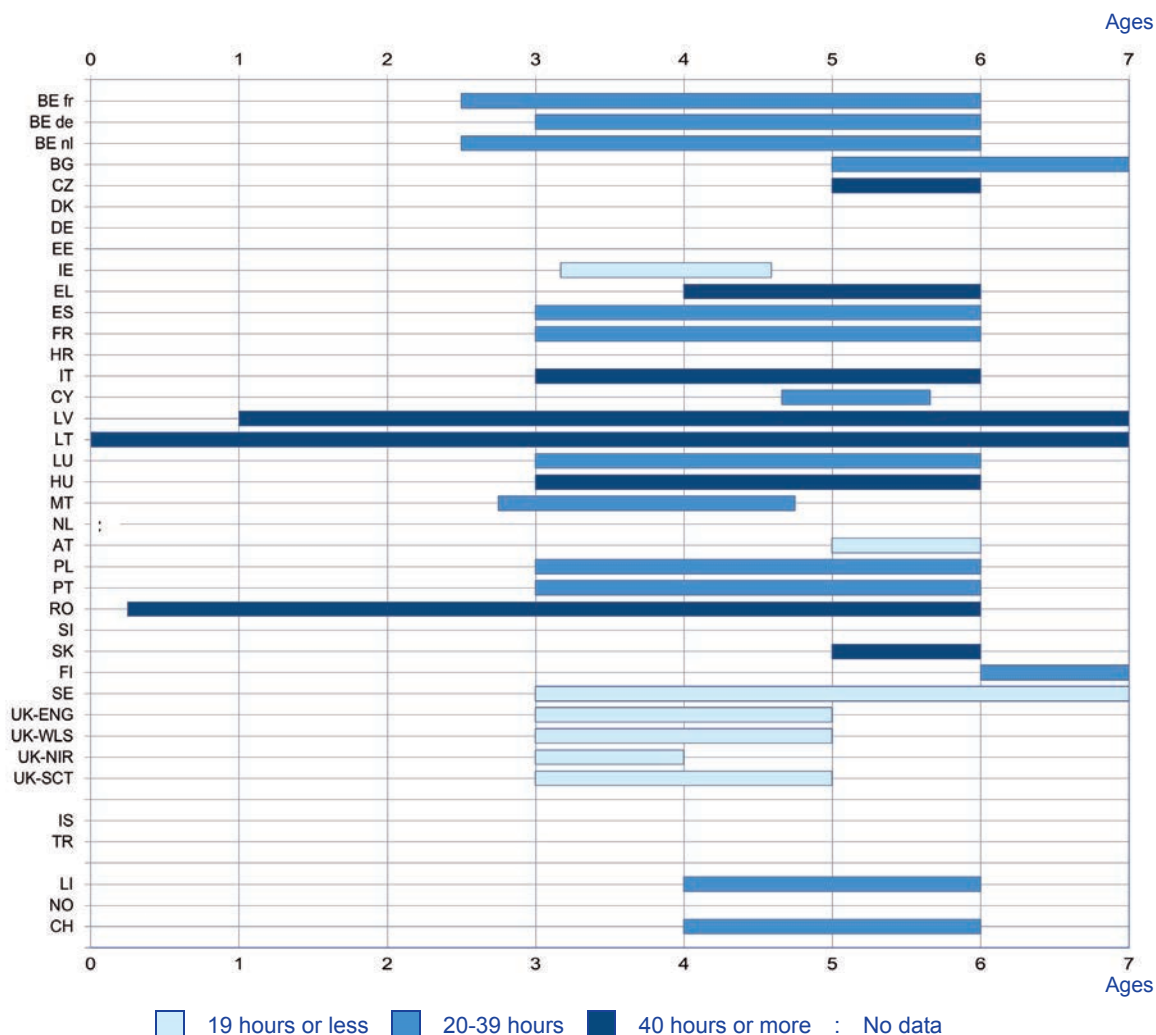
In almost all countries, free pre-primary education is offered in centre-based ECEC settings or primary schools. However, in Ireland and all parts of the United Kingdom, the entitlement to free ECEC applies to all types of ECEC, including home-based childminders.

The number of hours of free ECEC provision varies considerably between countries. Several offer free ECEC only for a limited number of hours a week. Ireland, some *Länder* in Austria, Sweden, all parts of the United Kingdom and some cantons in Switzerland offer less than 20 hours of free ECEC per week. In contrast, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia offer free ECEC for the entire day. Most countries, however, fall between these two extremes.

Where free pre-primary education is available, parents usually have to pay for meals taken during the session. Only in Finland does every pupil attending free pre-primary education receive a free meal every school day. Transport for children living in remote areas is offered free in most countries.

The entire phase of ECEC requires parent contributions in Denmark, most *Länder* in Germany, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Iceland, Turkey and Norway. However, these countries may still offer fee reductions or exemptions for some families (see Figure D7), or targeted support for families through tax relief, allowances or vouchers (see Figure D8) to reduce or offset the costs of ECEC.

Figure D5: Free ECEC provision, by age and weekly hours, 2012/13



Source: Eurydice.

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Weekly hours	28	28	28	20 (24)	40	-	-	-	15	22.5	25	24	-	40	27.5	40	40	26	40
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
Weekly hours	30	:	16-20	25	25	40	-	40	20	(15)	15	10	12.5	(12.5)	-	-	28	-	11-25

**Explanatory note**

Weekly hours are truncated at 40.

**Country specific notes**

**Bulgaria:** Compulsory ECEC, 5 year olds 20 hours, 6 year olds 24 hours.

**Germany:** Some *Länder* have abolished parental fees, either for the last year in ECEC before school entry (Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia), for the last three years in kindergarten (Berlin), or from the age of 2 (Rhineland-Palatinate).

**Czech Republic, Latvia and Romania:** Figure shows the situation of publicly subsidised ECEC provision, which is attended by the majority of children.

**Hungary:** Many municipalities charge only for food for the entire ECEC phase.

**Sweden:** 525 yearly hours were divided by a common length of school year (178 days) and multiplied by 5-week days.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** In the most economically deprived areas, this entitlement is extended to 2 year-olds.

**United Kingdom (SCT):** 475 yearly hours were divided by 38 weeks, which is a common length of school year.

**Switzerland:** As the situation varies between cantons, the Figure shows an average of 20 hours.

## ECEC FEES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN ARE THE LOWEST IN EASTERN EUROPEAN AND NORDIC COUNTRIES

Fees for ECEC for younger children vary greatly across European countries and across different types of provision. As it is impossible to show all these variations, Figure D8 shows the monthly fees in the largest ECEC sector(s), i.e. the ones that accommodate the majority of children – be it public, private (publicly subsidised) or private (self-financing) (see country specific notes).

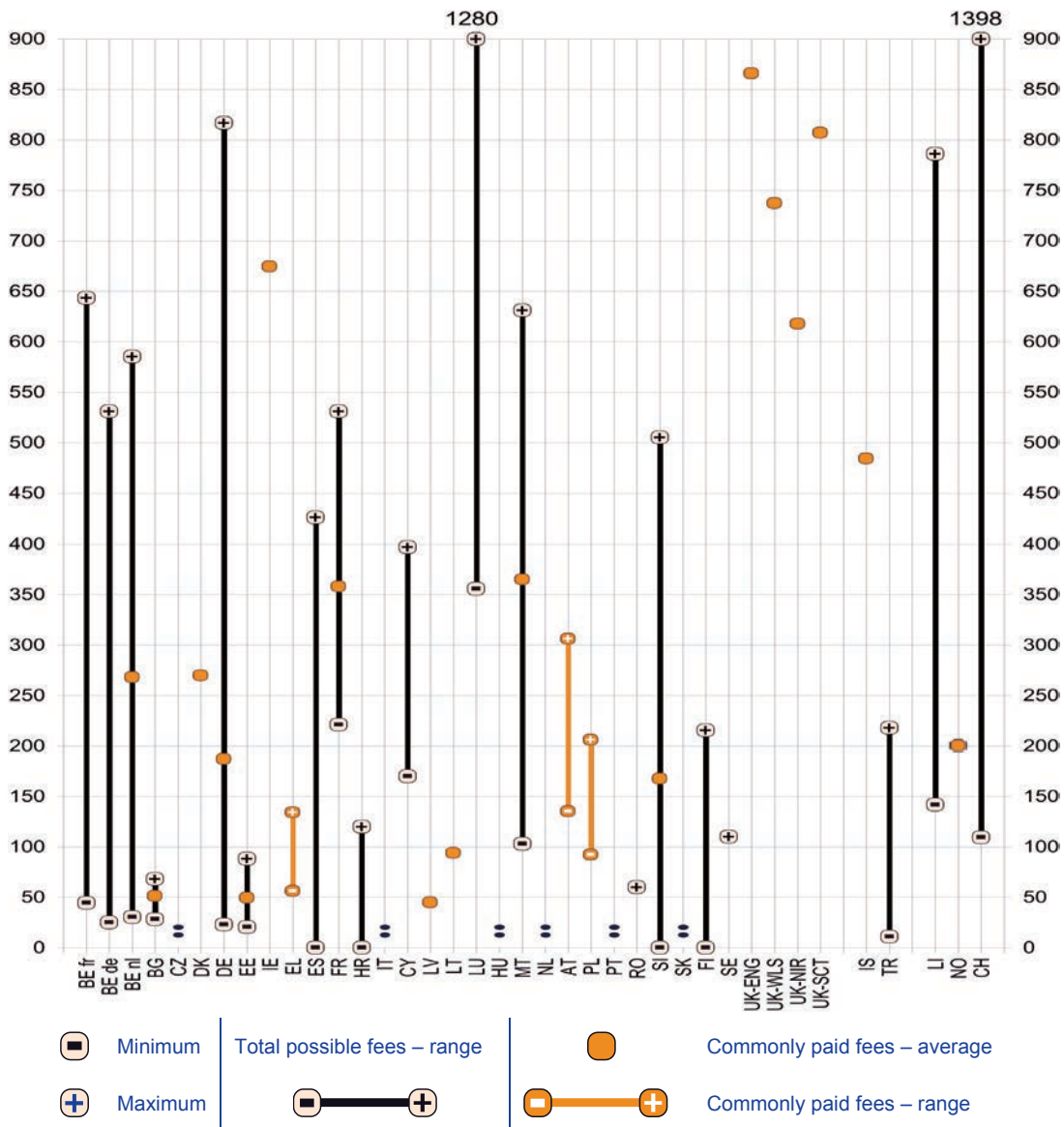
Fees are regulated in the largest ECEC sector in most European education systems. The regulations usually apply to public ECEC providers; fees in private (publicly subsidised) settings are regulated less often. Only Turkey regulates fees in private (self-financing) settings. Usually, countries set the fee limit as a specific figure, but sometimes the limit is expressed as a proportion of ECEC costs, the minimum wage or family income. For example, in Denmark, parents' fees must not make up more than 25 % of operating costs. In Estonia, the amount charged to parents per child must not exceed 20 % of the minimum wage. In Hungary, fees and meals in centre-based ECEC cannot exceed 25 % of net family income per person.

Monthly fees for centre-based ECEC for children under 3 years old tend to be the lowest in Eastern European countries. For example, in Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, the entire ECEC phase is free; parents only have to pay for a child's meals (which amount to ca. PPS 45 in Latvia, PPS 94 in Lithuania and PPS 60 in Romania). The fees also mostly cover food in Bulgaria and Estonia (where average monthly fees amount to approximately PPS 50). In Croatia, the maximum fees are PPS 120. In public settings in Poland, average monthly fees amount to approximately PPS 92, while in the publicly subsidised sector they may reach PPS 206. In Slovenia, the average monthly fees amount to PPS 168. It is important to note, however, that even though the fees for ECEC are low in these countries, the demand for ECEC places for younger children often outweighs supply (see Figure B12).

In contrast, ECEC is both affordable and available in Nordic countries. In Sweden, for example, fees for ECEC are capped at PPS 110 per month. In Denmark, Finland and Norway, ECEC is slightly more expensive, with monthly fees at PPS 270, PPS 216 and PPS 200, respectively. All these countries (except Iceland) provide a legal entitlement to publicly subsidised ECEC from a very early age (see Figure B4). Only in Iceland are younger children taken care of mostly in home-based provision (by *dagforeldri*), and monthly fees here reach PPS 484. The fees in centre-based *leiksskóli*, which cater for most children over 2 years old, decrease to PPS 140.

Average monthly fees for ECEC for younger children are the highest in those countries where private provision predominates. For example, in Ireland and the different parts of the United Kingdom, ECEC for children younger than 3 years is not publicly subsidised, except in the case of the most disadvantaged children. Average monthly fees in Ireland amount to PPS 674. Across the United Kingdom, it varies from PPS 618 in Northern Ireland to PPS 866 in England. Furthermore, maximum fees are capped at even higher amounts in several countries. In Luxembourg, for example, where ECEC for younger children is also dominated by the private sector, the ceiling on monthly fees is PPS 1 280. However, the state does offer indirect subsidies via a voucher system (see Figure D8). In Switzerland, the limit is exceptionally high – fees in public or publicly subsidised ECEC for children up to age 4 can reach PPS 1 398. Unfortunately, figures for the average level of fees in these countries are not available.

Figure D6: Monthly fees for younger children in the largest ECEC sector(s), in PPS, 2012/13



Central regulations regarding fees

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Fees regulated	•	•	•	•	-	-	local	•	-	•	•	•	-	local	-	NA	NA	•	•
	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
Fees regulated	-	:	-	-	-	NA	•	:	•	•	-	-	-	-	-	•	•	•	11 cantons

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

The Figure illustrates the range of fees payable based on regulations or on common practice. Only the largest ECEC sector(s) that accommodate the majority of children are shown (see the National System Information Sheets or country specific notes below). Where national surveys exist, average data are presented. Survey data may be available even where fees are not regulated at central level.

Whenever possible, fees for food were included in the monthly figure. Whether food is included or not varies (depending on local autonomy) in Denmark, Ireland, all parts of the United Kingdom and Norway. In Greece and Malta, food is usually provided by parents and prepared by staff of the childcare centre at no extra charge.

Hourly fees were multiplied by 40 for obtaining weekly fees; these were converted to monthly figures by multiplying by a factor of 4.345. Hence, the actual monthly fees can differ slightly.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' correspond to in the context of each country.





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### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE fr, BE de):** Private (publicly subsidised) sector.

**Belgium (BE nl), Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Romania, Finland and Turkey:** Figure shows the public sector, no data is available for the private sector.

**Bulgaria:** Figure shows the public sector; fees in private settings can reach PPS 474.

**Czech Republic:** No exact data exists. It is estimated that fees in public facilities are approximately PPS 138, but the private (self-financing) sector predominates for the younger age group.

**Denmark and Norway:** The situation is the same in public and private (publicly subsidised) ECEC.

**Germany:** Data for 2009 (Rauschenbach, 2012).

**Ireland:** Figure shows the private (publicly subsidised) sector, no data is available for the private (self-financing) sector. For babies under 1 year, the average monthly fee rises to PPS 702.

**Greece:** In private (self-financing) settings, the fees range between PPS 233 and PPS 746 monthly.

**Spain:** The fees shown are based only on Autonomous Communities' regulations, not local ones. Fees are waived completely only under specific family circumstances.

**France:** Figure shows the predominant private (publicly subsidised) home-based provision. Centre-based provision costs a minimum of PPS 56, and a maximum of PPS 443, average PPS 221-336.

**Cyprus:** Figure shows only the private sector. In the private (publicly subsidised) sector, fees range between PPS 68 and 193. In public settings, in which only 1.9 % of children are enrolled, fees range between PPS 108 and 227.

**Latvia:** Figure shows the public sector, monthly fees in private (publicly subsidised) ECEC, in which 4.3 % of children are enrolled, range between PPS 104 and 624 (normally PPS 374).

**Luxembourg:** Figure shows the private (self-financing) sector. In both the public and publicly subsidised services, the fees range between PPS 41 and 966.

**Malta:** Figure shows the private (self-financing) sector. In other sectors, the fees are regulated, with monthly fees in public and private (publicly subsidised) settings capped at PPS 203 and PPS 379 respectively. From April 2014, children with parents in education or employment are able to attend free ECEC (up to full-time).

**Poland:** The lower number refers to the public sector; the higher number to average fees in the private (publicly subsidised) sector. No data is available for the private (self-financing) sector.

**Finland:** in 2010, the most commonly paid fee was the maximum fee.

**Iceland:** Figure shows private (publicly subsidised) home-based ECEC, which is the main form of provision for children under 2 years old. For the over-2s, fees are around PPS 140 for 8 hours a day – data drawn from the *Leiksskóli* in the largest municipality (Reykjavík).

**Liechtenstein:** Figure shows the private (publicly subsidised) sector, no data is available for the private (self-financing) sector.

**Switzerland:** Fees are regulated in 11 of the 26 cantons for private (publicly subsidised) settings, and in 9 cantons for public settings. Average data on fees is not available.

## FAMILY INCOME IS USUALLY THE BASIS FOR FEE REDUCTIONS

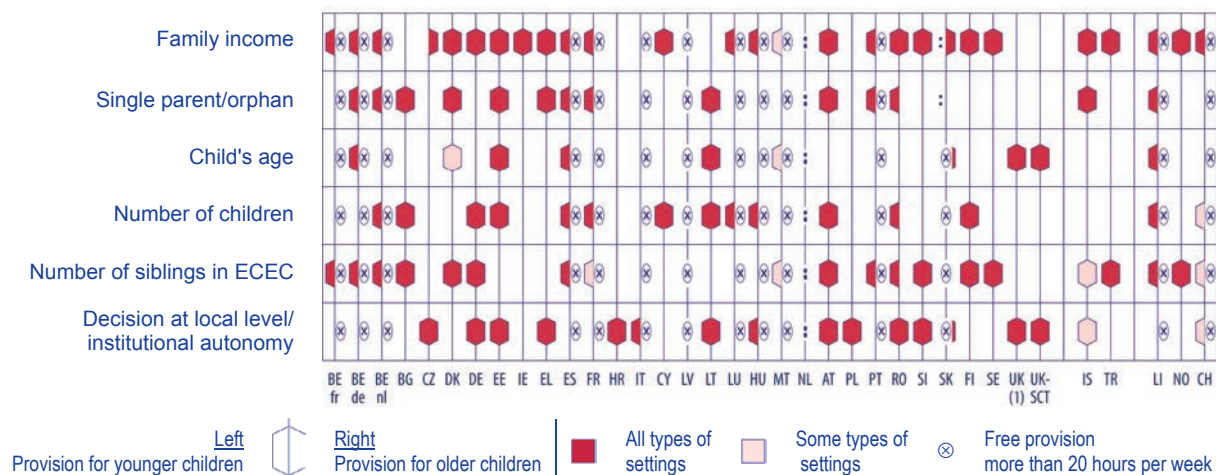
As Figure D6 showed, ECEC fees can be relatively high in some countries. Therefore, in order to increase the affordability of ECEC, most countries offer fee reductions or even exemptions depending on certain criteria. Not surprisingly, needs-based criteria, such as family income, are most commonly used. Family income is taken into consideration in determining fee reductions in 25 European countries. Moreover, in Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia, free meals are offered to children from very poor families attending ECEC.

The number of children in a family is the second most commonly used criteria. For example, in Lithuania, fees in public settings are reduced by 50 % for families with three or more children. Often the number of children attending ECEC is taken into consideration. For example, in Slovenia, the central authority covers a portion of the parental fee when more than one child from the same family attends centre-based ECEC (*vrtec*). If two or more children from the same family attend the same ECEC setting, the fees are often reduced even by private providers.

The age of a child is also usually a factor because fees for younger children are often higher. This is probably due to the fact that staff costs are higher for these children as child/staff ratios are lower.

Other criteria vary greatly across countries. For example, subsidies from central authorities to certain regions are available in Norway and Switzerland. In Lithuania, fees are reduced if one parent is a full-time student. In Iceland, fees can be adjusted if both parents are students. Liechtenstein takes employment status into account and offers reductions for self-employed families.

Figure D7: Factors taken into account when offering fee reductions or exemptions in ECEC, 2012/13



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Explanatory note**

Free pre-primary classes available only for one or two years are not covered.  
 Special cases such as support for disabled parents/children or victims of violence are not covered.  
 See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

- Belgium (BE nl):** Only in public and private (publicly subsidised) settings.
- Denmark:** Fees are lower for children over 3 years old in centre-based ECEC (*daginstitutioner*).
- France:** 'Number of siblings in ECEC' is taken into account only in centre-based *crèches*.
- Lithuania:** Since June 2013, there has been no national regulation on fee reductions and institutional autonomy applies.
- Malta:** 'Family income' is taken into account only in private (publicly subsidised) settings, while 'number of siblings in the same ECEC setting' and 'child's age' (charging higher fees for children under a certain age) are taken into account only in private settings.
- Iceland:** 'Number of siblings in ECEC' applies only in centre-based ECEC (*leiksskóli*) and in some home-based daycare.
- Switzerland:** Data shows the most common basis on which fees are adjusted in the cantons.

## TAX RELIEF IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO HELP PARENTS WITH ECEC COSTS

An important element in ECEC funding is targeted support for parents who incur costs for ECEC. While family allowances exist in all European countries without exception, they are generally not linked to ECEC attendance. Normally, they are awarded when a child is born and are paid at least until the end of compulsory education. Similarly, tax relief for families with children is also widespread in Europe, and is usually a universal entitlement unrelated to ECEC (for more information, see EACEA/Eurydice, 2012, pp. 102-104).

However, financial support to families is sometimes directly linked with a child's enrolment in an ECEC setting. In this way, governments hope to encourage attendance by reducing the costs for parents. The most common form of financial support available to parents who incur ECEC costs is tax relief. Tax relief allows families to deduct their ECEC costs from their tax liability. However, this type of ECEC funding may not benefit very poor families if they do not earn enough to pay taxes. In Germany, Malta, Austria, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Norway, tax relief is available on fees paid during the entire phase of ECEC. In these countries, families with documentary proof of centre- or home-based ECEC expenditure qualify for a tax reduction. In Belgium, France, Italy and most cantons in Switzerland, tax rebates are available for parents whose children attend fee-paying ECEC before the child enrolls in education at ISCED 0 that is free. For example, in Italy, tax relief is available to families with children under 3 years old attending *nido d'infanzia*. In France, tax deductions are



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allowed for parents whose children are in home-based care (which is the predominant form of ECEC for younger children). In some countries, for parents of children attending settings at ISCED 0, tax deductions may still be allowed for additional hours of care or, as in the case of Malta, for parents who decide to enrol their child in a private fee-paying school.

Some countries allow tax deductions to be claimed by parents whose children are in ISCED 0, but not for younger children. In Bulgaria, taxes for education related expenses are deductible only for children over 3 years old attending settings at ISCED 0. In Spain, tax deductions are allowed for older children attending private fee-paying ECEC in some Autonomous Communities.

Very few countries offer special family allowances or grants based on a child's attendance at ECEC. Such allowances are available in Greece, some Autonomous Communities in Spain, France and in Finland. In France, the allowances are available for children attending home-based care or centre-based fee-paying provision for under-3s (*crèches*); in Spain, family allowances are paid only for younger children in ECEC. In Finland, childcare allowance is available if a child attends private ECEC.

A few countries offer vouchers as a targeted support measure for families whose children attend ECEC. In Spain, Madrid and Valencia offer the *Cheque Guardería*. In France, employers can provide their employees with 'universal service vouchers' (CESU), which can be used as payment for home-based childcare. In Italy, regions offer vouchers for ECEC for under-3s. In Luxembourg, parents whose child attends private daycare (centre- or home-based) are offered vouchers to help with childcare costs. In the United Kingdom, the Childcare Voucher scheme provides an opportunity for an employer to offer childcare vouchers (including vouchers in return for a reduction in employee's pay – known as a 'salary sacrifice'). This may affect the amount of tax credits an employee can receive, therefore it is essentially just another way to offer tax relief.

Some countries offer several of the above-mentioned support measures – in France parents of under-3s in home-based care can benefit from tax relief and vouchers, while specific family allowances are available for placing children in centre-based *crèches*. In some regions in Italy and the United Kingdom, both tax relief and vouchers are available. In Germany, two *Länder* (Hamburg and Berlin) and some municipalities offer ECEC vouchers in addition to nation-wide ECEC tax relief.

A few education systems (Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Portugal and Liechtenstein) offer supplementary family allowances to families with children with additional educational needs (as described in Figure G1). These measures are in addition to the normal reductions in fees in publicly subsidised ECEC. Often, proof of regular ECEC attendance and family income lower than a certain threshold is required to receive such allowances.

For example, in Belgium (Flemish Community), low-income families can apply for an extra family allowance based on a child's enrolment in pre-primary education. From the age of 5, regular attendance in *Kleuteronderwijs* is required to keep the allowance. Similarly, Bulgaria offers monthly allowances to low-income families whose children regularly attend compulsory preparatory groups at kindergartens or in schools. In Slovakia, the state provides special subsidies for children over 3 years old who attend ECEC (*materská škola*) and are at risk of social exclusion. A small special allowance (PPS 48.2 per year per child) is provided to compensate for any necessary educational equipment. In Hungary, if a child of very poor and low-educated parents regularly attends ECEC for at least 6 hours, a special allowance of PPS 118 is granted twice a year. In Portugal, all socio-economically disadvantaged children and students, attending public education institutions (starting from ISCED 0), are entitled to an additional allowance, which may be given in kind (free transport, free meals, free additional hours in pre-school and primary school, free school materials) or in cash. Families have to present proof of their income on a yearly basis.

Figure D8: Types of financial support available to parents with children in ECEC, 2012/13

Figure D8a: Younger children

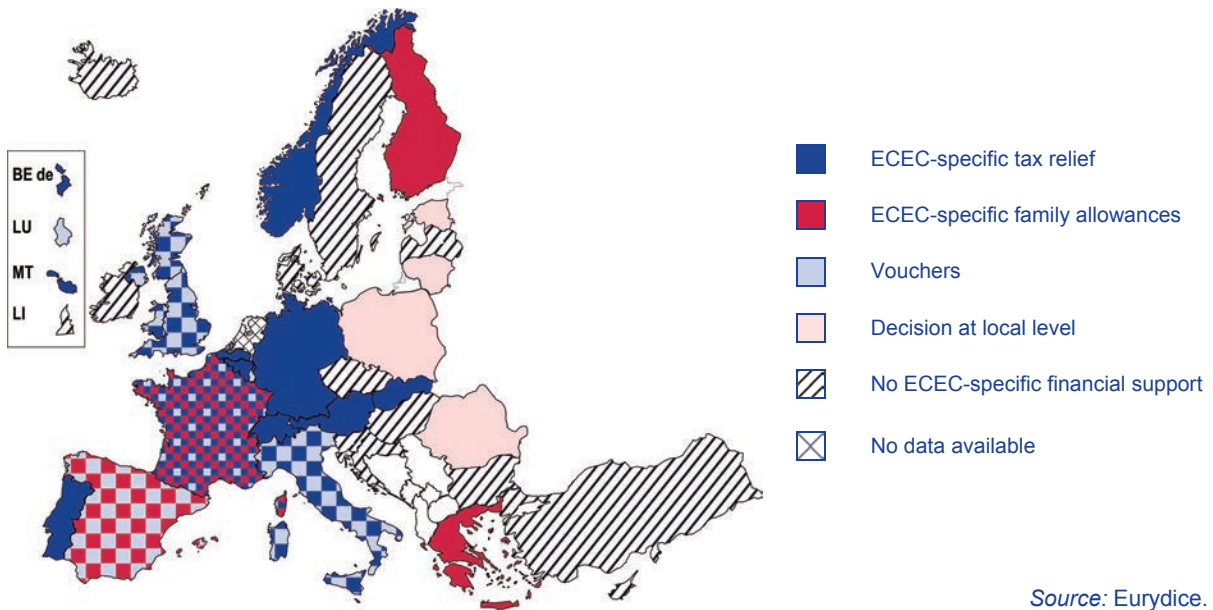
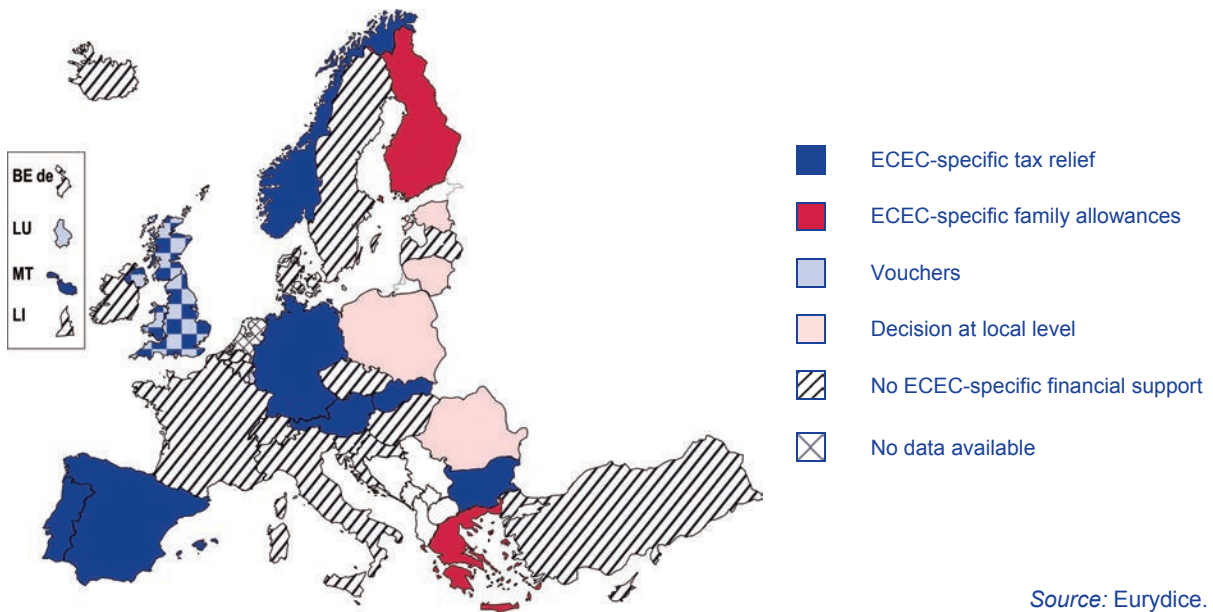


Figure D8b: Older children



**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Germany:** Two *Länder* (Hamburg and Berlin) and some municipalities offer ECEC vouchers

**Spain:** Measures exist only in some Autonomous Communities. For older children – measures only apply to fee-paying private ECEC.

**France:** Tax relief and vouchers are only available for home-based *assistant(e)s maternell(e)s agré(e)s*.

**Italy:** 'Younger children' – tax relief is available on a national level, while vouchers are distributed at regional level.

**Malta:** Tax rebate is available only to parents of children older than 2 years and 9 months attending independent schools (private (self-financing) settings). Otherwise, ECEC is free.

**Finland:** Childcare allowance is available if a child attends private ECEC.

## ON AVERAGE, HOUSEHOLDS CONTRIBUTE 14.4 PER CENT OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE AT ISCED 0

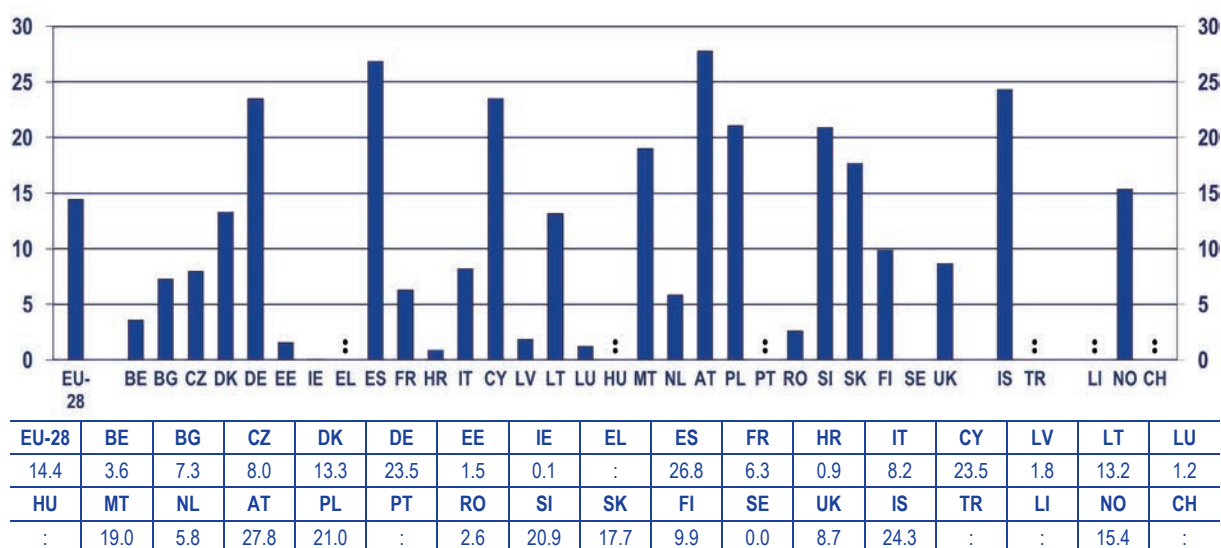
According to Eurostat data, on average in the EU-28, approximately 14.4 % of educational expenditure on ECEC at ISCED 0 comes from private sources. This largely comprises household spending on tuition fees (see Figure D6) and all other payments to education institutions for ancillary services such as meals, school health services and transportation to and from school. On the other hand, educational expenditure from public sources includes direct funding of public educational institutions, subsidies for educational activities to private ECEC providers, as well as transfers to private households (e.g. for family allowances). By showing the contribution made by private sources to total expenditure at ISCED 0, Figure D9 serves as a summary indicator for the information on public and private funding described in this chapter.

In Denmark, for example, the distribution between public and private expenditure is influenced by a regulation that fees from parents must not cover more than 25 % of a setting's operating costs. After other subsidies, fee reductions and exemptions are taken into account the proportion of expenditure from private sources amounts to 13.3 % – slightly below the EU average.

Educational expenditure from private sources constitutes more than 20 % of total ISCED 0 expenditure in Germany, Spain, Cyprus, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Iceland. Interestingly, in two of these countries, namely Spain and Poland, ECEC from age 3 is free of charge for parents (for 25 hours per week, see Figure D5), but private contributions for meals, additional hours and extra-curricular activities still constitute a considerable proportion of total expenditure. In Poland, since September 2013, fees for additional hours have been capped and extra activities have been free.

In contrast, private household spending on ISCED 0 is less than 4 % of total ISCED 0 expenditure in Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania and Sweden. Education at ISCED 0 is completely free of charge only in Belgium, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg and Romania. Private household spending on ISCED 0 in these countries might include fees for food and additional hours. In Estonia, Croatia and Sweden, however, the fees are very low and include the provision of food (see Figure D6).

**Figure D9: Proportion of total educational expenditure (at ISCED 0) from private sources, 2010**



Source: Eurostat, UOE, February 2014.



### Explanatory note

The spending of households and other private bodies (including private companies, religious institutions and other non-profit organisations) includes tuition fees and all other direct or indirect charges to families; for example, for materials, equipment and services. Day or evening childcare provided by pre-primary and primary institutions is not included. Information on payments to education institutions from 'other private bodies' is not available in the majority of the countries. For definitions of 'household' and 'ISCED 0', see the Glossary.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium:** Expenditure excludes private (self-financing) institutions and the German-speaking Community.

**Estonia:** Private expenditure excludes payments to public institutions.

**Ireland:** Payments from private bodies other than households to educational institutions are not available. While most pre-school provision in Ireland takes place in private institutions, the government pays these private institutions for one year of pre-school education.

**Croatia:** Expenditure excludes private institutions.

**Poland:** Expenditure excludes private institutions

**Portugal:** Public transfers to private bodies other than households are not available. Intergovernmental transfers for education are not available. Expenditure at local level of government is not available.

**Finland:** Expenditure on childcare in kindergartens is excluded after theoretically estimating care and education components of expenditure.

## CASH-FOR-CHILDCARE SCHEMES ARE AVAILABLE IN ONLY A FEW COUNTRIES

In general, most European countries encourage parents to enrol their children in ECEC settings. As other chapters have shown, a lot of effort have been made to increase the availability, affordability and the quality of ECEC. However, some countries base their ECEC policies on a notion of parental choice, and to support this they offer cash payment to parents who choose not to send their pre-primary age children to public or publicly subsidised childcare services. These schemes are known as 'cash-for-childcare'. Usually, the basic benefit is relatively low and can be claimed until a child reaches 3 years.

Cash-for-childcare schemes in their clearest forms can be found in the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden and Norway). In Finland, a child home-care allowance was introduced in 1985, which can be claimed by families with at least one child under 3 years of age who is not in public ECEC. The monthly maximum allowance for one child equals PPS 275, with a possible income-related care supplement of PPS 147 for the poorest families. Smaller allowances are paid for each additional child under school age not in ECEC. Some local authorities also pay a municipal supplement. Since 2008, most Swedish municipalities offer a monthly child grant to parents who do not use subsidised ECEC for their 1 to 3 year-old children. The grant is a maximum of PPS 263 monthly, per child.

In Norway, since 1998, parents of 1 to 2 year-old children who do not attend publicly subsidised ECEC settings (*barnehager*) are entitled to a cash-for-childcare benefit, which can be claimed at full or half rates depending on the hours of attendance. In 2013, the full benefit amounted to PPS 430 for children aged 13-18 months, and to PPS 284 for children aged 19-23 months.

In Bulgaria, an allowance of PPS 114 monthly can be claimed for each child aged 3 to 6 years old who cannot be enrolled in a public ECEC (*detska gradina*).

In Germany, from August 2013, a cash-for-childcare benefit (*Betreuungsgeld*) was introduced for parents who wish to take care of their child at home instead of using publicly subsidised ECEC (*Kindertageseinrichtung*). Parents can claim this benefit for children who are between 15 and 36 months old. The allowance amounts to PPS 96 monthly until August 2014, and will be raised to PPS 144 afterwards.

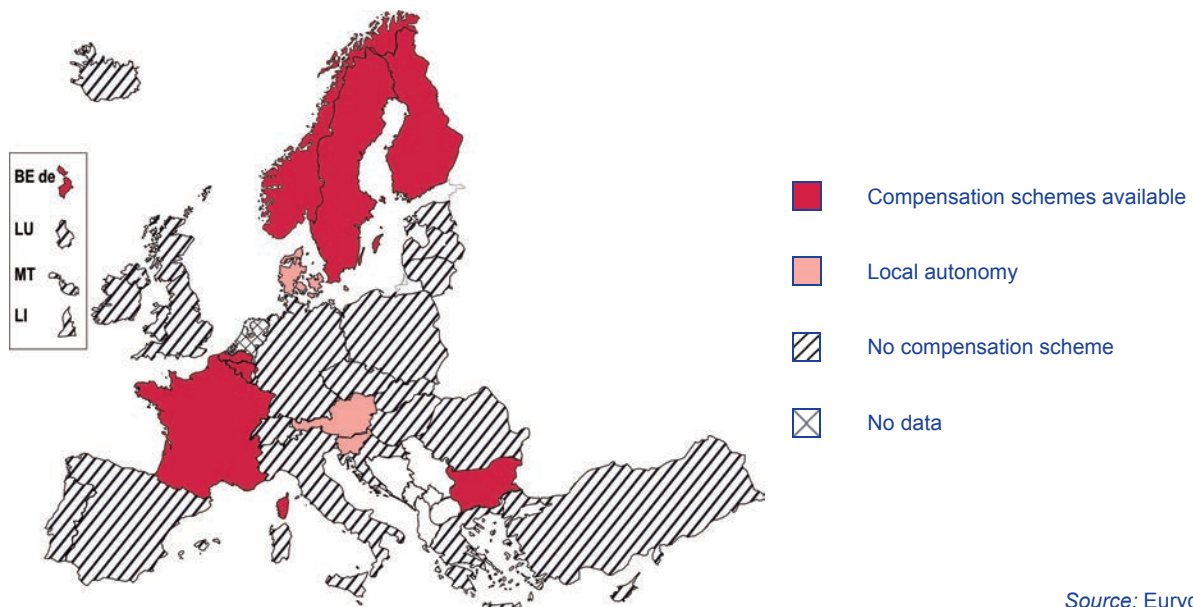
In Denmark, Austria and Slovenia, municipalities or regions can choose whether to give parents incentives for not enrolling their child in publicly subsidised centre-based ECEC. In Austria, the

amounts paid and the ages of eligible children vary. For example, in Upper Austria, a yearly allowance of PPS 639 is available to parents of 3 to 5 year old children who do not attend *Kindergarten*.

Alongside allowances, there are some other compensation mechanisms available to families who do not enrol children in ECEC. In Belgium, parents who do not apply for a tax rebate for money spent on ECEC services are entitled to another, yet considerably smaller, tax reduction (maximum PPS 483 annually, which constitutes less than 25 % of the tax deduction available to parents who choose to place their children in a childcare institution).

The above-mentioned schemes relate only to children’s attendance at ECEC and are not dependent on parent employment. In France, a cash-for-childcare scheme is linked to parent employment. A parent who has a child under 3 years old, and who does not work or works only part-time, is entitled to a monthly payment (*le complément de libre choix d’activité* – CLCA) at a maximum of PPS 501. Children of parents in receipt of this payment may attend ECEC for only a limited number of hours.

**Figure D10: Compensation schemes for parents who do not enrol children in ECEC, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

Parental leave is not considered to be a compensation ('cash-for-childcare') scheme since it is not linked to ECEC attendance. However, cash-for-childcare benefits are usually paid regardless of parents' employment status and therefore can be claimed by parents on parental leave.

**Country specific note**

**Germany:** A cash-for-care benefit was introduced from August 2013.





The 2011 Communication from the European Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care states <sup>(11)</sup> that 'Staff competences are key to high quality ECEC. Attracting, educating, and retaining suitably qualified staff is a great challenge. [...] Moreover, the range of issues tackled by ECEC staff and the diversity of the children in their charge requires continuous reflection on pedagogical practice as well as a systemic approach to professionalisation'.

This chapter therefore focuses on ECEC staff, but only on those who have regular, direct contact with children and whose duties involve education and care. Workers that perform only domestic or maintenance roles, such as preparing food or cleaning premises, are not within the scope of this analysis. Neither does this study address medical staff, such as doctors and medical assistants, who deal purely with the health of children in ECEC settings, for example, giving regular medical check-ups or first aid. Additional or specialist staff for special educational needs and/or disadvantaged children are in general not considered in this chapter, with the exception of Figure E6.

The chapter mainly addresses issues relating to initial training and continuous development for staff involved in the everyday care and education of children in centre-based settings and requirements for childminders in home-based provision. Questions pertaining to the professional specialists involved supporting regular staff and the requirements to become heads of ECEC centre-based settings are discussed separately.

## ECEC CENTRES OFTEN EMPLOY A RANGE OF DIFFERENT STAFF

Often, within the same country, a number of different types of professionals are involved with the everyday care and education of children. In addition, staff performing similar roles may also have different types of job titles, making analysis of this complex area rather difficult.

In **France**, the majority of staff in day nurseries (*crèches*) are auxiliary nursery nurses (*auxiliaires en puériculture*) who are required to have attained only upper secondary education. However, almost all day nurseries also employ educational staff – early childhood educators (*éducateurs des jeunes enfants*) and nursery nurses (*puéricultrices*) trained at ISCED level 5 (Bachelor's degree).

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)**, there is no single set of job titles for staff working in early years settings. The more generic and well known terms are *early years support staff* and *nursery nurse* (both trained at ISCED level 3), and *nursery assistant* with no formal qualification. Yet, other job titles are also used, such as *early years practitioners*, *early years educators*, *foundation stage teachers* and *pre-school assistants*; holders of these may have different qualifications.

Despite these variations, for the purposes of this report, the types of ECEC staff in direct, regular contact with children are grouped into three main categories:

a) **Educational staff:** teachers (pre-primary, pre-school, kindergarten)/pedagogues/educators

Educational staff usually have a tertiary qualification in education (see Figure E2); they have the main responsibility for the education and care of a group of children in an ECEC setting. Their duties usually include designing and delivering safe and developmentally appropriate activities in accordance with all relevant programmes/curricula (see Chapter F). They provide opportunities for creative expression through art, drama, play and music. In some countries, staff in this category may apply for senior positions as managers/coordinators/heads of setting.

In some countries, two different titles are used to distinguish between similar staff working in different settings: 'educators' is often the term used for those working with the younger age group in day-care settings while the term 'teachers' is used in pre-primary settings; this is the case in Greece, France and Italy. However, whereas in Greece the duration of initial education for educators and teachers is

<sup>(11)</sup> COM(2011) 66 final.



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the same (with different content), in France and in Italy the requirements for the teacher's qualification are higher.

Educational staff is available in two-thirds of the countries in settings for younger children and in all countries in settings for older children. In one-third of the countries, only educational staff work directly with older children.

b) **Care staff:** childminders/childcare workers/child carers/nursery nurses and/or nurses are responsible for providing care and support to children.

In most countries, childcare workers are trained at upper secondary level (see Figure E2). The role of care staff varies between settings. There are two main models:

- Care staff working independently in some settings for younger children only. They identify and meet the care, support and learning needs of children, including developing and delivering learning activities. They may be supported by auxiliary staff or assistants.
- Care staff working in a team with educational staff where they tend to provide support to educational staff. This type of staff structure can be found both in separate and unitary ECEC systems. Different types of care workers may be employed in ECEC settings, but always alongside educational staff. In Germany, Finland and Sweden, childcare staff work in teams with educational staff, and may perform more than a purely supportive role.

Care staff are more often employed in settings for younger children. Approximately half European countries employ care staff for work with younger children, while only five countries have care staff in settings for older children (Germany, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

c) **Assistant/auxiliary staff:** individuals who support educational or care staff

In almost half of European countries, ECEC institutions may employ auxiliary staff/assistants to provide support to qualified education and care staff both in settings for younger and older children. In some countries, the minimum level of initial qualification required is also upper secondary. In others, no formal qualification is needed (see Figure E2).

Assistants usually implement activity programmes designed for children, prepare craft materials and assist children to use them. They may also arrange daily routines such as preparing and serving meals, organising changeovers such as lunch breaks and rest periods, and guide children in their activities.

Usually, a few staff members work in a team with a group of children. Often, different team members perform different roles. Therefore, in two-thirds of the countries, at least two different categories of staff work as a team. In Spain, France, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Switzerland, all three categories work together in settings for younger children. This is also the case in settings for older children in all parts of the United Kingdom.

The type of staff involved in these settings varies according to children' age (younger or older ones) in over one-third of the countries. In a dozen countries, care staff are replaced by educational staff in settings for older children. In a few countries, assistants/auxiliary staff are available only in settings for younger children (the Czech Republic and Spain), or only to support educational staff working with older children (Ireland and Slovakia).

In a few countries, only one type of staff works in all ECEC settings. In Croatia, Lithuania and Romania, only education staff is employed. Others employ solely care staff in settings for younger children and education staff in settings for older children. This is the case in Belgium, Bulgaria, Malta, Poland and Liechtenstein.

Figure E1: Main categories of staff in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13

Figure E1a: Younger children

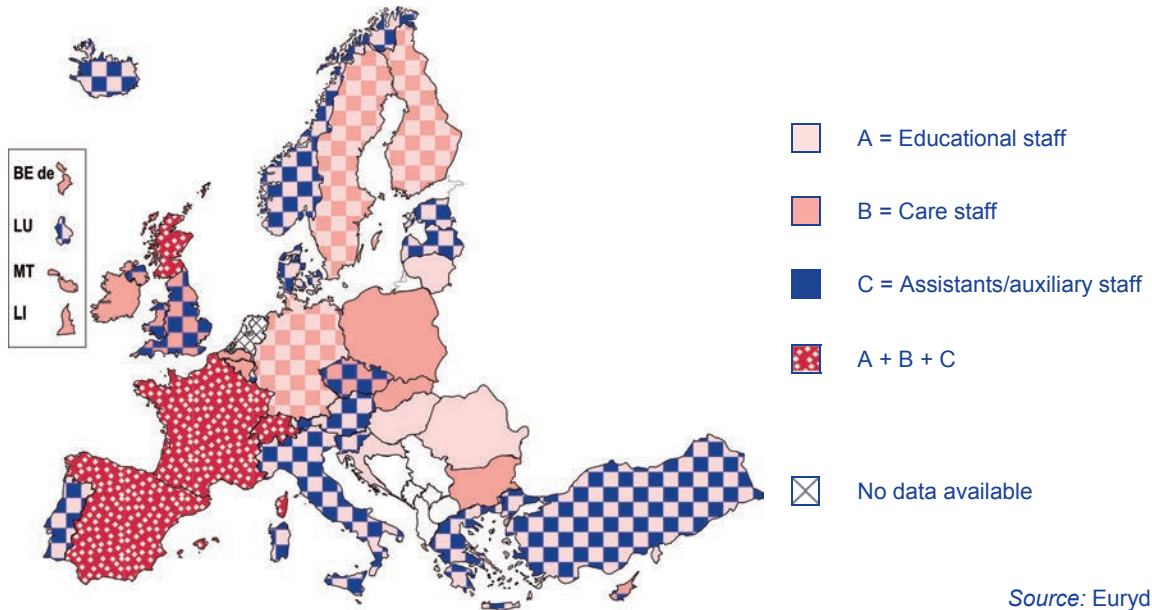
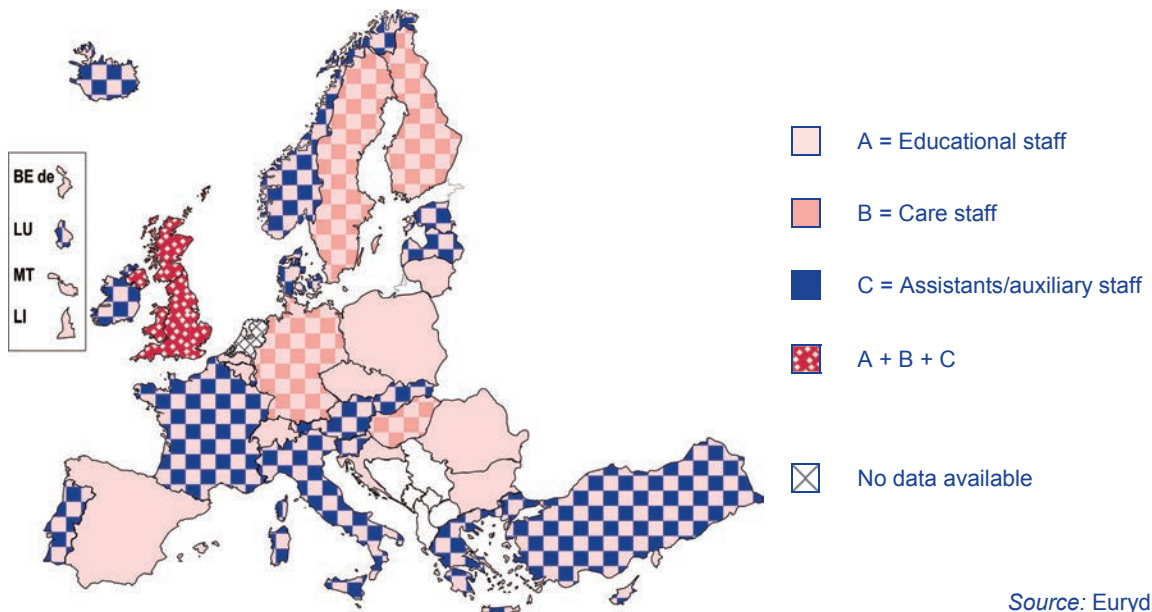


Figure E1b: Older children



**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Bulgaria:** In settings for younger children (*detski yasli*), nurses (*medizinski sestri*) are the main type of staff. However, pedagogical staff may also be employed.

**Czech Republic:** The Trade Licensing Act only defines the minimum qualification needed and the fields of studies for staff employed in day-care centres for children under 3 years of age (*zařizení pro péči o děti do 3 let*) but does not relate it to any specific type of work. It is up to the employer to define the work of the staff.

**Estonia:** The Figure represents the situation in childcare institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*). In childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*), only care staff is employed (*lapsehoidja*).

**Greece:** For older children, the Figure represents the provision for child centres (*paidikos stathmos*). In pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*), no assistants are provided.

**Spain:** Situation may vary between regions.



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**Italy:** In settings for younger children, the provision of auxiliary staff (*educatore, operatore*) is regulated at regional level; in settings for older children, it is regulated at central or local level. The Figure shows the most widespread situation.

**Romania:** Medical assistants (*asistent medical*) assigned to a specific kindergarten may cooperate with educational staff on health education issues.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS):** Separate settings for older children may operate without education staff but with a lower children/care staff ratio.

The ECEC profession is still predominantly female according to national statistics. Many countries have estimated that nearly all ECEC staff working in direct contact with children are women. In Portugal (settings for older children – *jardins de infância*), Iceland, Turkey and Norway, the proportion of men working with children is slightly higher and varies between 5 and 7 %. In Norway, men occupy approximately 10 % of assistant positions; Denmark is unique in having men in 23 % of assistant positions, and 15 % in teaching roles.

In order to diversify the ECEC workforce, Germany, Austria and Norway have developed special measures focusing on improving the level of male employment in the sector. Germany, for instance, has set up the national programme 'More men in ECEC centres' (*Mehr Männer in Kitas*). ECEC settings taking part in the programme explore different ways to attract men into the sector by improving the image of the profession, supporting men wishing to become educators and creating new paths into the profession. Austria introduced an annual 'Boys' Day' at national level in 2008, designed to promote social careers among men, including in the field of education. Finally, Norway uses a process of positive discrimination in favour of men applying for jobs in ECEC.

### IN A DOZEN COUNTRIES BOTH EDUCATION AND CARE STAFF WORKING WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN MUST BE QUALIFIED TO BACHELOR LEVEL

Two main approaches to staff qualifications are evident in European education systems. Over half of the countries have a single qualification regime in place across the whole ECEC phase. In other countries, there is a different regime in place for staff dealing with younger children than that for people working with the older age group: usually, a lower minimum level of qualification is required for staff working with younger children.

In most countries where the same minimum qualifications are required regardless of children's ages, the minimum qualification for educational staff is a Bachelor's degree in the field of education. In Portugal and Iceland, educational staff must even hold a Master's degree. Only in Germany, Latvia and Austria is the minimum entry a qualification at post-secondary non-tertiary level. The basic content of training programmes for prospective staff working either with younger or older children is usually the same, although sometimes the particular specialisation can differ. For example, in Austria early childhood educators (*Früherzieher/in*) working in settings for the youngest children (*Kinderkrippen*) have the same post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4) basic training as kindergarten pedagogues (*Kindergärtner/in Kindergartenpädagog/in*) working in settings for older children (*Kindergarten*), but undertake different specialisations during the last 1-2 years of the 5-year training.

There is a clear link between the ECEC organisational model (see Chapter B) and staff qualification requirements: in unitary systems, where ECEC provision for all children of pre-school age is organised in one single phase in one setting, the same minimum qualifications are required regardless of the ages of the children being cared for. Educational staff working with younger children in unitary settings are, in general, more highly qualified – usually at tertiary level – than those working with younger children in separate settings. This is the case in Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, Nordic countries, and Slovenia. Only in Latvia is the minimum qualification at post-secondary non-tertiary level.



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In most countries with split system that structures ECEC services according to the age of the children, different types of qualifications are required to work with younger and older children. Usually, the care or even educational staff in ECEC settings for younger children are required to have a minimum qualification of at least at upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level. The length of courses varies from two to five years. Moreover, there is no minimum qualification specified in Ireland and Slovakia for staff working with younger children. However, in practice, ECEC institutions in these countries aim to employ people with appropriate qualifications in childcare. In Ireland, for instance, regulations state that in centre-based settings, management should aim to have at least 50 % of childcare staff with a 'qualification appropriate to the care and development of children'.

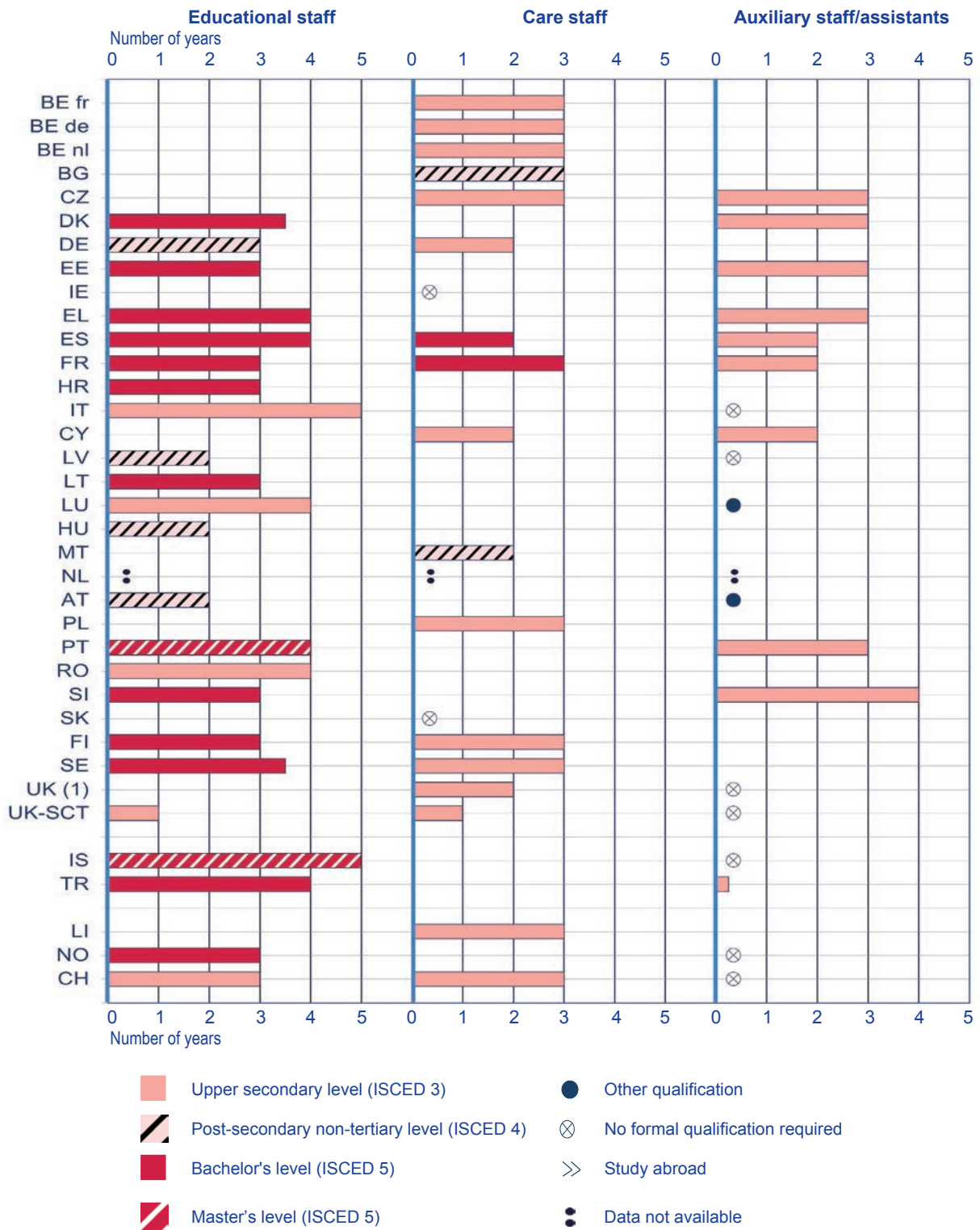
There are a few exceptions. In Greece, France, Portugal and Turkey, educational staff working in settings for younger children are required to have at least a tertiary degree level.

Usually, however, in countries with split system, tertiary level qualification is required only in settings for older children at pre-primary level (ISCED 0). Most countries require a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent with three or four years of study at tertiary level. In France and Italy, a Master's degree is mandatory. In a few countries, however, the minimum level of qualification required is either upper secondary (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Scotland)) or non-tertiary post-secondary level (Ireland and Malta (until 2015/16)).

With respect to pre-primary 'teachers' working at ISCED 0, the length and level of initial education is the same as for primary teachers (ISCED 1) in half of the countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland, Turkey and Norway). Sometimes, there may be some common content in the educational programmes for pre-primary and primary teachers, as in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Bulgaria, Spain, Poland and Romania. In Luxembourg and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), pre-primary teachers undertake the same initial education as primary teachers (in terms of length and content) and can be employed in both sectors. In Switzerland, some higher education institutions offer separate programmes for ISCED 0 and ISCED 1, others provide joint ones.

Finally, it is worth noting that in several European countries, ECEC teaching staff have the opportunity to attain a higher level of qualification than the required minimum. For instance, in Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, prospective ECEC educational staff may continue their study up to Master's level. In some cases, a higher qualification allows further specialisation in particular areas, while in others it may help individuals to advance their career and/or obtain a more senior position (see Figure E7).

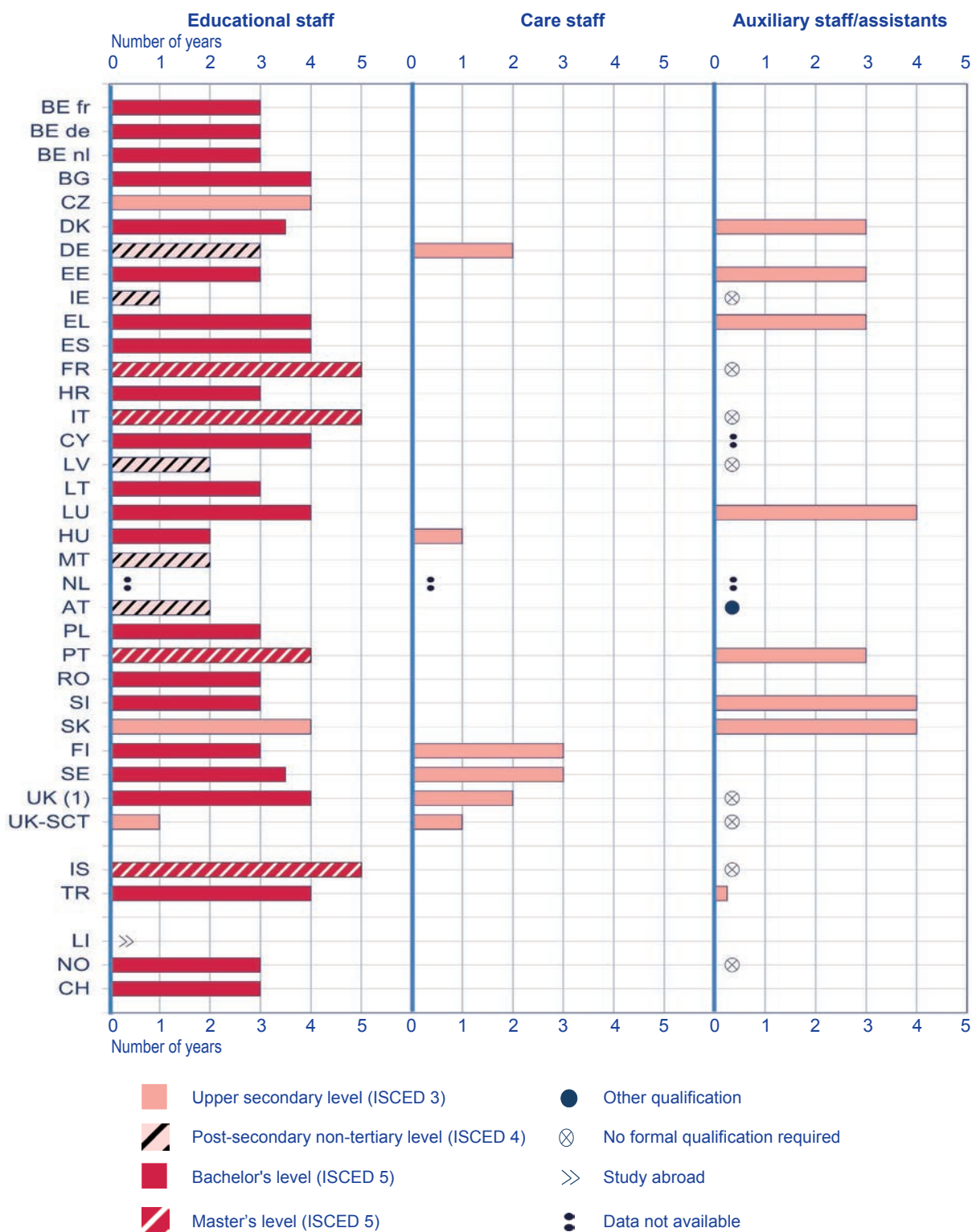
**Figure E2a: Minimum required level and minimum length of initial education for staff working with younger children in centre-based ECEC settings, by staff category, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Figure E2b: Minimum required level and minimum length of initial qualification for staff working with older children in centre-based ECEC settings, by staff category, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country. Additional or specialist staff for special educational needs and/or disadvantaged children are not considered in the Figure (see Figures E6 and G2).



### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE nl):** Qualification required for child workers (*Kinderbegeleider*) in the public sector: a specific vocational secondary school programme with an option in childcare. Students can choose this option in the 3rd grade (5-6th year) of secondary school or in an additional year to secondary education.

**Czech Republic:** The Figure shows the situation based on the Trade Licensing Act, which defines the possible qualifications for staff working in settings for younger children. Qualifications may vary between nurse (*všeobecná sestra*), social worker (*sociální pracovník*), nanny (*chůva*) and teacher (*učitel mateřské školy*).

**Estonia:** The Figure represents the situation in childcare institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*). In childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*), nurses (*lapsehoidja*) having at least a one-year qualification at upper secondary level (ISCED 3) are the only category of staff.

**Greece:** Where there is a lack of candidates with a Bachelor's degree for an educational post in a private setting (except pre-primary schools: *nipiagogeio*), the holders of an upper secondary vocational education certificate or of a certificate from a private school (with a relevant specialisation) can be accepted.

**Ireland:** Public or publicly subsidised free pre-primary year in ECEC provisions (for older children) are incentivised, through a higher capitation rate, to ensure that all assistants are qualified at ISCED level 3.

**France:** For settings with older children, the Figure represents the minimum qualification required for the competitive examination for assistants (*agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles*). This qualification is required for at least 60 % of employees. Since 2010, the competitive examination is also open, without specific qualification, to people with experience in ECEC (minimum two years for civil servants, four for others) and without additional requirement, to parents with three children or more.

**Italy:** Despite the fact that the minimum qualification requirement for educational staff working with younger children is set at upper secondary (ISCED 3) level in some regions, the general trend is to employ educators (*educatore dell'infanzia*) with tertiary education degrees. In settings for younger children, the provision for auxiliary staff (*educatore, operatore*) including their prerequisite qualifications are foreseen in the regional regulations. In public settings, auxiliary staff may also qualify through specific vocational courses organised at regional level. No formal qualification is required in private settings. In settings for older children, the provision of auxiliary staff is regulated at central or local level.

**Cyprus:** In settings for older children, the minimum qualification for school assistants (*sholikoi voithoi*) is at ISCED level 3 but the minimum duration is not available.

**Luxembourg:** Educators (*éducateurs*) trained at ISCED level 3 are mainly employed in settings for younger children. Yet, specialised educators (*éducateurs gradués*), teachers (*instituteurs*) and pedagogues (*pédagogues*) with a higher education qualification can also be part of the team. Auxiliary staff may have a qualification lower than ISCED 3.

**Hungary:** The vocational training of a kindergarten nurse (*óvodai dajka*) lasts between 480 and 720 hours.

**Malta:** As of 2015/16, the minimum qualification for educational staff will be at Bachelor's level.

**Austria:** The training for educational staff may either last five years (three at ISCED 3 and two at ISCED 4) or two years (all years at ISCED 4). Minimum requirements for care assistants vary. In some provinces no formal qualification is required, in others up to 300 hours of training are needed.

**Poland:** Nurses (*pielęgniarka*) with a Bachelor's degree must be employed in nurseries (*żłobek*) where the number of children in groups is greater than 20.

**Slovenia:** As part of the induction programme or once they are employed, pre-school teachers (*vzgojiteljice*) and assistants (*pomočnice vzgojiteljic*) have to pass a state professional examination in ECEC to obtain their qualification. Requirements for staff do not apply to private settings running programmes according to special educational principles (e.g. Steiner, Montessori).

**Finland:** In day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*), at least a vocational qualification in the field of social welfare and health care is required (ISCED 3). One in three staff must have a tertiary level degree. In pre-primary classes (6-7), if the group includes both pre-primary and primary pupils, the teacher needs to be a qualified class teacher (Master's degree).

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** For settings with older children, the Figure reflects the minimum qualification requirement for separate settings. In unitary settings, the requirements for qualification of staff working with older children is the same as for younger children.

**United Kingdom (SCT):** By 30 June 2014, all assistants/auxiliary staff (including those already employed) must be registered and qualified at a minimum of ISCED level 3.

## A SHORT COURSE SPECIFIC TO HOME-BASED CHILDCARE WORKERS IS MANDATORY IN MANY COUNTRIES

Two-thirds of European countries provide for regulated home-based ECEC services, which must follow certain pre-defined rules and quality standards (see Figure B2). A formal qualification or special training is usually stipulated in regulations on ECEC home-based provision and may be also one of the requirements for official accreditation.

Half of the countries with regulated home-based ECEC provision have specific mandatory training courses to prepare prospective childminders for work in home-based settings but do not require a minimum level of qualification: Belgium (French Community), Germany, France, Hungary, Austria (some *Länder*), Poland, Portugal, Finland, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland and Switzerland (some cantons). In Estonia, both a minimum initial education and a specific

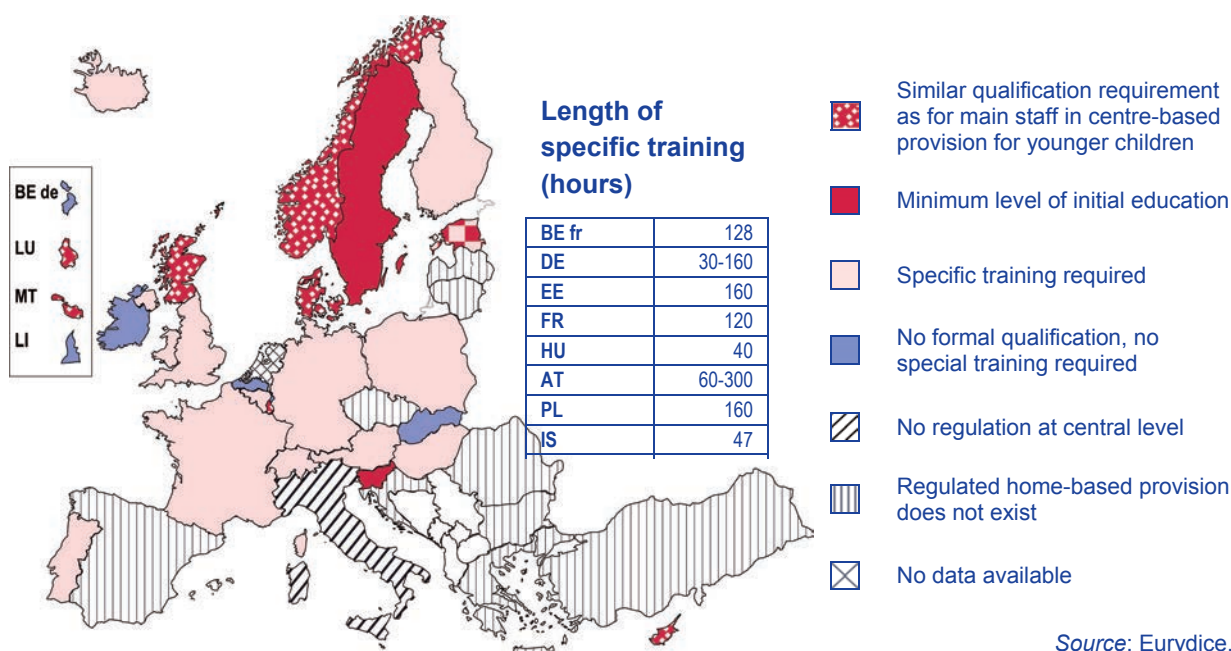


training are required. The length and the content of these training programmes vary from country to country. Whereas in Hungary the duration of the training is only 40 hours, Estonia requires 160 hours of theoretical classes followed by practical training.

In one-third of the countries with regulated home-based ECEC provision, childminders are required to have a minimum level of initial education. In only six of them, it is the same minimum level of qualification required to work as care staff (Cyprus and Malta) or educational staff (Denmark, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Norway) in ECEC centre-based settings for younger children (see Figure E2a). In Estonia and Slovenia, the minimum qualification is at upper secondary level, which is less than what is required for main staff in ECEC centre-based settings for younger children.

In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, no formal initial qualification is required, but one of the conditions for childminder (*Tagesmutter/-vater*) accreditation is to follow continuous professional development (CPD) covering topics such as health education and child psychology.

**Figure E3: Qualification requirements for childcare workers in regulated home-based provision, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

### Explanatory note

First-aid training on its own is not considered to be 'specific training' for childcarers in home-based provision.

### Country specific notes

**Germany:** Childminders in home-based settings have to attend a qualification course for family day-care. The content and scope of these courses vary across *Länder*. Several *Länder* have adopted a curriculum which has been developed by the German Youth Institute (DJI) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and which comprises 160 hours. Others only require a 30-hour course and first-aid course.

**Italy:** Home-based settings (*asilo familiare*) are regulated at local and regional levels.

**Luxembourg:** The status of childminders (*assistants parentaux*) is awarded to people having either a diploma (in psycho-sociology, pedagogy, socio-pedagogy or health) or a childminder certificate, or to those preparing to one of these diplomas. In addition, childminders must follow an employment-based training (at least 20 hours per year).

**Austria:** In most provinces, 'daycare parents' are required to attend specific training courses.

**Portugal:** Childminders (*amas*) have to meet some personal, family and housing criteria. They also need to attend some training sessions organised by the social security services of the Ministry for Solidarity, Employment and Social Security and by publicly subsidised private institutions. No minimum length of the training is specified.

**Slovenia:** Childminders are required to have at least a 4-year upper secondary qualification (general or vocational).

**Finland:** The competence-based Further Qualification for Childminders (ISCED 3) is recommended. Other suitable training may also be accepted by the education provider.

**Sweden:** Childminders (*barnskötare*) must have experience or education for working with children.



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**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** No minimum length of the training is specified. Childminders are required to obtain and maintain training in core areas including first aid, health and safety, and to have an understanding of how to set up a home-based childcare business.

**Liechtenstein:** Personnel working in home-based provision have to take only a basic first-aid course.

**Switzerland:** Cantonal and local regulations on 'day-care families' may stipulate that childminders have to complete a training course and undertake continuing education and training (about half of all cantons require these courses).

### CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT FOR STAFF WORKING WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Continuing professional development (CPD) plays an essential part in increasing ECEC professionals' competences. In certain cases, participating in training allows staff not only to improve their knowledge and develop additional professional skills in ECEC, but also to upgrade their qualifications. CPD is more often compulsory for educational and care staff than for auxiliary staff and assistants. Therefore, this analysis focuses on the status of CPD for educational and care staff.

CPD has gained considerable importance over the years. In 2009, CPD was optional for education and care staff working with younger children in more than a half of European countries (Eurydice, 2009). Now, however, in most countries, CPD is generally considered a professional duty for these staff.

For educational and care staff working in settings for older children, CPD is usually a professional duty. In six European countries, CPD is considered both a professional duty and a prerequisite for promotion for educational and care staff working with children of all ages (Estonia, Spain, Croatia, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia). This is also the case in Bulgaria and Slovakia, but only for educational and care staff working with older children. In Germany and Austria, different possibilities exist depending on the *Länder*.

In some countries, participation in continuing professional training is optional for staff working with younger children, but it is a professional duty for those working with older ones. This is the case in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Malta, the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland) and Switzerland (in many cantons).

In Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, Sweden and Norway, CPD is not obligatory for educational and care staff. However, in Greece and Poland, CPD is clearly linked to the career progression of teachers working with older children.

In Luxembourg, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland), CPD is a professional duty even for assistants.

#### **Country specific notes (Figure E4)**

**Belgium (BE nl):** In subsidised and non-subsidised private settings for younger children, CPD may be provided but it is not mandatory. Only those providers that ask for funding from the government have to provide at least 12 hours per year of mandatory professional training.

**Germany, Austria and Switzerland:** The status of CPD is established at *Länder*' or *canton*' level. The Figure represents the possible options in Germany and Austria depending on the region and the most common situation for Switzerland.

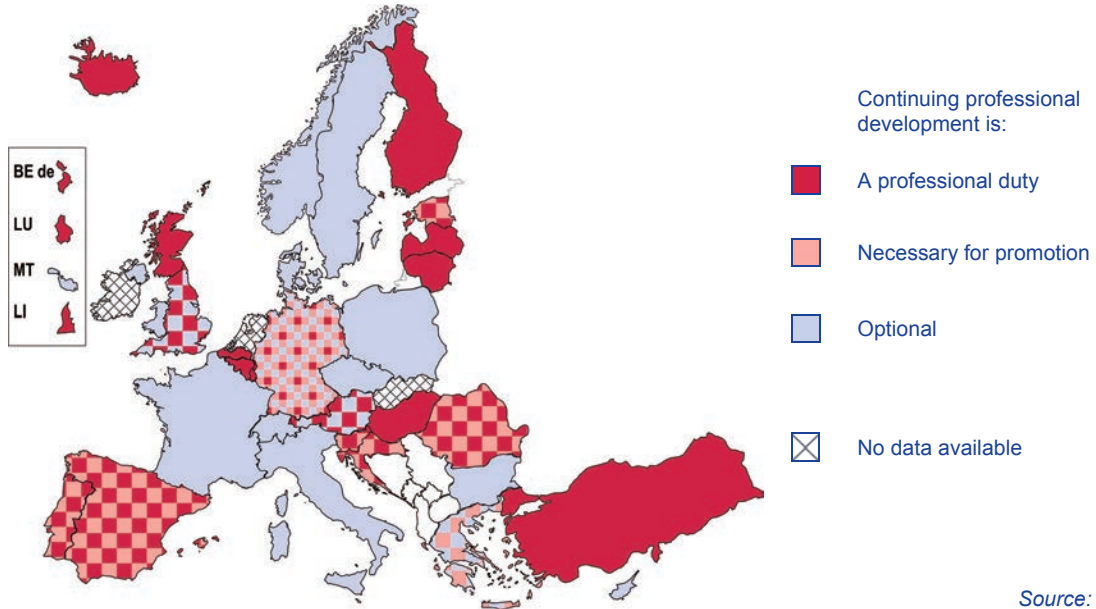
**Estonia:** For nurses (*lapsehoidja*), CPD is optional.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** In England, CPD is a professional duty for qualified educational staff, whatever the type of setting. In addition, in primary schools including *maintained nursery schools and nursery classes/reception classes*, CPD is a professional duty for qualified teachers in all three jurisdictions.

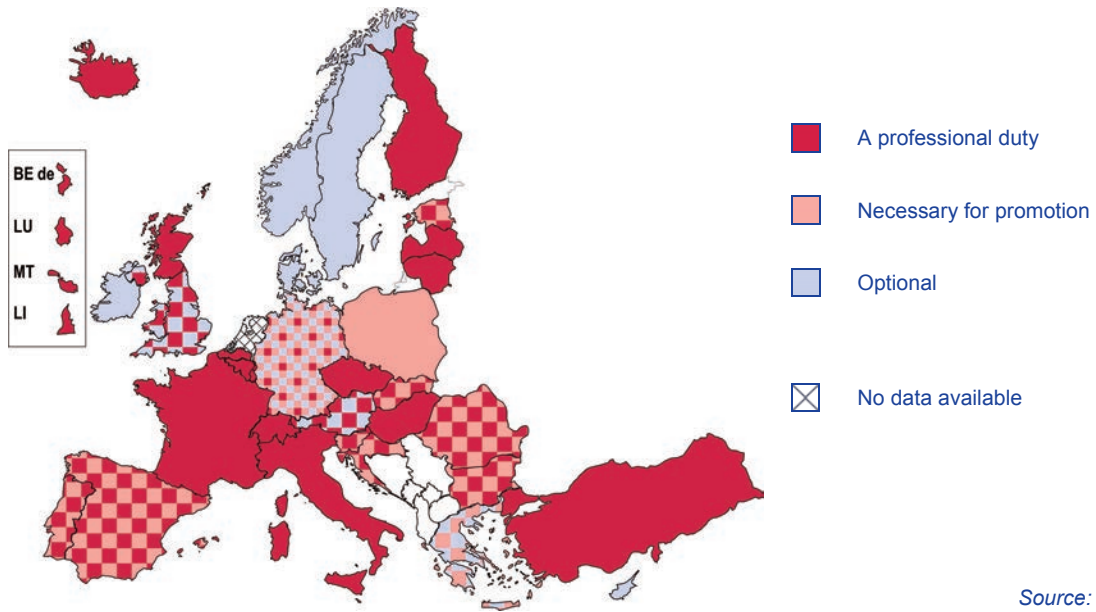
**Iceland:** The Act 90/2008 on pre-school stipulates that a plan for CPD of employees shall be developed by each principal.

**Figure E4: Status of continuing professional development for educational and care staff in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure E4a: Younger children**



**Figure E4b: Older children**



**Explanatory notes**

**Professional duty** means a task described as such in working regulations/contracts/legislation or other regulations on the teaching profession.  
See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.



## ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS INTO ECEC CAREERS ARE STILL NOT WIDESPREAD IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

To facilitate access to careers in ECEC, allow progression to more senior roles, and in some circumstances counter a lack of qualified staff, some European countries have introduced alternative pathways to becoming qualified. However, the practice is still not widespread in Europe. Only a dozen European countries and regions offer alternative pathways to some ECEC roles alongside the traditional models of initial education. The main types of alternative pathways are described below.

- **Employment-based training/qualification and/or recognition of past experience**

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, unqualified staff already working in public or publicly-subsidised day-care centres (*Kinderdagverblijven*) can follow a special training course provided by the Centre for Adult Education to obtain a qualification as a childcare worker (*Kinderbegeleider*).

In the **Czech Republic**, educators (*vychovatel*) may become pre-primary teachers by passing an additional examination of the school leaving examination (ISCED 3A).

In certain **German Länder**, it is possible to become an educator (*Erzieher/in*) or a childcare worker (*Kinderpfleger/in*) by following shortened programmes (sometimes two years instead of three or four). In one *Land* (Brandenburg), these programmes are targeted particularly at long-term unemployed men.

In **Finland**, the competence-based qualification system offers a way to recognise an individual's vocational competences regardless of how they have been acquired (work experience, studies or other activities). Individual study plans are prepared for each student taking a competence-based qualification. Thus adults may, for instance, acquire the necessary qualification to work either in regulated home-based provision or as care staff in centre-based ECEC settings.

In **Sweden**, a relatively common alternative route for pre-school teachers (*förskollärare*) is to work as a qualified childminder (*barnskötare*) for some years and then enter the profession following a shortened version of the pre-school teacher programme after validation of their knowledge and experience. An unqualified person can start to work as a childminder and later acquire a qualification via short in-service training courses that may be organised by municipalities.

In the United Kingdom (England), different training programmes have been introduced, depending on the applicant's previous qualifications and experience, leading to *Early Years Professional Status* (EYPS), replaced by *Early Years Teacher Status* (EYTS) as of 2013.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, practitioners and support workers may be qualified via work-based qualifications (various *Scottish Vocational Qualifications*) which assess the skills and knowledge people have and need to perform their job effectively.

In **Norway**, a pre-school teacher qualification can also be acquired via employment-based training programmes on a part-time basis. Assistants who have worked in pre-school centres for at least five years can get an upper secondary level certificate as childcare and youth workers without attending upper secondary school.

In **Switzerland**, people over 22 years of age and having at least a two years of work experience in the field of ECEC can acquire a qualification as specialist in care (in settings for younger children) in two years instead of three or alternatively through the validation of their competences.

- **Studies of a shorter duration**

In **Belgium (German-speaking Community)**, people without a nursery school diploma may follow a ten-month training in order to be able to care for younger children in centre-based settings (*Kinderkrippe*).

In the **Czech Republic**, studies of a shorter duration to become a pre-primary teacher are organised by upper secondary schools (post-secondary non-tertiary study) and universities' lifelong learning study programmes.

- **Recognition of formal and non-formal learning**

In the **Czech Republic**, so far, only nannies (*chůvy*) may become qualified through a professional qualification examination which verifies their work-related competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

In **Malta**, childcare workers in *Childcare and family support centres* may enter the profession after a validation process of their informal and non-formal learning.

- Specific pathways for teachers and graduates in education, humanities or social sciences

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, Bachelor's degree holders in other subjects may apply for a place on a short programme leading to the Bachelor's degree in pre-primary education. In some cases, waivers for certain subjects are allowed on the basis of recognition of prior learning.

In **Estonia**, qualified teachers in other levels of education can acquire an ECEC qualification via a specific module (usually 160 hours). This training is mainly provided part-time.

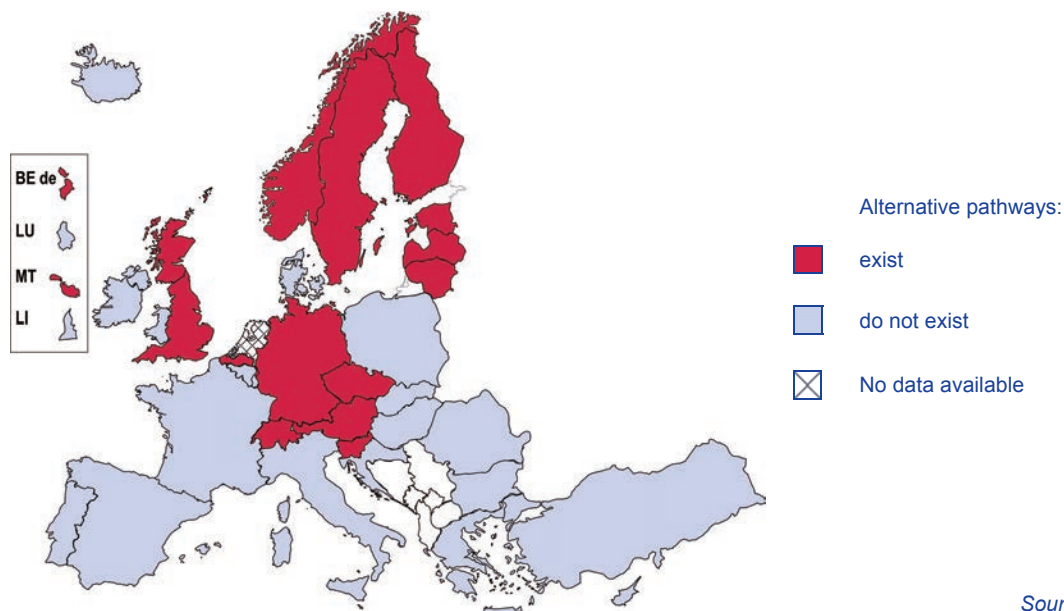
In **Latvia**, people qualified as generalist teachers in primary education can obtain a pre-primary teacher qualification after 72 hours of in-service training.

In **Lithuania**, teachers with a Bachelor's degree can gain an additional qualification in ECEC via a special module (90 credits) provided by higher education institutions.

In **Slovenia**, Master's degree wishing to become pre-primary teachers need to complete one year of a supplementary study programme in pre-school education (60 ECTS).

In **Sweden**, teachers qualified for age groups outside the range of ECEC can also be employed as a pre-school teacher and then take a shorter version of a special pre-primary education programme.

**Figure E5: Alternative pathways into ECEC careers, in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'alternative pathways', see the Glossary.

## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS ARE THE MOST COMMON SPECIALIST STAFF IN ECEC

Professionals specialised in particular fields such as speech/language therapy, educational psychology, social workers, etc., employed directly by ECEC settings or by external support services, can provide highly effective assistance to education and care staff working with children who have learning or cognitive difficulties.

Figure E6 shows that in almost all European countries regulations include provision for a range of professional specialists to support ECEC staff. In most countries, ECEC teams receive support from educational psychologists and speech/language therapists; however, support from professionals specialised in teaching reading or mathematics is rare.



## STAFF

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In more than two-thirds of the countries examined, other types of specialists may provide support to ECEC staff, mostly in settings for older children. In addition to language therapists and educational psychologists, settings for older children often ensure access to specialist teachers/pedagogues, social workers, or special educational needs (SEN) staff. On the other hand, settings for younger children usually tend to receive help from medical and health professionals such as paediatricians, physiotherapists, psychomotor therapists, nutritionists, etc., providing support for children's physical development.

Often, the size of the setting or the number of children with additional educational needs determines availability of specialists. For example, in Lithuania, the presence of professional specialists depends on the number of children with special educational needs in an ECEC setting. An ECEC setting can employ one speech therapist if there are at least 25-30 children who need assistance. Where there is no option of providing professional specialist assistance within an ECEC setting, it can be provided by local pedagogical/psychological services.

Whereas in some countries professional specialists may be directly employed in ECEC settings, other countries make available multi-professional support teams. In general, small ECEC settings cooperate with external specialists. Sometimes, ECEC settings have a choice between including a professional specialist position on their staff and applying for occasional professional support from external services. Usually, external support services have multidisciplinary teams which deliver individual or small-group intervention to children either on their own premises or in ECEC settings.

In **Belgium (German-speaking Community)**, psycho-medical-social centres staffed by psychologists, nurses, doctors and social workers provide assistance to children in need of physical, emotional, cultural or mental support.

In **Ireland**, Early Intervention Teams can include speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, paediatricians, social workers and other specialists.

In **Luxembourg**, multidisciplinary teams, including psychomotor therapists and social workers, intervene directly in ECEC settings for older children.

In **Hungary**, the municipal educational professional guidance centres (*nevelési tanácsadó*) allocated professional specialists to each kindergarten (*óvoda*) according to their needs in 2012. Since January 2013, central pedagogical specialist services (*pedagógiai szakszolgálat*) diagnose and centrally provide the necessary support for older children. However, Heads of settings can decide to employ professional specialists as members of the permanent ECEC staff.

In **Slovenia**, all public and fully publically subsidised private settings provide an internal kindergarten counselling service. Kindergartens with 30 or more groups are entitled to a full-time counsellor, while smaller kindergartens are allowed a relative proportion of a full-time counsellor's services. A wide range of specialists such as psychologists, special needs educators, rehabilitation specialists, social workers, etc., may be employed as counsellors in these services.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, early years education providers are expected to cooperate with support agencies, which may include medical services, teachers, therapists, educational psychologists, learning support staff and social workers.

Special support can also come from trained regular ECEC staff. For instance, in Germany, the centrally initiated programme Early Chances Initiative (*Offensive Frühe Chancen*) provides additional funding for especially trained staff on language support (*Sprachexperten*).

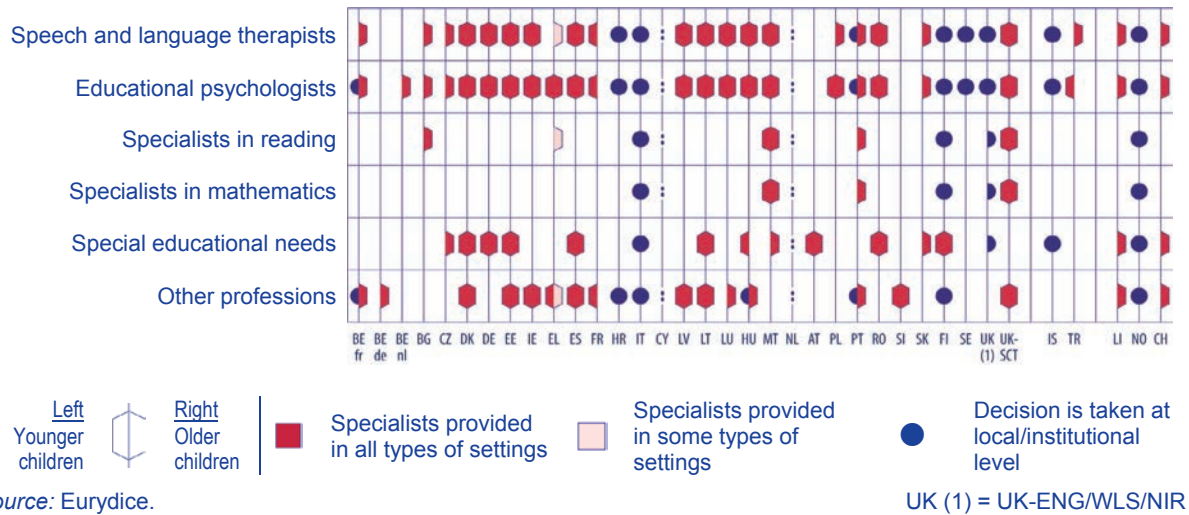
In Finland, Sweden and Norway, the central regulations do not specify the type of professional specialists that should be available (except for special day-care teachers in Finland) but mention that children with additional needs should receive the support they need.

In **Finland**, the need for multi-professional cooperation at local level is emphasised in steering documents for day care and pre-primary education.

In **Norway**, ECEC settings collaborate with the Pedagogical-psychological Counselling Services providing special educational assistance. The role of these services is to assess the situation and make written recommendations to ECEC staff on what kind of assistance a child needs and how to provide it. Based on these recommendations, the municipality can provide ECEC settings with additional specialised 'pedagogues'.

In countries where access to professional specialists is not regulated at central level and provision is not compulsory, access to professional specialists is usually at the provider's discretion. It is normally the responsibility of the heads of ECEC institutions to recruit relevant staff.

**Figure E6: Professional specialists providing support for centre-based ECEC staff as laid down in central regulations/recommendations, 2012/13**



#### Explanatory note

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

#### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE fr) and France:** 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to psychomotor therapists.

**Belgium (BE de), Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia and United Kingdom (SCT):** 'Other professions' corresponds to multidisciplinary teams (see details in the text).

**Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia:** Support for special educational needs also targets Roma children.

**Germany:** Some *Länder* have regulations concerning special needs educators.

**Estonia and Lithuania:** 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to social pedagogues.

**Greece:** Only pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*) provide speech and language therapists and specialists in reading. 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to social workers (not available in pre-primary schools).

**Spain:** The Figure represents the situation in most regions.

**Croatia:** 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to pedagogues.

**Italy:** The situation may vary according to the regions.

**Latvia:** The presence of professional specialists in settings depends on municipalities' financial resources. 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to music teachers. Physical education teachers may also contribute, as well as Latvian teachers in ethnic minorities settings.

**Malta:** The Figure refers to public settings for younger children and public and church kindergarten settings for older ones.

**Austria:** There are no central regulations; however, all provinces have regulations for special educational needs.

**Portugal:** 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to specialist teachers in environmental sciences, arts and crafts, music and educational sciences.

**Finland, Sweden and Norway:** Central regulations focus on the right of individual pupils to individual support and not on the type of professional specialists (except for special day-care teachers in Finland). Decisions on the provision of specialist professionals are taken at local level.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** Specialists in reading and mathematics are only available in school-based centres.

**Liechtenstein:** 'Other professions' corresponds to teachers for German (second language).

**Switzerland:** 'Other professions' mainly corresponds to specialists for psychomotor therapy and for teaching pupils their language of origin.



## HEADS OF ECEC SETTINGS ARE MOST OFTEN EDUCATED UP TO BACHELOR LEVEL

Good leadership in settings is important if ECEC is to be of high quality. Heads of ECEC settings are faced with a wide range of tasks, they are not only required to organise educational provision, but they must also manage financial and human resources.

In almost all European countries, the minimum level of qualification required for heads of ECEC settings is the same as for the core educational/care staff (see Figure E2). In a few countries, the required level is higher – a tertiary level qualification is usually the prerequisite for heads rather than ISCED 3/ISCED 4.

In the majority of countries, heads of ECEC settings must hold a Bachelor's degree. In some others, a Master's degree is officially required to access a managerial position. This is the case in Portugal and Iceland, in settings for older children in France and Italy, and in settings for younger children in Belgium (German-speaking Community).

In a dozen countries, the minimum initial qualification required for heads of ECEC settings is at secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level. This is more often the case for heads in settings for younger children (Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). However, in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Austria, it applies to both younger and older children.

In four European countries (Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland), regulations do not set out any official requirements for the initial qualification of heads in ECEC. This is also the case in Slovakia with settings for younger children. However, Denmark and Sweden have formal competence requirements for this role: in Denmark, the legislation states that local authorities have to ensure that ECEC staff have the necessary competences to perform this job. In Sweden, only someone who has acquired the appropriate skills and competences through training and experience may be appointed as head.

### Country specific notes (Figure E7)

**Belgium (BE fr):** The Figure refers only to public and publicly subsidised settings.

**Belgium (BE de):** Exceptionally, the competent Ministry may accept alternative qualifications for headship in ECEC settings for younger children based on relevant experience or specific training.

**Belgium (BE nl):** In private settings, no formal qualification is required to be a head.

**Germany:** The minimum level of qualification required to be a head is ISCED 4, but some ECEC settings employ as managers pedagogues/early childhood pedagogues/social pedagogues qualified with Bachelors' or Masters' degrees.

**Estonia:** The Figure refers only to pre-school childcare institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*). In childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*), the minimum level required is ISCED 3.

**Italy:** The minimum level of qualification for heads in settings for younger children is defined at regional level (from ISCED 3 to ISCED 5 Master's degree).

**Luxembourg:** The Figure refers only to ECEC services for children under 3 years old (*services d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*). To be a head in ECEC settings with 40 or more children, an ISCED level 4 qualification is required. Settings for older children operate under the responsibility of inspectors as is in elementary schools.

**Poland:** Pre-school classes (*oddziały przedszkolne*) are managed by heads of primary schools.

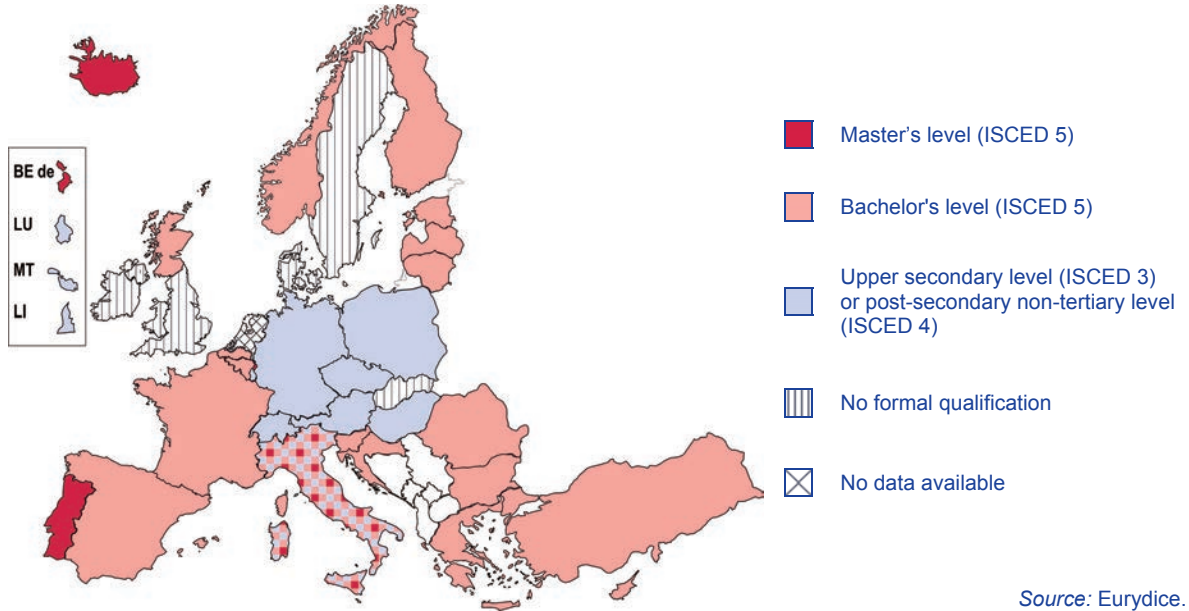
**Slovenia:** Some ECEC settings employ counsellors as managers, in which case the minimum level of qualification is a Masters' degree.

**Switzerland:** The Figure illustrates the situation in the majority of cantons.

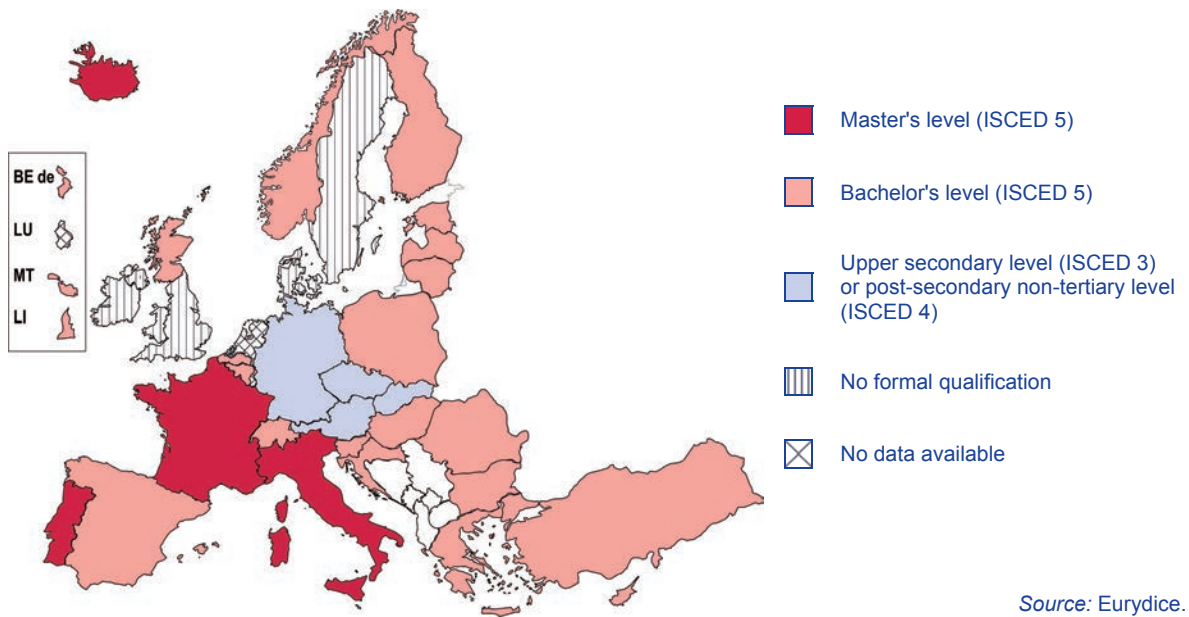


**Figure E7: Minimum level of qualification required for employment as a head of centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure E7a: Younger children**



**Figure E7b: Older children**



**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.



## **IN ALMOST HALF OF ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HEADS OF SETTINGS FOR OLDER CHILDREN MUST HAVE SPECIFIC TRAINING AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

The workload of heads in ECEC settings usually includes many varied tasks such as planning and organising teaching and learning activities, managing finances and human resources, dealing with logistics, etc. In almost all European countries, therefore, in addition to the initial qualification, many other criteria must be considered when selecting a candidate for headship.

In most countries, professional experience in ECEC is the basic condition for becoming a head in ECEC settings for older and younger children. The required minimum period is usually between two and five years. It ranges from two years in Germany, Latvia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), to seven-eight years in the French Community of Belgium (for heads in settings for older children), and 10 years in Cyprus. In Greece (in *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* settings), Portugal, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Iceland and Switzerland, professional experience is required, but the duration is not stipulated. This is also the case in Malta, but only for heads in those settings for younger children.

In almost half of the countries, applicants for a position as head in ECEC settings for older children must undertake special training for headship in addition to having professional experience. Conversely, this requirement is less common for heads in settings for younger children; applying only in one-third of the countries. In Sweden, the leadership training programme is highly recommended but not mandatory.

The duration, organisation and content of headship training vary. Usually training modules focus on organisation, planning and management of schools including people and financial management, educational legislation, communication and teamwork strategies. Overall they aim to develop the leadership, decision-making and communication skills of prospective heads.

In some countries, training programmes for headship consist of theoretical and practical parts. In Spain, training programmes usually include a 100-hour theoretical course and six months' internship. Candidates may be appointed as heads only if they have passed the final evaluation. In Poland, the specific qualification course for heads in settings for younger children lasts 280 hours, of which 80 hours are practical classes.

Only in Estonia and the United Kingdom (Scotland) must prospective heads in all ECEC settings meet all three requirements: professional experience, administrative experience and special training for management. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic (public settings only), Malta, Poland and Romania, this applies only in settings for older children.

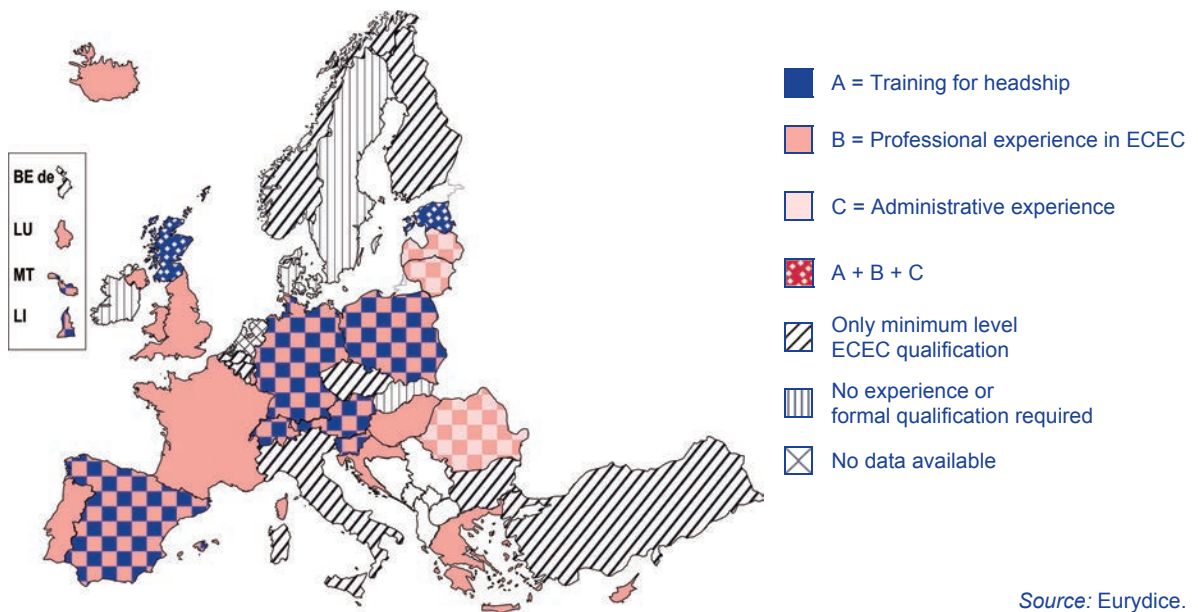
In Latvia, Lithuania and Romania (in settings for younger children), candidates applying for heads' positions must provide evidence of both professional and administrative experience. In Latvia, two years' experience in an administrative position is usually required. In Lithuania, in addition to professional experience, one year's experience in people management as well as leadership, informational technologies and language competences are explicitly required.

In Belgium (Flemish Community), Norway and Turkey, heads of ECEC settings only need a minimum level of qualification. This is also the case in Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Italy, but only in settings for younger children. In Finland, to be head of a day-care centre, a day-care centre teacher qualification is required, and leadership skills should be demonstrated. The law does not stipulate how these skills should have been acquired nor how they should be assessed (local autonomy).

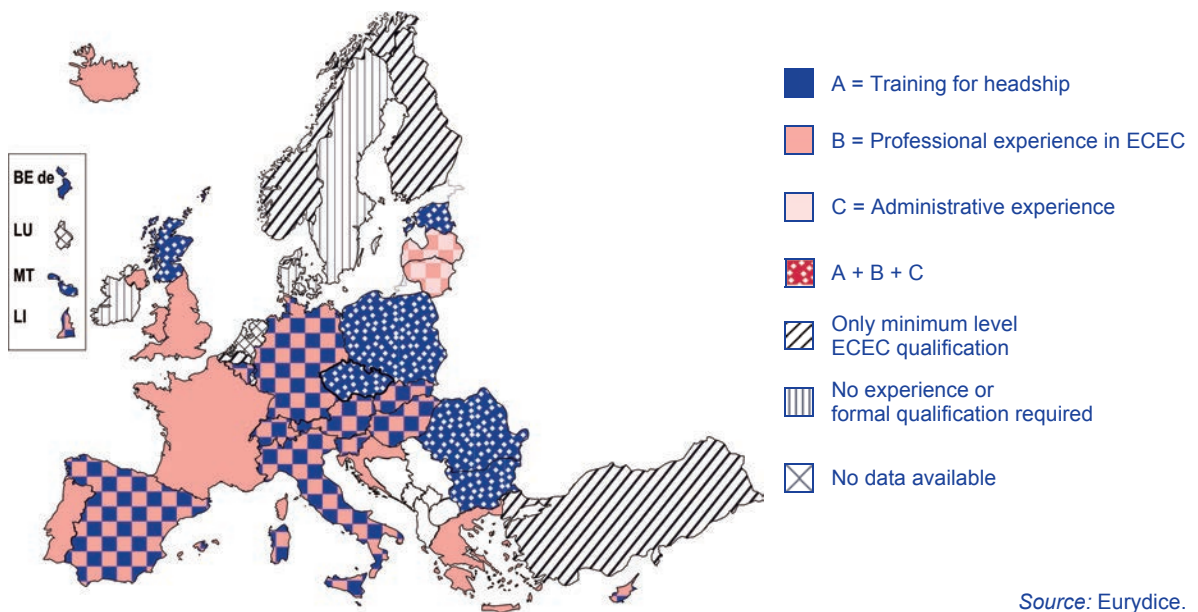
In some countries, one or more additional conditions may be applied. Thus, in Spain, in addition to professional experience and special training for headship, prospective heads have to undertake a management project. In some Autonomous Communities, the Education Authorities may add requirements, for example, for language competences. In Slovenia, becoming heads in public and publicly subsidised settings must have been promoted to the title of adviser (*svetovalec*) or counsellor (*svetnik*) or have been a mentor (*mentor*) during the five years prior to their appointment.

**Figure E8: Additional requirements to become a head of centre-based ECEC settings, as laid down in central recommendations, 2012/13**

**Figure E8a: Younger children**



**Figure E8b: Older children**



**Explanatory notes**

For definitions of 'professional experience in ECEC', 'administrative experience', 'specific training for headship', see the Glossary. See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.



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**Minimum number of years of professional experience in ECEC required to become a head in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

Settings for **younger** children

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Length	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	2*	4	⊗	●	5	3	5	⊗	10	2	3	5	5
	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH			
Length	●	2-5*	2-5	●	2-3	5	⊗	⊗	⊗	2	●	●	⊗	5	⊗	●			

Settings for **older** children

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Length	7-8	⊗	⊗	3	3	⊗	2*	4	⊗	●	5	3	5	5	10	2	3	na	5
	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH			
Length	10	2-5*	5	●	5	5	5	⊗	⊗	2	●	●	⊗	5	⊗	●			

⊗ Professional experience is not required

● Min. number of years is not stipulated

\* Depends on regions/Länder

**Countries requiring a minimum period of compulsory training before or after appointment as a head in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

Settings for **younger** children

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Length	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	*	160 h	⊗	⊗	100 h	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH			
Length	:	160* lessons	280 h	⊗	⊗	144 h	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	60 ECTS	⊗	⊗	:	⊗	*			

Settings for **older** children

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
Length	120-140 h	150 h	⊗	:	100-350 h	⊗	*	160 h	⊗	⊗	100 hours	⊗	⊗	4* months	160 h	⊗	⊗	na	360 h
	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK (1)	UK-SCT	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH			
Length	60 ECTS	160* lessons	:	⊗	60 h	144 h	160-200 h	⊗	⊗	⊗	60 ECTS	⊗	⊗	:	⊗	*			

⊗ No headship training required

\* Depends on regions/Länder

: Duration not available

Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Country specific notes**

**Estonia:** The Figure refers to pre-school childcare institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*). In childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*), only the minimum level of ECEC qualification is required to access a position as head.

**Greece:** The Figure refers to infant/child centres (*vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos*). In pre-primary schools, (*nipiagogeio*) in addition to professional experience, administrative experience and training gained before appointment to headship are required.

**Spain:** The Figure only represents public settings. In settings for younger children, Autonomous Communities may waive any of the requirements.

**France:** Professional experience is not required for holders of a Doctoral degree in medicine (*docteur en médecine*).

**Luxembourg:** Settings for older children operate under the responsibility of inspectors as is in elementary schools.

**Hungary:** Heads of settings for younger children must pass a state exam in Social Affairs within two years of appointment.

**Malta:** Public settings for older children (*kindergarten centres*) are integrated in primary schools and supervised by school heads.

**Poland:** Pre-school classes (*oddział przedszkolny*) are supervised by heads of primary schools.

**Portugal:** Public ECEC settings for older children (*jardins de infância*) are integrated in school clusters and supervised by school heads. The minimum number of years (2 years) is only defined for private settings for older children.

**Slovenia:** The required experience is not necessarily linked to ECEC.

**Finland:** The Figure only shows the situation for heads in day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*), who are required to have appropriate leadership skills in addition to their initial qualification. For pre-primary classes (*esiopetus/förskoleundervisning*), school heads must have the appropriate work experience and sufficient knowledge of education administration or have obtained the Certificate in Educational Administration in addition to teacher qualification.

**Sweden:** The Education Act stipulates that heads need to have pedagogical insight through training and experience. The National School Leadership Training Programme (*Rektorsprogrammet*) is recommended but not compulsory for heads in pre-school centres.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** For settings with older children, the Figure represents the situation in day nurseries/children centres for older children and pre-schools/nursery schools. When nursery schools/nursery classes/reception classes (3-5) are integrated in primary schools they are supervised by the school head. The *National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership* is available for practicing heads of day nurseries/children centres (0-5), but is not compulsory. In England, this programme ceased to be available in July 2014. The *Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland* is recommended for primary heads. New first-time heads, which do not have this qualification, are expected to obtain their qualification through the *Qualification for Serving Headteachers Programme*, though it is not mandatory.

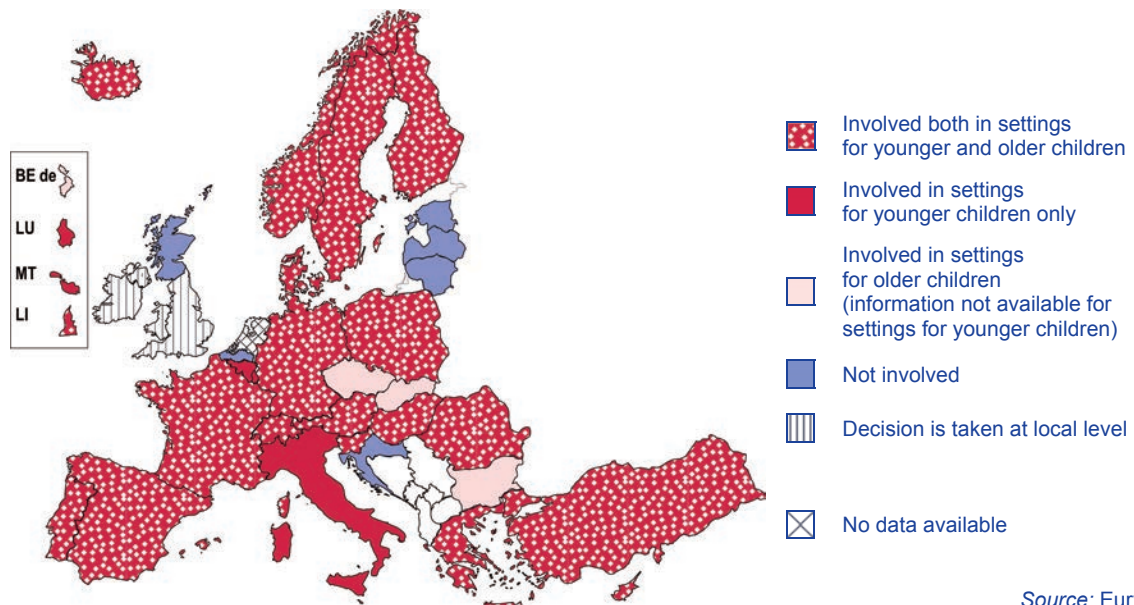
**United Kingdom (SCT):** There is a range of trainings for headships, some of which are postgraduate qualifications.

**Turkey:** As of 2013/14, heads in settings for younger children should have at least 3 years of experience in ECEC as well as administrative experience. For settings with older children, the Figure represents the situation for heads in kindergartens (*bağimsız ana okulu*). The same reform applies to them as of 2013/14. Nursery classes (*anasınıflar*) are not represented. This provision is integrated in primary schools and supervised by school heads.

## HEADS OF ECEC SETTINGS ARE USUALLY INVOLVED IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In almost all European countries, in addition to performing managerial and administrative tasks, the heads of ECEC institutions have some involvement in pedagogical and educational activities. Overall no strict regulations about the involvement of heads in pedagogical/educational activities exist, and only general frameworks are established. The role and specific responsibilities of heads in ECEC are usually defined at local or institutional level.

**Figure E9: Involvement of heads of centre-based ECEC settings in pedagogical/educational activities, 2012/13**



### Explanatory note

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE de):** Usually, heads of settings for older children (*kindergarten*) are not involved in pedagogical educational activities. If a setting has fewer than 180 children, the head also performs teaching duties.

**Belgium (BE nl):** For younger children, the Figure refers to public settings. In private settings, heads can be involved in pedagogical/educational activities.



## STAFF

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**Denmark:** Some settings have both administrative and pedagogical leaders. Usually administrative leaders are not involved in educational processes.

**Luxembourg:** The Figure only refers to settings for younger children (*service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*). Settings for older children operate under the responsibility of inspectors as is the case in elementary schools.

**Poland:** Whenever settings for younger children are merged in clusters, heads do not work directly with children.

**Romania:** In settings for younger children, heads have no obligation to be involved in educational/pedagogical activities but may, depending on their education.

**Slovenia:** Only the heads of settings with 13 or fewer groups of children (i.e. about 7 %) are involved in educational activities.

In a few countries, heads in ECEC settings are never involved in educational activities, namely in the Baltic countries and in Belgium (Flemish Community), Croatia and the United Kingdom (Scotland). In four countries, heads' pedagogical role is limited to ECEC settings for younger children: Belgium (French Community), Italy, Luxembourg and Malta. In Slovakia, heads of ECEC settings carry out teaching duties for, on average, 12-23 hours a week, the rest of their working time is allocated to management duties.

The size of institutions is usually the main factor in determining whether heads are involved in pedagogical/educational activities in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Germany, France, Hungary (in settings for older children), Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia. Heads of smaller settings are more often involved in daily work with children. For example, in Austria (*Carinthia Land*), the heads of settings with 1-2 groups generally spend two hours a week on administrative tasks, while in settings with 3-4 groups they spend three hours on this type of work. The rest of their workload is normal kindergarten teaching activities. In some settings with more than four groups of children, heads may perform only managerial/administrative tasks, but they still have to substitute for staff in case of illness. In Slovenia, only the heads of settings with 13 or fewer groups of children (i.e. about 7 %) are involved in educational activities.

# TEACHING PROCESSES

## SECTION I – EDUCATIONAL CONTENT, APPROACHES AND ASSESSMENT

After examining the organisation, funding and staffing of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in European countries, this chapter focuses on the core processes taking place within ECEC. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process largely determines the quality of ECEC provision. Appropriate teaching methods, learning activities based on well-defined objectives, good communication between children and staff, regular assessment of progress towards the desired learning outcomes, as well as the involvement of stakeholders such as parents and the local community, all contribute to the delivery of high quality education and care (see EACEA/Eurydice, 2009).

This chapter firstly examines whether countries have issued steering documents which set out what the educational component of ECEC should be and what age range it should cover. The objectives, educational content and teaching approaches, as recommended in these documents, are examined. The question of whether children are assessed to determine their progress towards any desired learning outcomes is also raised.

The second section focuses on measures to facilitate the transition between different stages of ECEC, as well as between ECEC and primary education. It discusses admission to primary education and the role of the key participants in this procedure. Finally, the chapter examines the partnerships established by ECEC providers with parents and the wider community. It also looks at the types of support available to parents within ECEC settings.

### MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE NO STEERING DOCUMENTS TO GUIDE PROVIDERS OF ECEC FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Since it is becoming increasingly accepted that early years' provision is the foundation of learning throughout life, ECEC is receiving more attention from governments, and many European countries now issue official steering documents for this phase. However, any educational component tends to be restricted to the older children in the pre-primary years. For younger children, guidelines relating to their cognitive and intellectual needs are less apparent, and in many countries the emphasis tends to be on the care element of provision.

The notion of a 'steering documents' is used to encompass the variety of official approaches that intend to steer or guide ECEC providers in different countries. In this perspective, steering documents include any or all of the following: learning content, objectives and outcomes, attainment targets as well as guidelines on pedagogical approaches, learning activities and assessment methods. This chapter examines whether steering documents provide guidelines covering children's education and care needs.

The form of steering documents for ECEC varies considerably between countries. Such documents may be incorporated into legislation as part of an education programme (e.g. in Estonia, Spain, France and Slovenia), whereas in others they are published as a reference framework of skills (e.g. *socle de compétences* for *écoles maternelles* in Belgium (French Community), care and education plans (e.g. in different German *Länder*), educational standards (e.g. in Ireland and Malta), criteria for developing local curricula (e.g. in Lithuania) or practical guidelines for ECEC practitioners (e.g. for *crèches* in Belgium (French Community)).



Depending on how formal or binding they are, steering documents allow varying degrees of flexibility in the way they are applied in ECEC settings. There may be more than one document applicable to the phase in a particular country or region within a country, but they all contribute to establishing the basic framework in which ECEC staff are required (or advised, where mandatory requirements do not exist) to develop their own practice to meet children's needs.

In around half of the countries, the education component of ECEC provision, as set down in steering documents, covers the entire age range of children at this stage, while in the remaining half it is directed only at older children. Where unitary ECEC systems exist, with settings accommodating the entire age range of children up to primary school age, the educational element of steering documents also applies to the whole age range. Indeed, in these countries, educational authorities are involved in programme development for unitary settings and, moreover, the same qualification requirements apply to all ECEC staff working with children regardless of age (see Figures B1 and E2). This is the case in the Nordic and Baltic countries, Croatia and Slovenia and also in Germany and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland) which have both split (separate settings for each age group) and unitary systems.

Many countries with a split ECEC system have established an educational framework only for older children. This is the case in Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. This may be explained by the fact highlighted previously, that the first phase of ECEC for younger children in these countries has a more care oriented approach, whereas the second phase for older children is more education oriented (see Figure B1). Nevertheless, some countries with a split system also have an official framework for both younger and older children, which is either set down in the same steering document(s) for the whole range of age (e.g. as in Ireland) and/or in separate documents for younger and older children (e.g. in Belgium (French Community), Greece, Spain, Malta, Hungary, Romania and Turkey).

It is important to note that in several European countries central steering documents contain general principles and objectives for ECEC and these may serve as a basis for steering documents issued at regional or local level. Thus, in federal systems with significant regional autonomy, as is the case in Germany and Spain, the education authorities of the *Länder* and the Autonomous Communities are responsible for providing more detailed programmes of study for ECEC containing objectives, content and assessment methods, etc. In some other countries (e.g. Estonia, Denmark, Lithuania (prior to pre-primary groups), Sweden and Finland), the guidelines and principles established in the national framework provide a reference point for producing local curricula at the municipal level or within ECEC settings.

In a few education systems where steering documents do not apply to younger children, ECEC settings must draw up their own education and care plan in order to become accredited. Settings are required to outline, for example, their proposed socio-pedagogic activities, the education and support provided for children, and information on cooperation with parents. This is, for instance, the case in Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities) and Switzerland.

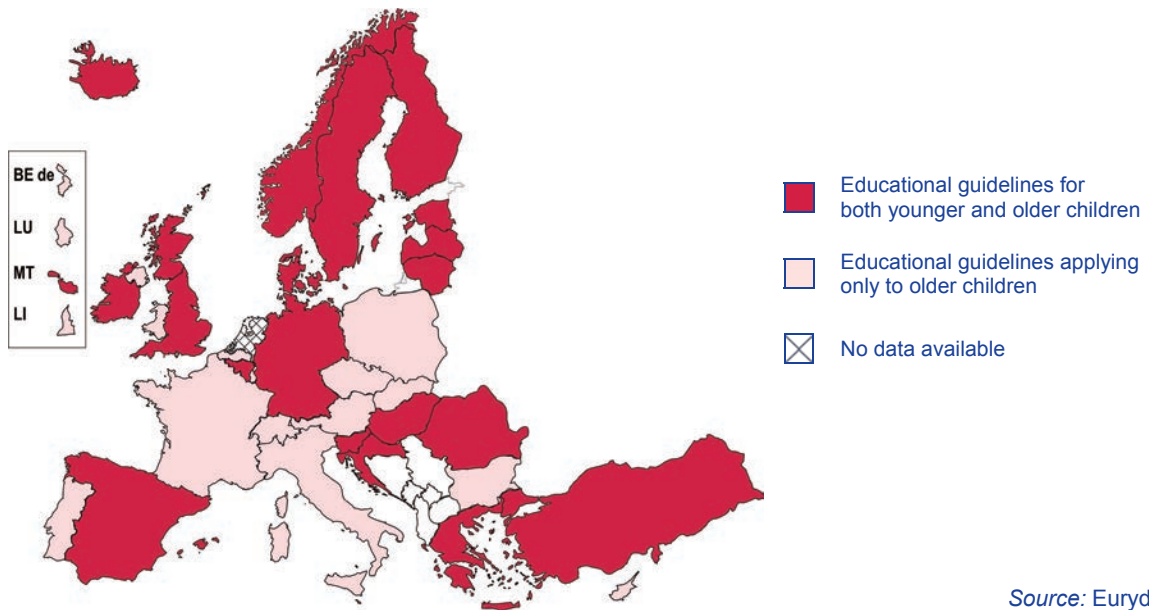
Among the countries where **home-based provision** exists, less than half have issued steering documents for this type of settings. However, in the countries where home-based provision is a significant part of the ECEC sector (see Figure B2), steering documents apply to both home-based and centre-based provision (except in Belgium (German-speaking Community) and France). In some cases (e.g. Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Finland, the United Kingdom (England and Scotland) and Norway), these documents cover the whole age range of children attending ECEC, while in others they only apply to older children (e.g. in the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern



Ireland)). In contrast, in Malta, the documents refer only to younger children because home-based provision is designed only for children up to three years of age. Other countries outline only general objectives for home-based ECEC (see Figure F2) or have no steering documents containing guidelines on education for this type of provision.

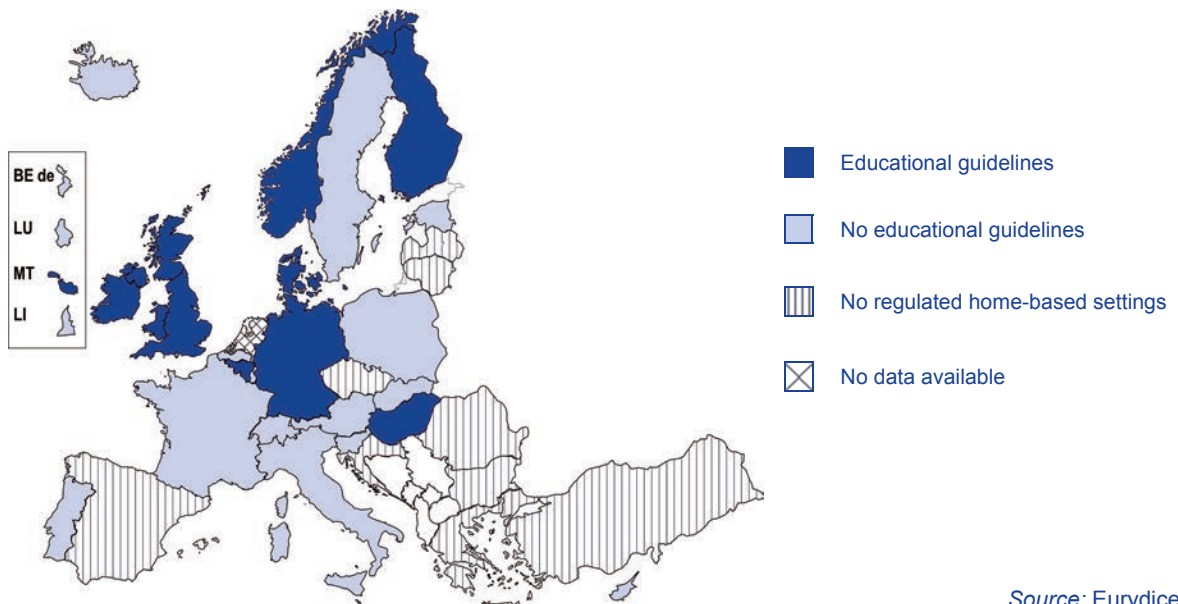
**Figure F1: Provision of educational guidelines in central-level steering documents for centre-based and home-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure F1a: Centre-based ECEC settings**



Source: Eurydice.

**Figure F1b: Home-based settings**



Source: Eurydice.

#### **Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'steering documents', see Glossary.

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

#### **Country specific notes**

**Belgium (BE nl):** Steering documents for younger children apply only to centre-based public settings.

**Switzerland:** Most cantons require ECEC settings to draw up an education and care plan as a basic condition for approval/accreditation.



## ECEC LARGELY FOCUSES ON CHILDREN'S PERSONAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

As previously mentioned, all European countries have issued steering documents for at least one stage of the early years covering the education and care component of provision. The most common elements relating to children's educational needs defined in these documents are learning objectives or the expected outcomes for children in terms of their progress and development. Objectives and outcomes are also often translated into learning areas or activities to be provided by ECEC settings.

In accordance with the age covered by steering documents (see Figure F1), learning objectives, outcomes and/or activities set down in steering documents are usually directed at a certain age group. Alternatively, children may be expected to have completed them by the end of a particular stage of ECEC. Thus, over 20 countries (many of them having unitary settings) have established learning objectives, outcomes and/or activities for the whole period of ECEC. In some cases, these are defined and described year by year as, for instance, in Malta. Steering documents may also specify outcomes to be attained by children by the end of ECEC, prior to their entry into primary education (e.g. in Estonia). This pre-supposes that, within a setting, the whole period of ECEC is designed and conducted in a way that will enable these central objectives to be reached. In another 15 countries (which all have a split ECEC system), specific objectives are set only for older children while in the earlier years only general objectives are provided.

All European countries without exception, list objectives referring to personal, emotional and social development as well as language and communication skills, which should be covered some time during ECEC. Physical development and health education are also covered everywhere, except in Croatia. The development of artistic skills and understanding the world are highlighted by most countries for both younger and older children.

Reading literacy and numerical and logical reasoning are more often targeted at older children. The same is true for adaptation to school life. In Lithuania, Finland and Sweden, this objective applies only to children age 6-7 attending pre-primary classes before their entry into primary education.

Out of all the ECEC learning objectives/activities listed in Figure F2, early foreign and/or second language learning is the least frequently mentioned in steering documents. Nevertheless, it is specified in 18 countries, usually in relation to older children.

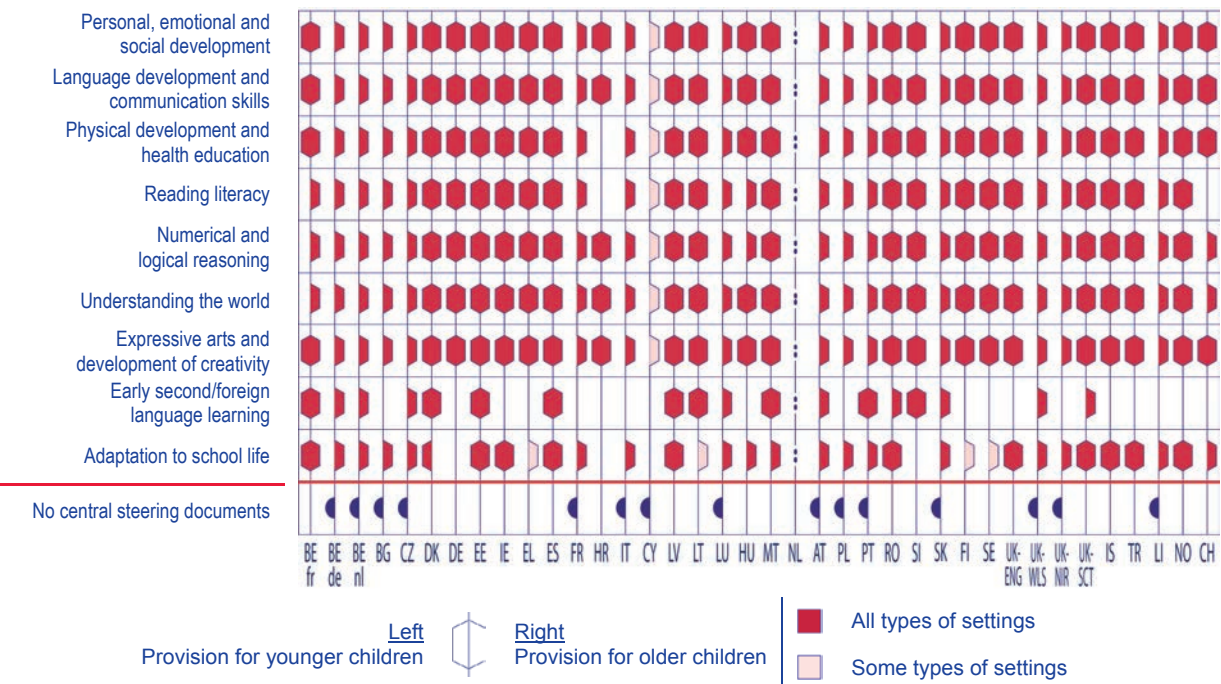
In addition to the elements shown in Figure F2, several countries have identified other learning areas or objectives. These range from developing children's sense of identity and belonging (e.g. Ireland and Malta), to intercultural skills and cultural diversity (e.g. some Autonomous communities of Spain, Hungary and the United Kingdom (Wales)) and also to moral or religious education (e.g. Austria, Finland, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Norway).

Progression scales that provide a common framework for assessing children's development are very rarely set up centrally for ECEC. They are defined only in four systems: Greece (*nipiagogeio*), Luxembourg, Austria and the United Kingdom (Wales). Progression scales have been developed only for the learning areas considered most important. For instance, in Greece, these exist for physical and social development, while in Austria they apply to language skills in German as the first and second language. It is important to note that in many countries, local authorities or the settings themselves are responsible for developing assessment tools.

In countries where **home-based provision** plays an important role in the ECEC sector (see Figure B2), the objectives for children attending this type of setting are generally very similar to those

in centre-based provision. For instance, in Belgium (French Community), Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland) and Norway, the steering documents on early childhood education define exactly the same objectives for both home-based and centre-based settings. The same is true for Malta, the only exception being that home-based settings are not expected to prepare children for school life since this provision is designed only for children up to 3 years old. In Belgium (German-speaking Community), Sweden and Iceland, only general objectives are stipulated for home-based provision.

**Figure F2: Learning objectives, outcomes and/or activities for centre-based ECEC provision, as recommended in central steering documents, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

### Explanatory note

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Czech Republic:** The Trade Act states that ECEC for younger children focuses on the development of intellectual, speech, motor, musical and artistic skills, as well as on cultural development and hygiene habits.

**Germany:** Pre-primary classes (*Vorschuleinrichtung*) are not included.

**Greece:** The objectives referring to the adaptation to school life applies only to children attending *nipiagogeio*.

**Cyprus:** The information covers only kindergartens (*nipiagogeio*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*).

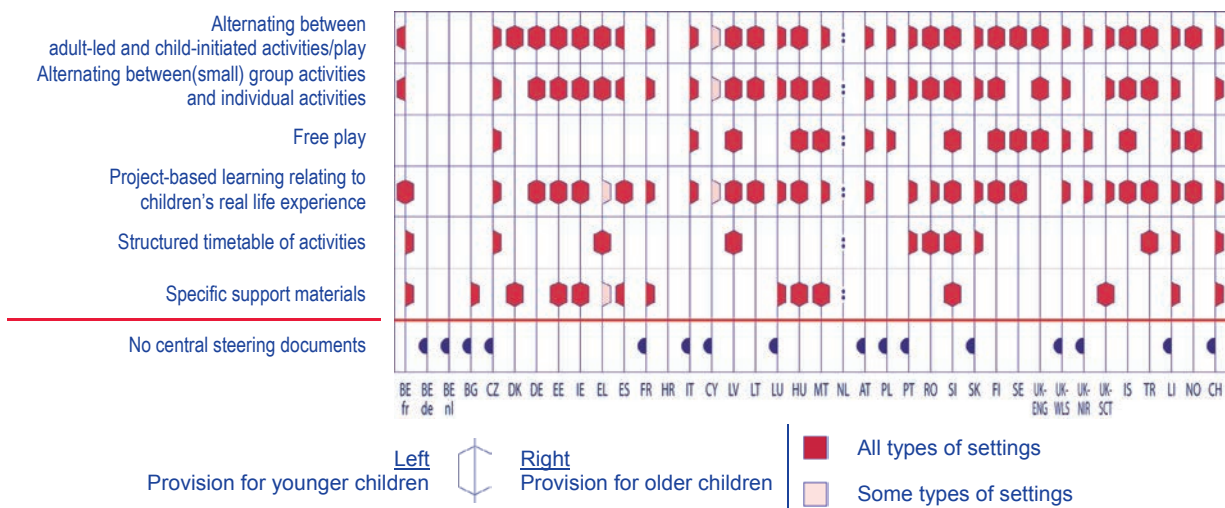
**Liechtenstein:** The guidelines for assessing young children have been issued by the National Association for Care Services (*Verein Kindertagesstätten*). They relate to personal, emotional, physical, language and social development.

**Switzerland:** The information on younger children is based on the requirements for the accreditation of ECEC settings in eight cantons.

## MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES RECOMMEND FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN ADULT-LED AND CHILD-INITIATED ACTIVITIES

In most countries, steering documents for ECEC recommend the type of approaches to education that institutions should adopt. In the countries where ECEC is organised in unitary settings and where steering documents cover all age categories of children, these approaches normally also apply to the whole period of ECEC. Around a dozen countries with a split ECEC system, which have no steering documents for settings for younger children (see Figure F1), recommend particular approaches only for older children. Belgium (Flemish and German-speaking Communities) and Croatia have no central recommendations on approaches for either age group and give full autonomy to institutions in this matter.

**Figure F3: Main educational approaches recommended for centre-based ECEC settings, as recommended in central steering documents, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

### Explanatory note

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Bulgaria:** Educational materials paid for by the State are available for children in the last year of ECEC.

**Greece:** Project-based learning and the use of specific support materials are recommended only for pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*).

**Cyprus:** The information covers only kindergartens (*nipiagogeio*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*); it does not cover pre-primary day nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*).

**Switzerland:** Recommendations for the provision for older children vary between cantons.

Institutions are often free to develop their own curricula and choose their own methods. The structure and organisation of activities is also a matter for settings, and teachers are entrusted with making their own decisions on their everyday practice depending on children's needs. However, some priorities and recommendations on educational approaches may still be identified in top-level steering documents.

Where recommendations do exist, they are mainly broad guidelines. Most countries recommend finding the right balance between **adult-led and children-initiated activities** as well as between **group and individual activities**. These two elements are closely related to the principle of **free play** underlined in around half of countries. Indeed, play is a crucial element at the early development

stage; through play children become self-aware, make discoveries, gain experience and learn the rules of social behaviour. The teacher's role in free play is mainly to observe and to respect the child's autonomy. When needed, the teacher intervenes, helps, suggests and introduces other individual or group activities.

In many cases, steering documents suggest **project-based learning** related to children's real life experience. For instance, Slovenia recommends linking artistic projects to the content areas of nature, society, mathematics, language and physical activities; while Spain highlights that the content must be taught through meaningful activities using experiences and play.

Most countries have no centrally recommended support materials and allow institutions to select or create their own materials to meet the needs of children and the activities planned. Specific **support materials** are recommended in 15 countries. For instance, the Irish framework for ECEC includes web-based resources and manuals to be used by individual practitioners, or when working with colleagues or as a support for networking with other professionals. In Denmark, support materials are designed for language assessment tests.

**Structured timetables** are provided in 11 European countries. Usually, the main elements of the daily routine (e.g. meals, outside activities, etc.) are outlined, but in some other countries schools also list weekly activities and school-wide events to be carried out during the school year (e.g. the Czech Republic). In contrast, in other countries, daily and weekly routines are flexible and can be adapted to children's individual time patterns.



## CONTINUOUS OBSERVATION ACCOMPANIED BY A WRITTEN RECORD IS WIDESPREAD BUT TESTING IS RARE

Assessment of children's progress and achievement is an important task for staff in ECEC settings. Assessment and evaluation is carried out not only for each individual child, but also in relation to whole groups. The main goals of assessment in ECEC are to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and to identify any difficulties children may have so that practices can be adjusted to better suit children's needs. The practice of regular assessment can contribute to children's learning as well as to their social and emotional well-being.

The main focus of assessment is usually on children's personal development, as well as on their language and social skills. Artistic, literacy and numeracy skills are also often taken into consideration. The information collected through assessment should be shared with parents and in some cases with primary school teachers to ease the transition from ECEC to primary education (see Figure F5).

In most countries, steering documents in ECEC provide recommendations on assessment methods to be used by settings. Only Belgium (settings for younger children in Flemish Community), Croatia, Austria and Iceland have not issued specific recommendations in this regard. In these countries, ECEC institutions are given the freedom to choose their own assessment methods and tools.

**Continuous observation** is the key method of monitoring and collecting information on children's development and learning progress. Children are observed on a daily basis as they engage in activities and as they interact with other children in the group and with staff. Observation is systematically encouraged for children of all ages. It is the only method of assessment specified in steering documents for younger children in 19 educational systems, as well as in five systems for older children. In some cases, institutions are free to adopt other assessment methods. A few countries, such as Estonia, Lithuania and Finland, also mention that ECEC staff should cooperate closely with parents in matters of observation and assessment.

The keeping of **written records** of assessment based on observations of a child's development and learning is recommended in the vast majority of countries; however, this is more common for older than younger children. In a dozen countries, it is recommended that written records should be created from the very early days of ECEC and maintained throughout. In several other countries, especially in those with a split ECEC system, written records are mostly recommended for older children. The way of recording results is often decided by the ECEC institution: it may take the form of a child's portfolio (e.g. Lithuania) or a diary (e.g. Hungary). In some countries, all children also receive a report upon completion of ECEC which may include recommendations for primary teachers relating to each child (e.g. Bulgaria and Lithuania).

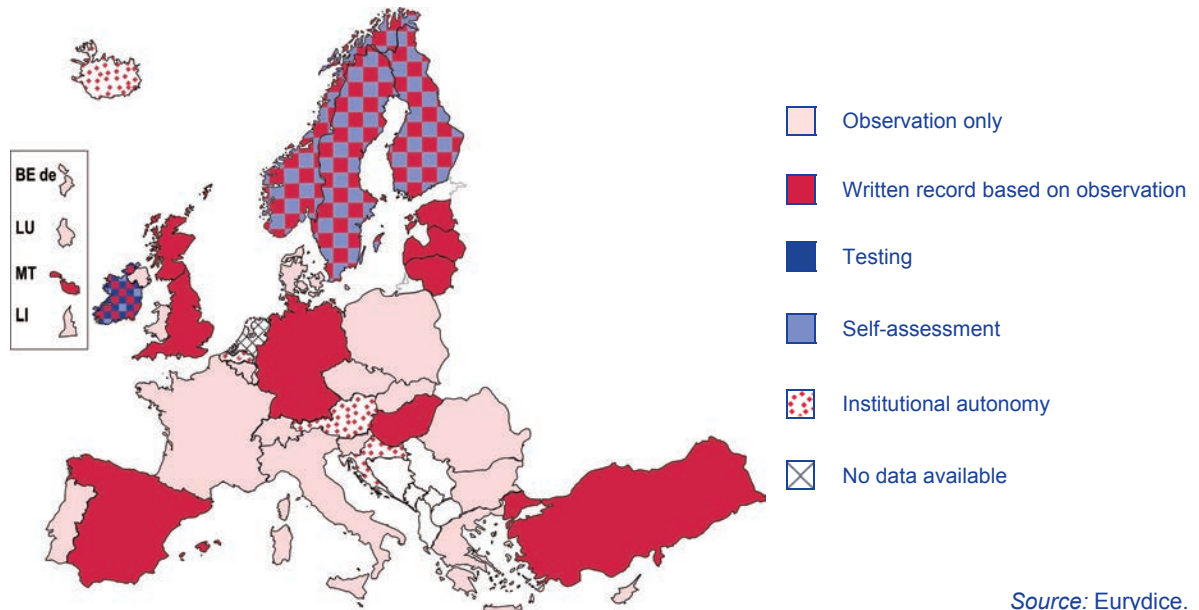
**Testing** is rarely recommended for assessing children's progress and development in ECEC. When it is used, it focuses either on readiness for school (e.g. Germany) or language skills (e.g. Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany and Austria). Specific testing tools for assessing readiness for school have been designed in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. In Germany, all children must take a test before entering primary education; in the other three countries, testing for school readiness may be carried out in special circumstances: in the Czech Republic only with parents' consent; and in Hungary and Slovakia only for children with learning difficulties. It should be mentioned that readiness for school and adequate language skills are sometimes admission criteria for primary education, as is the case in Bulgaria, Germany and Austria (see Figure F6).

**Self-assessment** is adopted by only a few countries such as Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Norway where it is becoming increasingly important in working with children of all ages. This method of

assessment takes into account and prioritises a child's own experiences and views. It also encourages children to take an active part in learning: they become aware of what they have learned and achieved, and they come to understand the difficulties they have had and what could be done to overcome them.

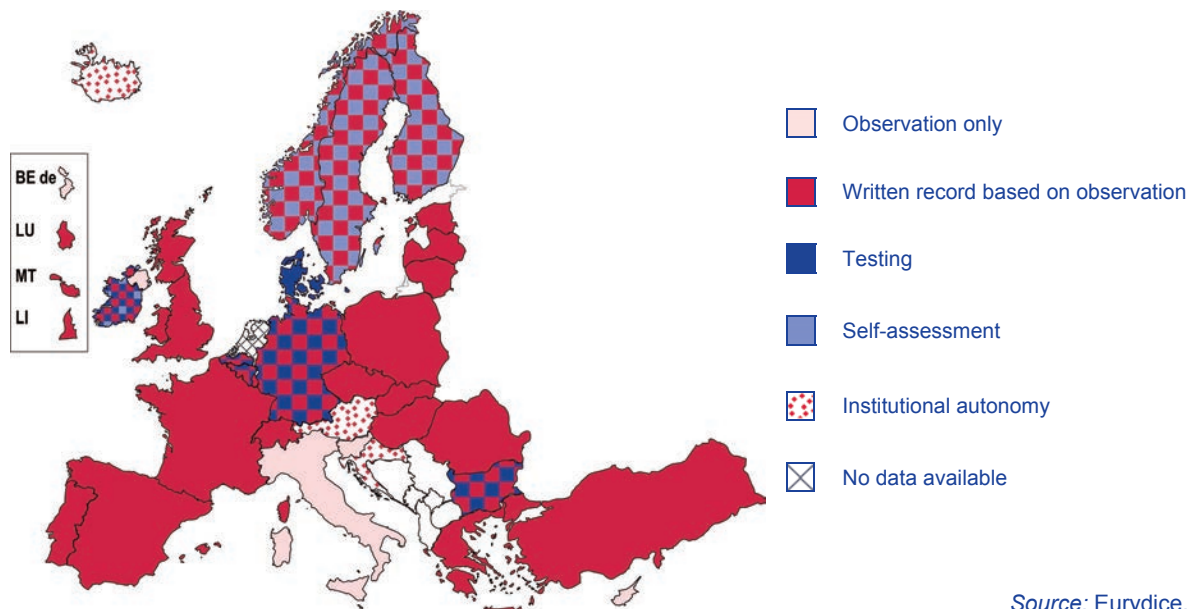
**Figure F4: Assessment of children's progress, as recommended in central steering documents, 2012/13**

**Figure F4a: Younger children**



Source: Eurydice.

**Figure F4b: Older children**



Source: Eurydice.

#### **Explanatory note**

The Figure does not cover home-based settings.

See National System Information<sup>2</sup> Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

#### **Country specific notes**

**Cyprus:** The information in the figure covers only kindergartens (*nipiagogeio*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*); it does not cover pre-primary day nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*).

**Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia:** Testing is applied under specific conditions.





# TEACHING PROCESSES

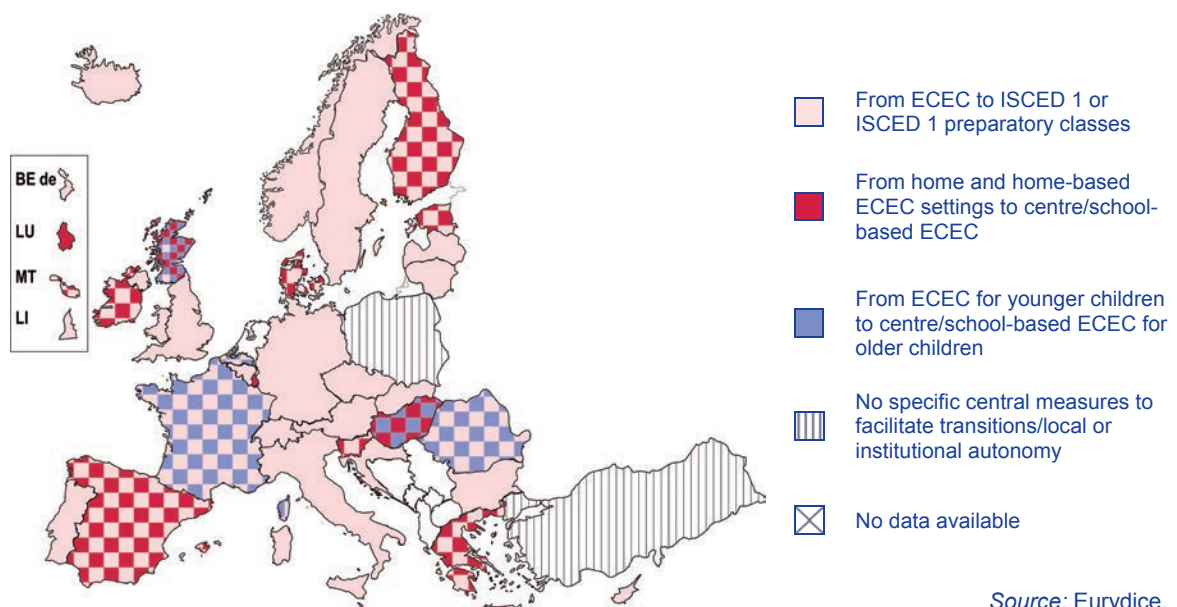
## SECTION II – TRANSITIONS

### MEASURES TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION BETWEEN ECEC AND PRIMARY EDUCATION ARE WIDESPREAD IN EUROPE

In their early years children may go through several transition phases such as when they start attending or when they change ECEC settings, and later when they go from ECEC to primary education. These moves might prove difficult for some children and may impact on their learning and behaviour. Therefore, most European countries have implemented measures to help children and their families to adapt to the new environment. These often involve establishing continuity and cooperation between the various phases of early childhood education and care. Only Poland and Turkey have no specific central guidelines for facilitating transition, but these matters are dealt with at local or institutional level.

A few countries have general, central guidelines for dealing with all kinds of possible transitions during the early years. For instance, the Irish framework for ECEC underlines that transition should be organised as smoothly as possible through cooperation between settings, partnership with parents and contacts with relevant professionals. In Finland, central guidelines state that each local curriculum should describe ways of ensuring continuity and cooperation between different levels of education, among them home-based and centre-based ECEC services, pre-primary and primary education.

**Figure F5: Measures to facilitate children's transition between different types of ECEC settings and/or primary education, as recommended in central steering documents, 2012/13**



#### Explanatory note

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

#### Country specific note

**Switzerland:** The indicated measures are implemented at canton level.



Several countries have established measures to support the transition process from family to an institutional environment for children starting ECEC in a centre-based setting. The most common measures include having parents stay alongside their child during the first few weeks and/or progressively increasing the time the child spends in the setting (e.g. Spain, Hungary, Malta and Slovenia). The aim of such measures is twofold: they help the child adapt to the new environment and new people, and they also allow relationships between staff and parents to develop.

Only some countries with a split ECEC system have introduced measures to facilitate the transition from settings for younger children (0-3 year-olds) to those for older children (3-6 year-olds). This is the case in Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Hungary, Romania and the United Kingdom (Scotland). In France, for instance, transition classes (*classes passerelles*) for 2-3 year-olds are intended to ease children's adaptation to pre-primary level (*écoles maternelles*). Such measures are particularly encouraged in disadvantaged areas (see Figure G1).

Almost all European countries have transition measures targeted at children who are finishing pre-primary and starting primary education. In some systems, the last year of pre-primary focuses on readiness for school (e.g. in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania and Liechtenstein), and in some cases records on children's maturity and readiness for school are kept (see Figure F4). Where this occurs, the records may be made available to primary teachers, with a view to easing children's integration into primary education (e.g. in Bulgaria and Lithuania).

Finally, activities facilitating the transition from pre-primary to primary level may include children's visits to primary schools while they are still in ECEC, in order to become acquainted with their new learning environment (e.g. in Belgium (Flemish Community) and Slovakia). Close cooperation between staff of both levels through joint projects and activities is also developed (e.g. in Portugal, Iceland and Norway) as well as cooperation between staff and parents (e.g. in Slovakia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Moreover, in Belgium (all Communities) and France, pre-primary and primary education is often provided on the same premises to facilitate the transition for children as well as to improve staff cooperation. Finally, in a few countries, transition arrangements are integrated into the curriculum. In Iceland and Norway, for example, they should be included in an institution's curriculum plans. Similarly, in Liechtenstein, the structure of the common curricula ensures continuity of learning between pre-primary and primary education.

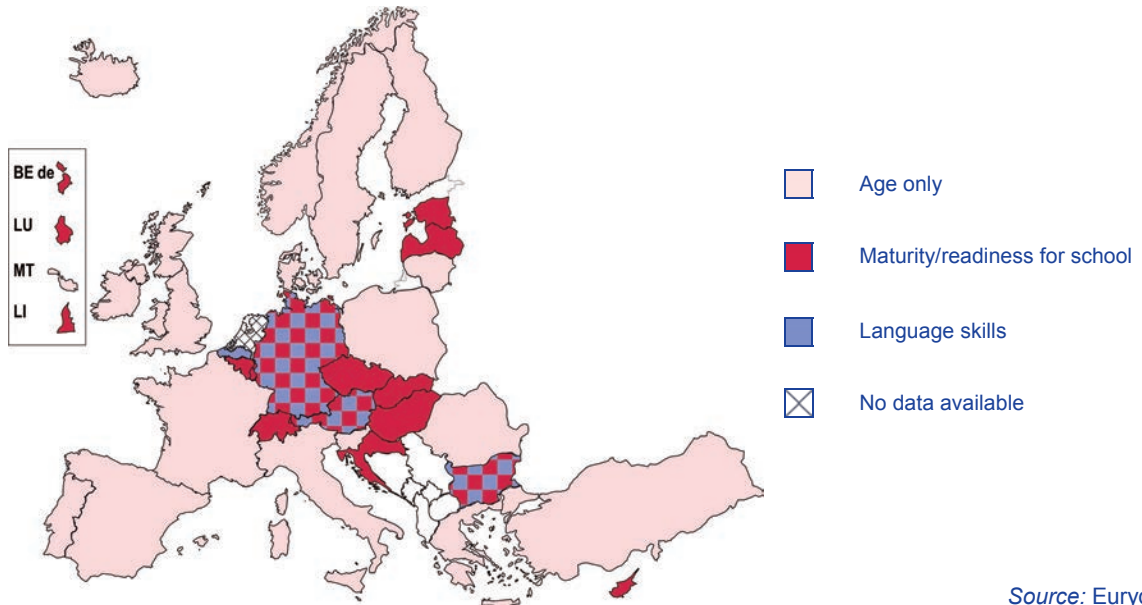
## IN MOST COUNTRIES AGE IS THE ONLY CRITERION FOR ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

In Europe, education systems define the official starting age for primary education, which varies from 4 in the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) to 7 in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden. However, criteria other than age may be applied for admission to the first year of primary education and, if a child does not meet the necessary conditions, entry to compulsory primary education may be deferred.

In around 20 education systems, reaching the **official age** is the only condition for the admission of pupils to the first year of primary education. In several cases (e.g. Ireland, Greece, France Italy, Lithuania, the United Kingdom and Norway), deferment is not permitted. In several other countries where reaching the official starting age is the only entry condition (e.g. Denmark, Croatia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and Iceland), deferment is permitted only at the request of parents when they consider that their child is not ready to start primary education. In a few countries (e.g. Spain and Finland), deferment is possible but occurs in exceptional cases.

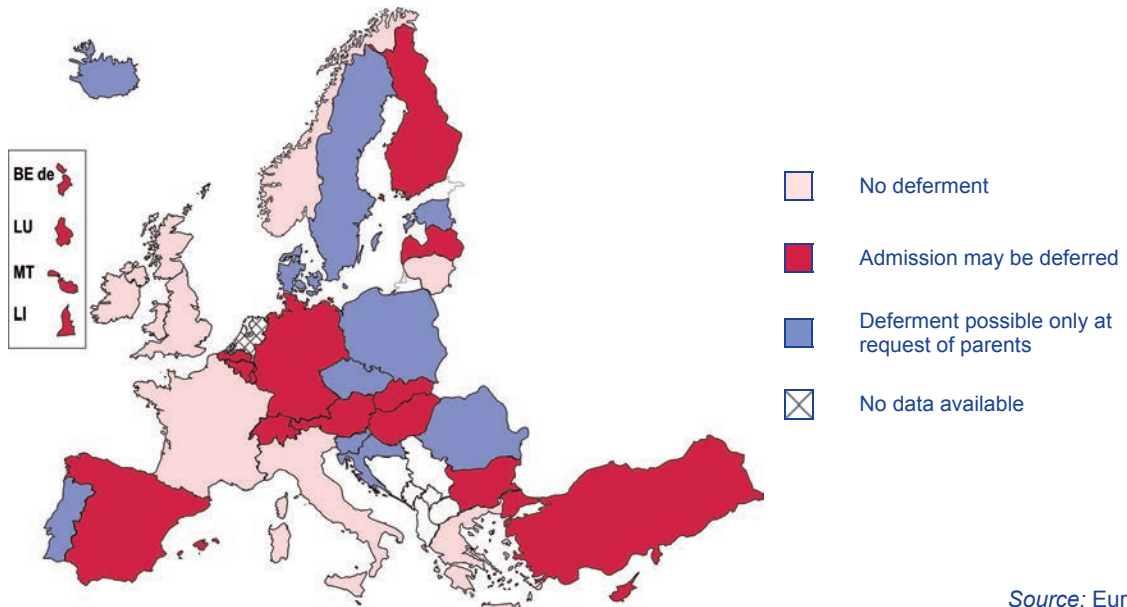
**Figure F6: Criteria and arrangements for admission to the first year of primary education, as recommended in central steering documents (ISCED 1), 2012/13**

**Figure F6a: Admission criteria**



Source: Eurydice.

**Figure F6b: Deferment of admission**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

The Figure does not take into consideration deferment of entry to primary education for health reasons.

**Country specific note**

**Czech Republic:** Although maturity assessment is not prescribed by steering documents, it is often organised by primary schools. More detailed tests are carried out if parents request deferment.



The other criteria most frequently applied are based on the concept that a child must have attained a certain level of development and be deemed **ready for school**. This means that a child should be emotionally, mentally, psychologically and physically mature enough to cope with the demands of primary education. He/she is expected also to have acquired working and learning habits as well as some basic cognitive skills. Readiness for school is a criterion applied for entry to primary education in several countries such as Bulgaria, Germany, Cyprus, Hungary, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. In some cases, this criterion is applied in certain circumstances. For example, in Belgium (German-speaking Community), only children who have not attended pre-primary institutions are assessed, while in Estonia a child's development is taken into account if parents request a year's deferment.

Children's **language skills** are included in the admission criteria for primary education in Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Germany and Austria. In the first two of these countries, these skills are largely tested in the case of children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction in primary education. Thus, in the Flemish Community, children aged 5 or 6 years must have a satisfactory attendance record in Dutch-speaking pre-primary education during the preceding year. If this is not the case, a language test is required in order to decide whether the child is ready to be enrolled in a Dutch-speaking primary institution or needs to be kept another year in pre-primary education.

Children who are not considered to be sufficiently ready, or do not have the appropriate language skills for primary school and consequently are not admitted to primary education, are generally kept at pre-primary level for an additional year to give them more time to prepare for school and its demands. In most countries they are kept in the ECEC institution they were already attending. In other countries (e.g. in some German *Länder*, Austria, Slovakia and Liechtenstein), transition or preparatory classes accommodate the children who have reached the required age for entering the first primary year but have not been admitted in the light of other criteria, namely that of development and maturity. These classes are usually integrated into primary schools.

### **IN MOST COUNTRIES PARENTS PLAY A DECISION-MAKING ROLE IN DEFERRING THEIR CHILD'S ADMISSION TO PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Often, the decision to defer a child's admission to the first year of primary education when he/she reaches compulsory school age follows not only a process of applying specific criteria (see Figure F6) but also a complex assessment and decision-making procedure in which various parties are involved. The main parties are normally ECEC institutions, primary institutions, parents, specialists in psychology and/or guidance as well as other educational authorities. Their role in this process may be consultative or decision-making.

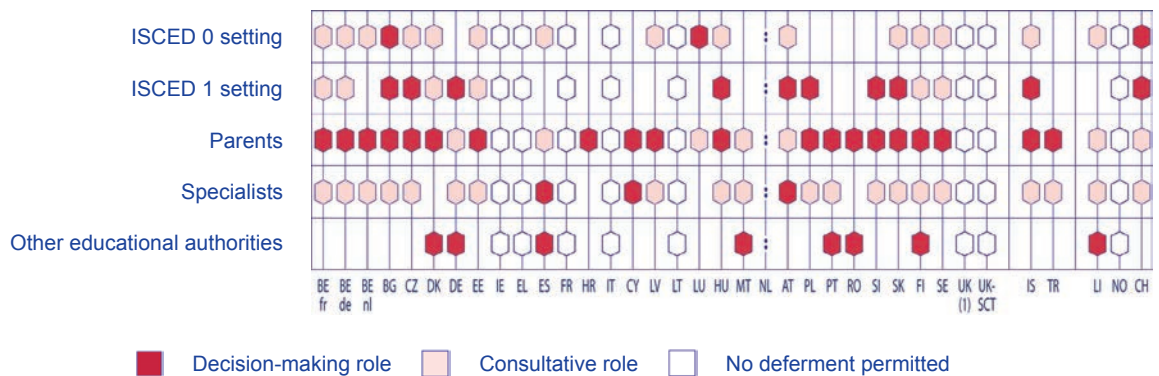
In most cases, parents play a decision-making role in their child's admission to primary education. There are some instances where the educational institution or a specialist suggests that a child's admission to school should be deferred but no decision can be made without the parents' consent. In other instances, the question of deferring admission only arises if requested by parents (see Figure F6). In these cases, a specific procedure must be followed in order to establish whether the request should be granted or refused. The final decision is usually made by one of the institutions involved or by a specialist.

In several countries (Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), parents have only a consultative role in the decision-making process on the issue of admission. In some German *Länder* and Swiss cantons, the primary institution in which the child is to be enrolled in the first year of primary level is responsible for deciding; while in Luxembourg, it is the ECEC setting

which decides whether a child is ready for admission to primary level. However, in some cases (e.g. in Liechtenstein), parents may still contest the decisions made by other parties.

Generally, the role of both ECEC settings and specialists in the decision-making process is consultative. This means that they may suggest deferring the admission or give an advice in this issue to other parties but do not have the ultimate power to decide on a child's entry to primary education. For instance, in Belgium, ECEC settings collaborate closely with psycho-medical-social centres and may ask them to assess a child's development to determine whether he/she is ready for school.

**Figure F7: Parties involved in decisions to defer admission to primary education (ISCED 1), 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

**Country specific note**

**Liechtenstein:** The parties' decision-making power on the deferment of a child depends on whether he/she has reached the official starting age of primary school.



## TEACHING PROCESSES

### SECTION III – PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

#### INFORMATION SESSIONS AND BILATERAL MEETINGS ARE COMMON BUT PARENTING PROGRAMMES ARE STILL RARE

Cooperation between ECEC staff and parents is considered beneficial for children's progress and development (EACEA/Eurydice, 2009). One of the tasks of education providers with regard to parents is to initiate a dialogue, share information and ensure that parents play a part in the education of their children and understand its importance. This is especially true in the case of children with additional needs who require specific support in their development and learning (see Figure G1).

Most European countries emphasise the importance of partnership with parents in their steering documents and encourage settings to include specific measures in their planning. Moreover, many countries recommend the types of support that settings should provide to parents. Information sessions and bilateral parent-teacher meetings, including guidance on home-learning are the most common. Parenting programmes, specific courses for parents, or home visits are rarely organised.

Where measures to foster partnerships with parents exist, they are usually encouraged for both younger and older children. In some countries with a split ECEC system such as Bulgaria, Slovakia and Switzerland, such measures are encouraged only in settings for older children. Where no central recommendations exist, local authorities and/or ECEC services are free to choose their own ways of cooperating with and providing assistance to families.

The most common form of cooperation between parents and settings is through information sessions and bilateral parent-teacher meetings, which should form the basis of a regular dialogue between families and ECEC practitioners. Parents receive information on their child's progress and development as well as get advice on their child's education.

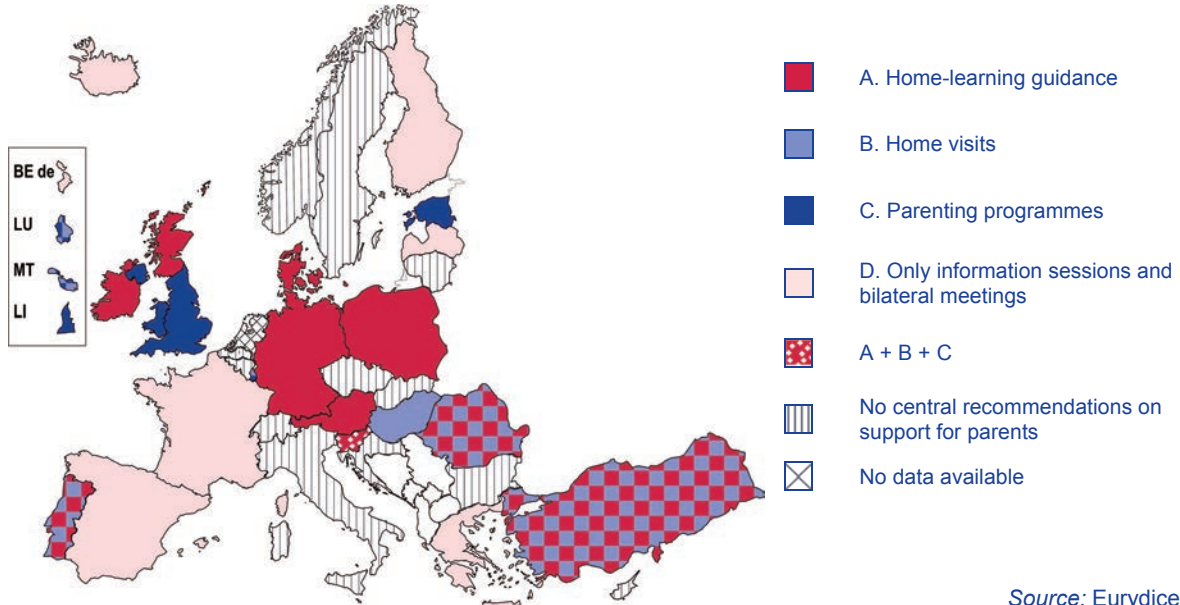
Meetings for providing information and advice are recommended systematically in most countries. In several, they are the only form of support for parents indicated in central steering documents. This is the case in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Spain, Greece, France, Latvia, Finland and Iceland for settings for both younger and older children (or for unitary settings), whereas Luxembourg, Hungary and Switzerland recommend such meetings only for settings for older children. In the countries which have no specific recommendations on the forms of support to be provided to parents, informal meetings between staff and parents is also common practice.

The main purpose of **home-learning guidance** is to provide parents with the necessary tools to encourage children's learning at home, including suggestions for appropriate learning activities. This kind of support is centrally recommended in a dozen countries.

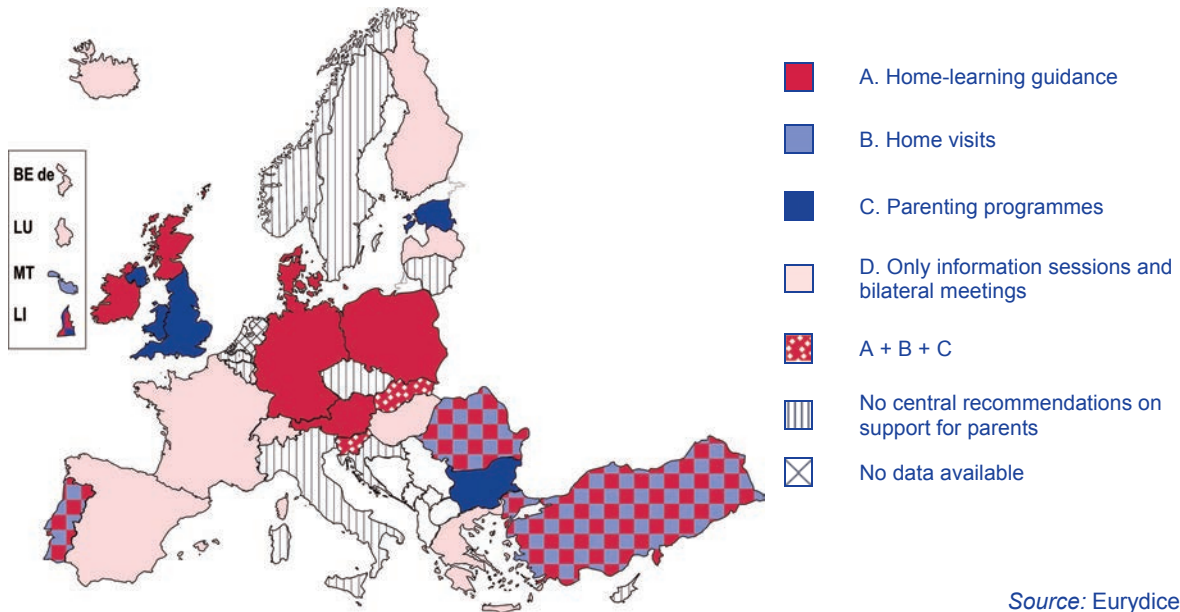
The **Irish** curriculum framework for ECEC contains information not only for ECEC practitioners but also for parents. The information is intended to help parents 'plan and provide challenging and enjoyable learning experiences enabling children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners'.

**Figure F8: Provision of support for parents in centre-based ECEC settings, as recommended in central steering documents, 2012/13**

**Figure F8a: Younger children**



**Figure F8b: Older children**



### Explanatory note

For a definition of 'home learning', 'home visits', and 'parenting programmes', see Glossary. See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Greece:** No specific recommendations for private settings.

**Luxembourg:** Parenting programmes and home visits for younger children are provided only by the *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non scolarisés*.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** The information provided refers only to day nurseries/children's centres; there are no recommendations on support for parents in other types of settings.

**Liechtenstein:** Parenting programmes and courses are recommended in all settings for older children. Home learning guidance is provided only in *Kindergartens*.



**Parenting programmes** have similar objectives to those set for guidance on home learning. The main distinction between these two types of support lies in their organisation: in the case of parenting programmes, parents attend formal courses covering a variety of topics related to children's education and development.

In **Estonia**, for instance, within the framework of the Strategy of Children and Families and its associated development plan, parenting programmes have been operating since 2012 covering such topics as child health and development, bullying in ECEC settings, and children's and parents' rights. Some training courses are provided within ECEC settings.

Some countries/regions have launched parenting programmes at regional level, and/or implemented local initiatives (e.g. Spain, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)). They may be financed by regional governments, municipalities or other local bodies, or parents' associations, but they may also be included as part of normal ECEC activities and counselling services.

In **Hungary**, for instance, the settings involved in the *Integration Pedagogical Programme* (see Figure G2) may use a part of their grant to organise programmes for parents.

In **Slovenia**, ECEC services can organise 'schools for parents' (*Šola za starše*), providing courses on topics related to children in ECEC such as domestic violence and reading literacy.

A few countries/regions specify that parenting programmes are often directed at the most vulnerable groups, as in Ireland and the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland) (see Figure G2). For example, some countries run programmes focusing on speech and/or reading skills specifically targeted at disadvantaged families or children with learning difficulties.

In **Malta**, parents with children who are slow in developing their language skills are offered courses on building their child's language skills naturally, during daily routines and activities.

**Home visits** involving ECEC staff (teachers or specialists) are recommended in Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey. These visits are mostly intended to support families from disadvantaged backgrounds, but they are also often available for parents of children with learning difficulties. The purpose of such visits is twofold: on the one hand staff provide advice to parents, while on the other hand, staff learn more about a child's family environment, and can therefore improve their understanding of the child's needs.

In **Romania**, home visits may be carried out when a child has difficulties in adapting to a new ECEC setting and/or communicating with staff or other children.

In **Slovenia** and **Slovakia**, home visits are mostly targeted at Roma families with a view to creating links with the Roma community and promoting the importance of using ECEC services.

It is important to note that ECEC settings are not the only providers of support.

In several **German Länder**, so called family centres (*Familienzentren* or *Eltern-Kind-Zentren*) beside ECEC offer other family-oriented services including, for instance, parenting programmes and counselling for parents.

In **Austria**, different bodies (mostly non-governmental organisations) run centrally financed education projects for parents.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, within the framework of the National Parenting Strategy launched in 2012, all parents, regardless of whether their children are enrolled in ECEC services, benefit from support through parenting clubs and courses, and have access to books, toys and web-based resources to encourage development through play.

Finally, as this issue has become increasingly important, several countries (e.g. Germany, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Romania and Slovenia) highlight that initial education and/or continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for ECEC staff currently place special focus on cooperation with and support for parents.



Where **home-based provision** plays an important role in ECEC (see Figure B2), some countries/regions recommend that the same types of support available to parents with children in centre-based settings should also be available in home-based provision. This is, for instance, the case in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Denmark, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom (Scotland). Other countries/regions such as Belgium (Flemish Community), Slovenia, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Switzerland have no specific recommendations on the types of support to be provided to parents by practitioners in home-based settings.

## **PARENTS ARE MORE OFTEN INVOLVED IN THE GOVERNANCE OF ECEC SETTINGS FOR OLDER CHILDREN**

An effective partnership between ECEC providers, families and the wider community can benefit children's learning in a number of ways. The support of parents, for example, can be particularly beneficial. They can assist children in their learning and help staff to better understand their needs. Expertise from the wider community may help to improve the effectiveness of settings, ensuring better use of resources and enabling extra-curricular activities to be delivered. For these reasons, many countries encourage ECEC practitioners to work closely with their stakeholders to support children's development, learning and general well-being.

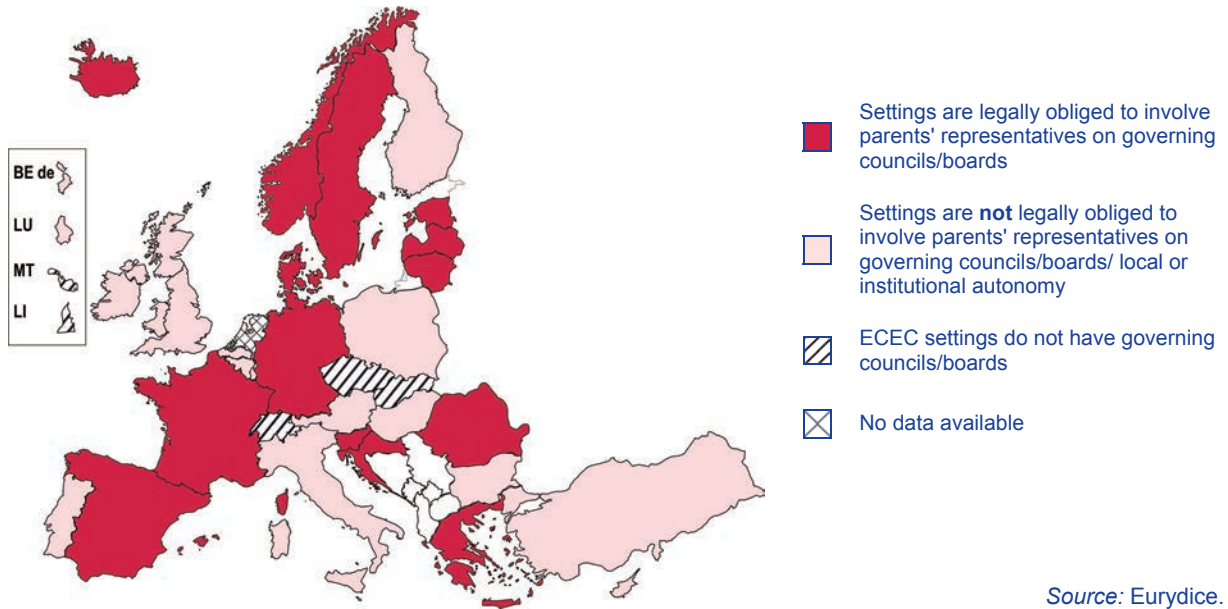
One of the ways of involving parents and the wider community is by enabling their representatives to participate in the institution's governance. In most countries, governance is normally exercised within a council or board. These normally comprise members drawn from staff, parents' and the community (e.g. members of local authorities and associations). The role of parent and community representatives on governing bodies varies between countries (see Figure F10).

Figure F9 below shows that across Europe parents are more often involved in the governance of settings for older rather than younger children. Indeed, whereas most European countries require settings for older children to include parents on their governing boards/councils, less than half do so in the case of younger children. Furthermore, it should be noted that more countries require parent representation on the governing bodies of ECEC settings than community representation. Where community representation is required, it is slightly more common in settings for older children.

Where central documents do not oblige ECEC institutions to involve parents on governing councils/boards, decisions on how to involve parents in governance are made locally. This is, for instance, the case in Finland. Moreover, in most countries, parents are free to participate in other ways, for instance, through establishing parents' associations. Thus, in ECEC delivered in schools in the United Kingdom (Scotland), parents are able to take part in the Parent Teachers Association and, for example, to comment on school policies or organise fund-raising events. The impact of parent associations is particularly significant in countries where no governing councils/boards exist (e.g. *mateřské školy* in the Czech Republic). Finally, in some countries, local curricula specify the ways in which parents should be involved. For example, they may be asked to participate in developing curricula or teaching activities. This is, for instance, the case in settings for younger children in Belgium (French Community) and Portugal.

**Figure F9: Parental and community involvement in the governance of centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure F9a: Parental involvement: younger children**



**Figure F9b: Parental involvement: older children**

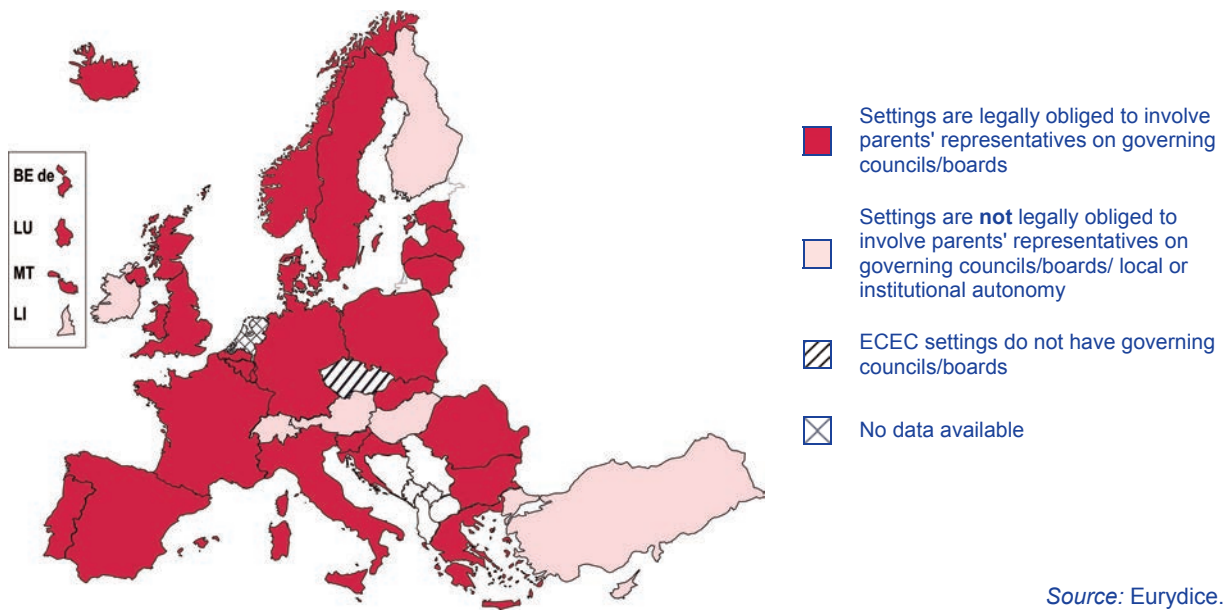
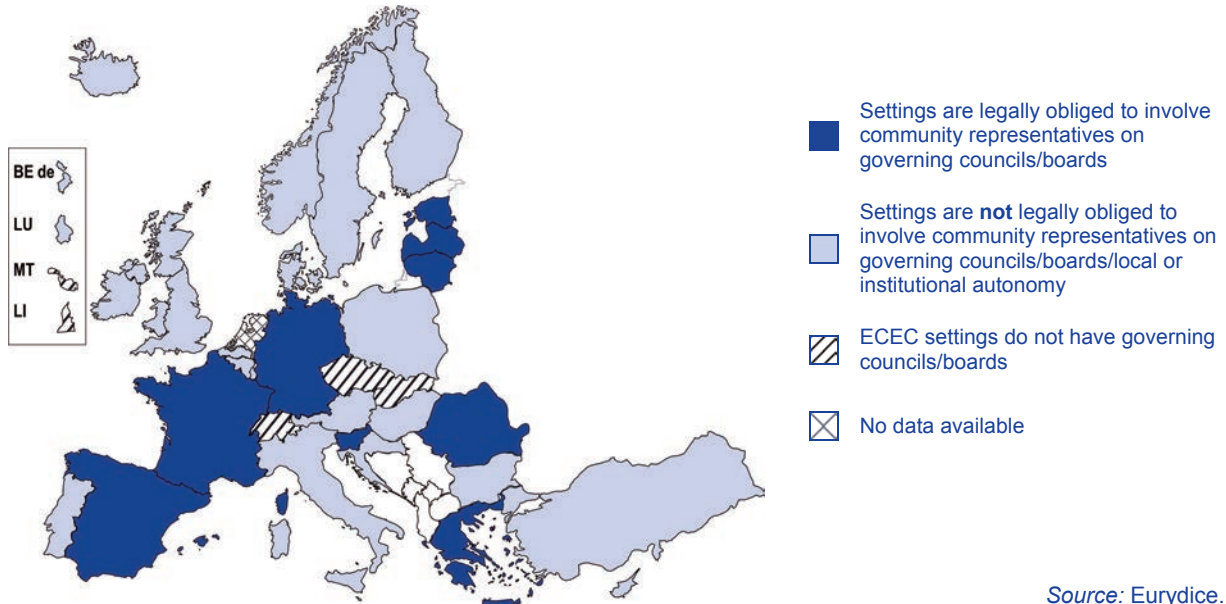
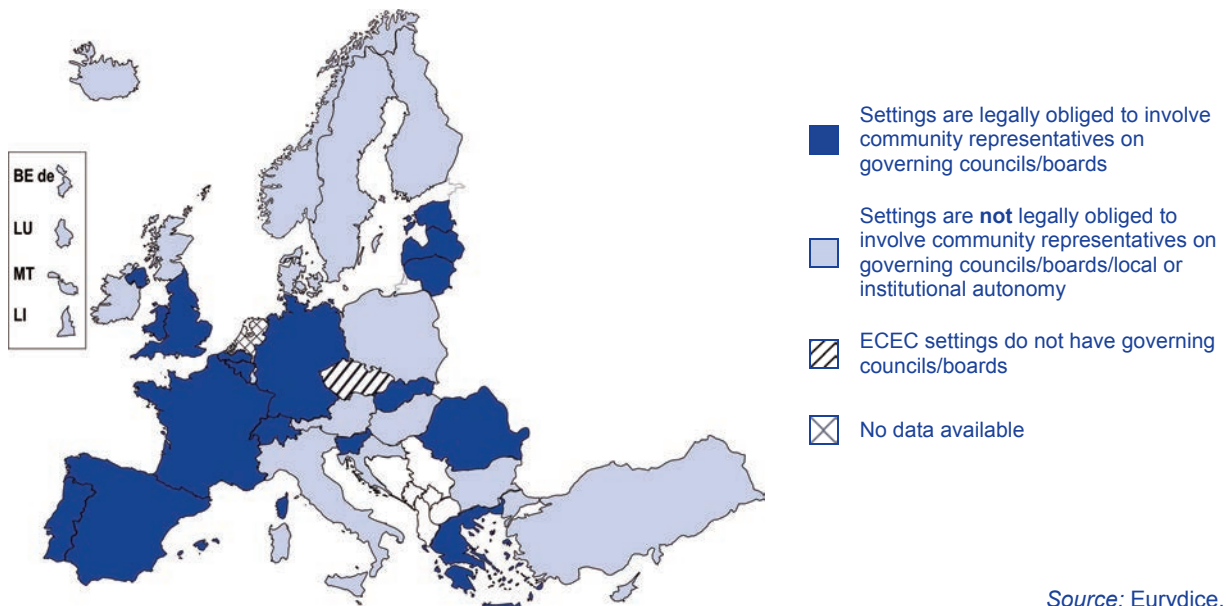


Figure F9c: Community involvement: younger children



Source: Eurydice.

Figure F9d: Community involvement: older children



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Countries specific notes**

**Germany:** Community representatives are involved in ECEC governance at municipal or district level. Local Child and Youth Welfare Boards work alongside the local Youth Welfare Offices and have a consultative role.

**Greece:** Parents of children attending *nipiagogeio* participate in School Committees at municipal level.

**Cyprus:** The information in this Figure covers only kindergartens (*nipiagogeio*) and pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*). Parents and community representatives might be members of council/boards in community nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikos stathmos*).

Where community representatives are not compulsory members of an institution's governing body, ECEC settings are nevertheless encouraged to create links with the community. For instance, in the United Kingdom (Scotland), settings should: make information available to members of the community; make effective use of community resources; and provide opportunities for children to take part in the wider community. Moreover, settings are encouraged to cooperate and network with other institutions and social partners at local level (e.g. Malta, Poland and Finland). In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), such cooperation is one of the evaluation criteria stipulated in the frameworks for inspection of pre-primary settings.

### **PARENTS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES MOST OFTEN HAVE A SAY ON THE RULES GOVERNING DAILY LIFE IN SETTINGS**

One of the ways of involving parents and community representatives in the life of an ECEC setting is by encouraging them to participate in its governance (see Figure F9). Generally, parents are more usually involved in these processes than community representatives, and both are more commonly involved in the governance of settings for older children.

Where parents are represented on the councils/boards of the ECEC institution, the areas in which they are involved differs between countries. The most common area addressed by parents and community representatives on councils/boards relates to daily routines in a setting such as the times set for meals, sleep and play, as well as behaviour and discipline issues.

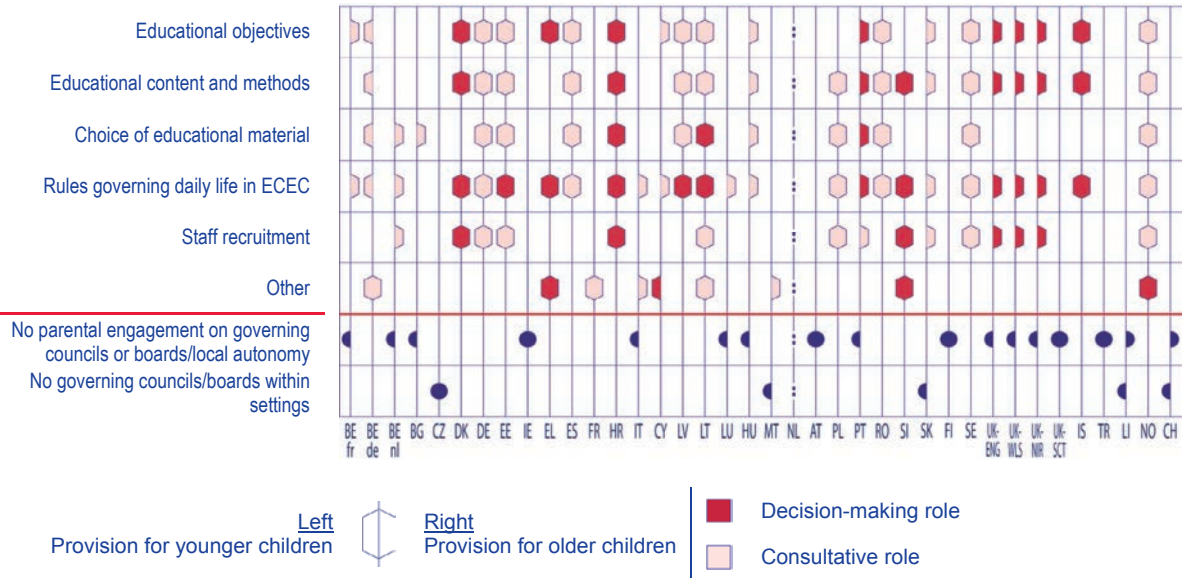
Parents and community representatives deal to a lesser extent with educational content, teaching methods and objectives, and choice of educational materials. For instance, in Spain, parents are invited to express their opinion on whether their children should attend religion classes in pre-primary schools. The area where parents and community representatives are least involved is in staff recruitment.

In addition to the areas explicitly listed in Figure F10, parents and/or community representatives have a say on other issues in settings. They may have influence in such matters as budget and finances (e.g. Germany, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia and Norway), fees (e.g. Norway), environment and facilities (e.g. Belgium (German-speaking Community) and Malta) as well as in the organisation of school time (e.g. France).

In tackling all these issues, parents and community representatives may play either a consultative or a decision-making role. Most commonly, both groups have consultative power. Nevertheless, in some countries parents enjoy decision-making power in all the areas they address, as is the case in Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). Community representatives have decision-making powers on all issues listed in Figure F10 in Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England and Wales).

**Figure F10: Powers exercised by parents and community representatives on councils/boards of centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**

**Figure F10a: Parents**



**Figure F10b: Community**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Greece:** The information covers *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos*. Parents of children attending *nipiagogeio* participate in school committees organised at municipal level, where they decide on operational costs of settings.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** The information on older children refers only to schools, including maintained nursery schools and nursery classes/reception classes in primary schools/academies.

**Germany and Cyprus:** see Figure F9.

## SUPPORT MEASURES FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Disadvantaged children are often at risk of poor outcomes in their education and may need additional support in order to reach their full potential. Participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC) from a very young age, however, improves the likelihood that children from such backgrounds will be successful in their education, and reduces their chances of becoming socially excluded. One of the main challenges for this stage of education is, therefore, to guarantee equal access and equality of opportunity to all children regardless of their socio-economic, cultural and/or linguistic background. For these and other reasons, improving accessibility to and the quality of ECEC have been included in the European education policy agenda <sup>(12)</sup>.

Earlier chapters provided data on the numbers of children in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion (see Chapter A) and examined the general arrangements for admission, funding, teaching and learning in ECEC. This report now explores the specific measures introduced by European countries to ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds participate in ECEC and, in doing so, lay the foundations for future success in school and later life.

This chapter looks initially at the approaches and criteria used to identify children with potential additional needs. In particular, whether countries use a target group approach or focus on the needs of individuals. The second indicator illustrates the measures introduced by central authorities to provide targeted support for these children, including help with language learning as well as support for other learning and development. This indicator also examines the special staffing, organisational or funding arrangements made to support settings. Finally, the provision of specific training to help ECEC staff meet the particular needs of disadvantaged children is explored.

### MOST COUNTRIES IDENTIFY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS BASED ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC, LINGUISTIC AND/OR CULTURAL CRITERIA

All European countries without exception, have adopted measures to provide support for children who have additional educational and/or developmental needs. There are two main approaches to identifying these children: specific groups that meet defined criteria may be targeted; or an individual approach may be taken, where specific needs are assessed and determined on a case-by-case basis. Most countries/regions have adopted a target group approach, while an individual approach, on its own, is used in only six education systems (i.e. Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Iceland). However, about a dozen European education systems use a combination of these two approaches.

Where a target group approach is adopted, various criteria are used to identify the groups of children most likely to be in need of additional support in their education. The main criteria taken into consideration are cultural and/or linguistic. Socio-economic and geographical criteria are also widely used. Some countries (i.e. Belgium (Flemish Community), the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece and Romania) apply all three types of criteria. Family status (for example, children living with only one parent or with foster parents) may also be taken into account, but this is less common.

**Cultural and/or linguistic criteria** apply in most European countries. Generally, this refers to migrant children and those from ethnic minorities who may have substantial cultural differences from the general population as well as insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction (e.g. Greek and Turkish minorities in Bulgaria; Italian and Hungarian minorities in Slovenia, etc.). In a few countries

<sup>(12)</sup> Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow, OJ C 175, 15.06.2011, p. 8.



(e.g. the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovenia), Roma children are a target group – the main objective here is to increase their participation in ECEC. In other countries, children of asylum seekers are targeted (e.g. in *kleuteronderwijs* in Belgium (Flemish Community) and *mateřské školy* in the Czech Republic) with a view to facilitating their integration into the respective education system.

Children with cultural/linguistic differences usually receive additional help in learning the language of instruction. They might be also supported in maintaining their ethnic and linguistic identity, as is the case in Poland, Slovenia and Finland (see Figure G2). For a proxy on how many young children might have substantial cultural and linguistic differences and therefore in need of additional support, see Figure A6, which shows the percentage of children aged 0-5 with foreign citizenship or born abroad.

**Socio-economic criteria** are applied in around half of European education systems in order to identify children with potential additional needs. In most cases, these are income related (e.g. in Belgium (Flemish Community) and the Czech Republic) or employment related (low work intensity). However, poor housing conditions or the educational level of parents (e.g. in Slovakia) may also be taken into account. The main objective of targeting socio-economically disadvantaged groups is to reduce the impact of poverty on children's educational attainment.

An indication of how many children might be in these disadvantaged groups in different European countries can be found in Figure A4 – Percentage of children aged 0-5 at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and Figure A5 – Percentage of jobless households with children aged 0-5. However, it is important to keep in mind that individual countries determine which socio-economic criteria they take into account.

**Geographical criteria** generally refer to economically and socially disadvantaged areas within a town/city or region where children may be at risk of poor educational outcomes or social exclusion. In Greece, France and Cyprus, 'education priority zones' have been established on the basis of socio-economic as well as specific educational indicators.

In **Greece**, 'education priority zones' are characterised by low educational attendance, a high percentage of early school leaving and low take-up of higher education.

In **Norway** since 2010, districts with a high proportion of immigrant children have been identified and offered 20 hours of free care per week ('free core time'). The aim behind the demarcation of such zones is to foster inclusiveness and provide targeted support for disadvantaged children so that they can benefit fully from the education provided (see Figure G2).

Where an **individual approach** is adopted, the assessment of a child's needs generally focuses on three main elements. These are related to a child's general progress and development (e.g. in Spain, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland)); language needs, in the case of migrant children or children from ethnic minorities (e.g. in Germany and Latvia); and social and family environment (e.g. in Spain). Often these elements are inter-linked and considered together in order to provide tailor-made support to a child.

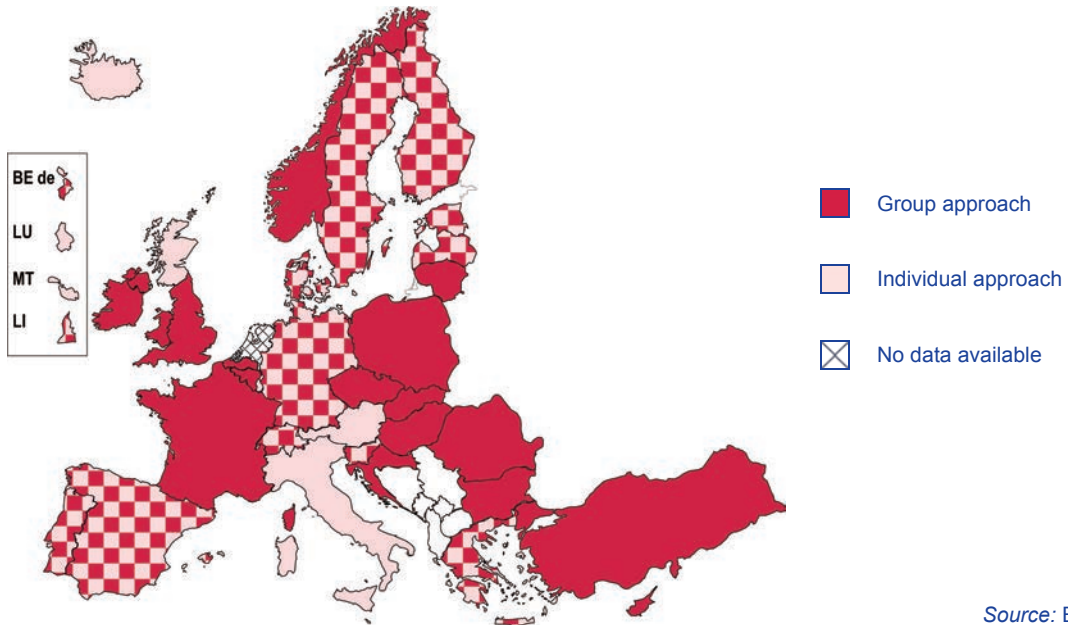
Often other professionals take part in the evaluation of a child's educational, psychological and social needs and provide assistance to ECEC educational staff and parents (see Figure E6). They may work in ECEC settings (e.g. Austria and Slovenia) or be part of external services (e.g. educational guidance services in Spain).

Support may be provided to children on the premises of the setting (e.g. Luxembourg), or on the external premises of the particular service (e.g. Denmark and Malta). In Denmark, local authorities provide language assessment tests and further support, if required, to children with language difficulties. In Malta, children with learning difficulties are referred to the Early Intervention Service (usually by parents themselves or by ECEC staff), which has its own assessment procedure to determine the type of intervention required.



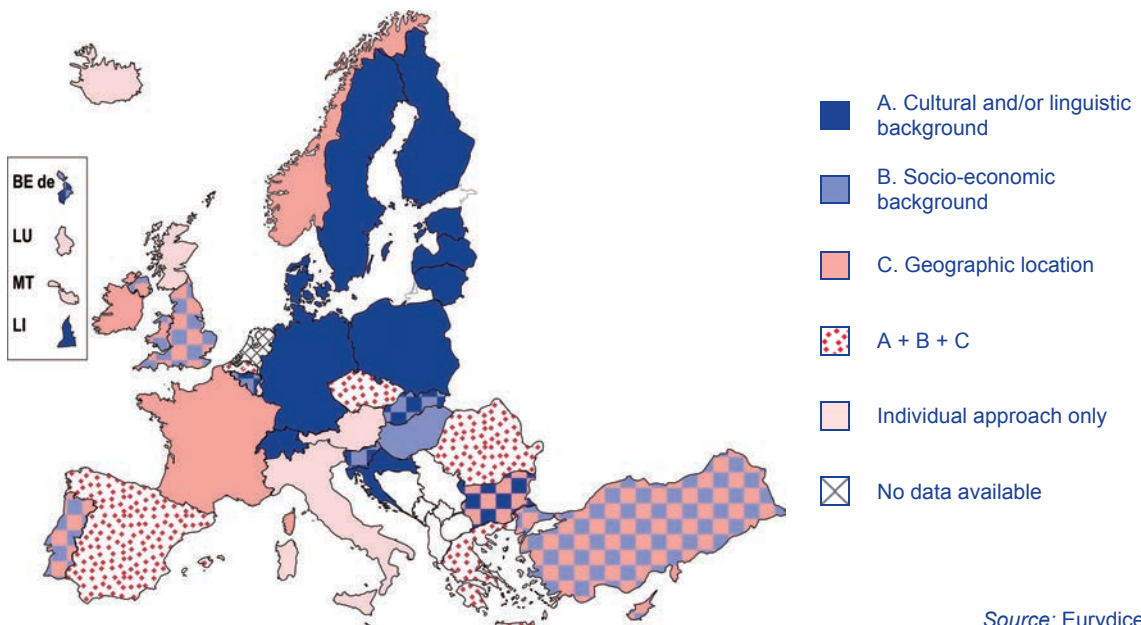
**Figure G1: Central measures targeting children with additional needs, 2012/13**

**Figure G1a. Group or individual approach**



Source: Eurydice.

**Figure G1b. Group criteria**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'children with additional needs', see Glossary.

**Country specific notes**

**Belgium (BE nl):** The information refers to *kleuteronderwijs*.

**Czech Republic:** The information refers to settings for older children (*mateřské školy*).

**Portugal:** In settings for older children (*jardim de infância*), only an individual approach is applied.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** The information for 'younger' children refers to the extended legal entitlement to disadvantaged 2 year-olds or 2 year-olds living in disadvantaged areas.



## LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES ARE THE MOST COMMON SUPPORT MEASURES FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

As mentioned above, most European countries use socio-economic, linguistic, cultural or geographic criteria to identify specific groups of children who may need additional support in their development and learning (see Figure G1). In almost all these countries, programmes or other measures have been established at central level to provide these groups of children with support tailored to their needs.

There are three main ways in which additional support is provided for disadvantaged children: through specific measures to support children's development, learning and attainment, especially language development; through the provision of additional or specialist staff; and/or through the establishment of special organisational and/or funding arrangements. In some cases, a range of measures are introduced under the umbrella of comprehensive programmes designed to support, for instance, language development and inclusive education (e.g. the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Hungary and Slovakia).

Most countries have introduced centralised measures to support **language development**, which again are of three main types: support for migrant and ethnic minority children to learn the language of instruction; support for minorities and migrants to consolidate learning of their mother tongue; and support for any child with speech and language difficulties.

Support for learning the language of instruction is intended to help children adjust and integrate into school life, and also to enable them to access the wider curriculum.

**Germany** is a typical example of a country providing language support to migrants or children from disadvantaged areas. A number of different initiatives (at central and regional level) seek to develop children's language skills and give them daily practice in the language of instruction. The national programme *Offensive Frühe Chancen*, for example, funds additional staff in settings operating in disadvantaged areas to support children's language development.

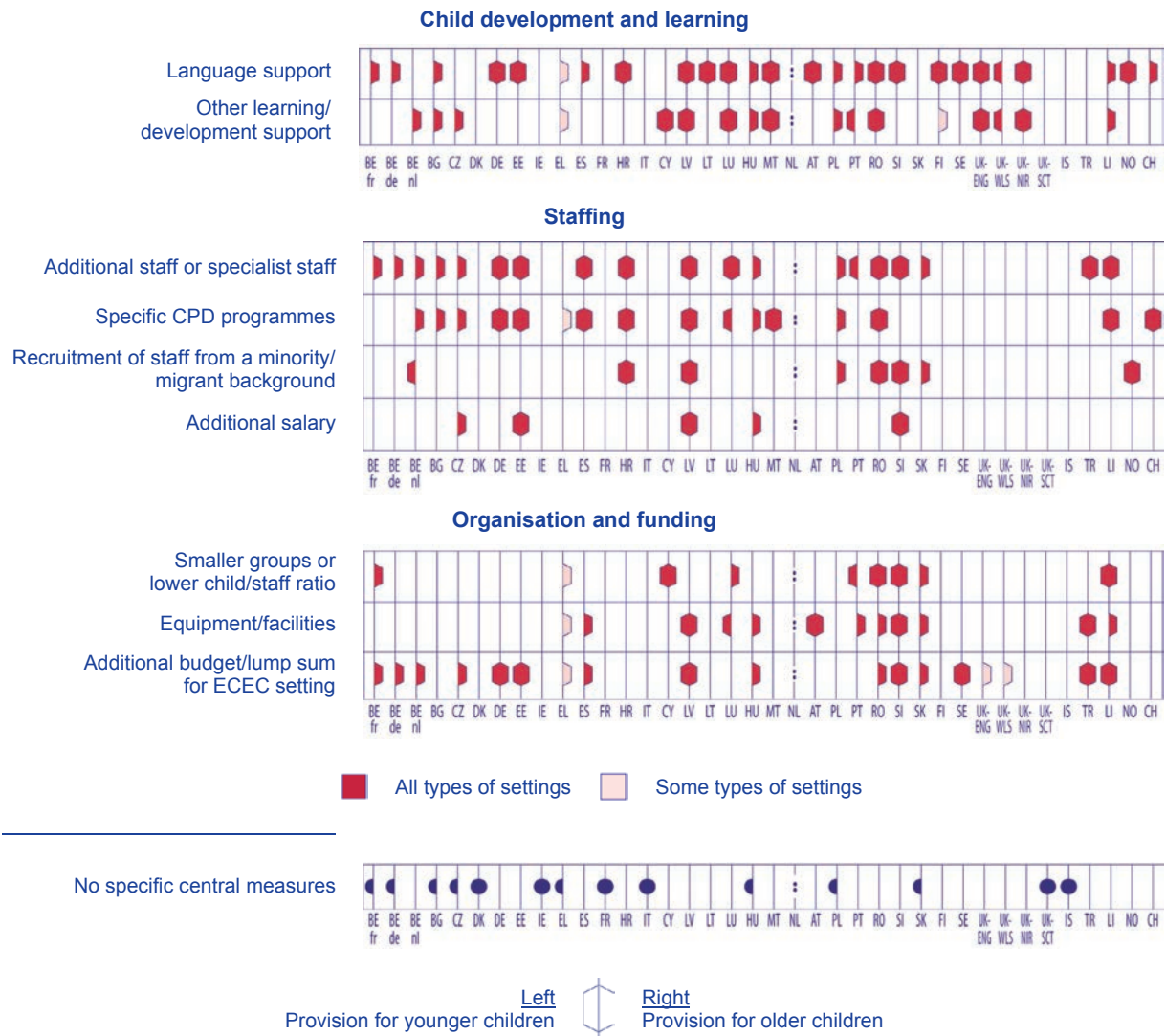
**Estonia** is an example of a country that offers support for learning the official language in ECEC settings. Here, the national curriculum provides for the teaching of Estonian in settings where education and care is delivered in another language. Additional funds from the state budget are allocated to these settings through local authorities. A specific teaching methodology, supported by materials and staff training has been introduced to facilitate the learning of Estonian as second language in the early years.

The second group of language measures focuses on supporting migrants and minorities in learning their mother tongue. The objective is to give these children an opportunity to keep their identity and grow up in a bilingual environment. Such measures exist in Poland, Slovenia and Finland.

For instance, in the areas with a high proportion of Italian-speakers in **Slovenia**, the ECEC system provides for the teaching of two languages.

In **Finland**, specific measures are decided locally: they may include support for learning Finnish as a second language; interpreter services to assist communication with parents; specific learning and teaching materials; additional training for staff or the recruitment of staff from a minority background.

**Figure G2: Central recommendations on specific measures to support children with additional needs in centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

**Explanatory note**

For a definition of 'children with additional needs', see Glossary. See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

**Country specific notes**

**Belgium (BE nl):** Staff from minority groups only in local neighbourhood childcare services.

**Germany:** The indicated measures are available in settings participating in the federal programme *Offensive Frühe Chancen*.

**Greece:** The information covers only pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*).

**Slovakia:** Additional budget available only for the final year of ECEC.

**Finland:** Other learning/development support is provided only in pre-primary education (*Esiopetus/förskoleundervisning*).

**United Kingdom (ENG):** The information on older children refers only to schools, including maintained nursery schools and nursery classes/reception classes in primary schools/academies.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** The information for 'younger' children refers to the extended legal entitlement to disadvantaged 2 year-olds or 2 year-olds living in disadvantaged areas.



The third group of language support measures is designed for all children who need help in developing in speech and language skills in their mother tongue, as is the case in Malta and Austria.

In 2009, **Austria** introduced a framework for supporting the language development of children aged 3-6, which has led to specific measures for all children. Accompanying measures include continuing professional development programmes (CPD) for ECEC staff.

**Other learning/development support** measures are intended to reduce the effects of socio-economic disadvantage and promote equity and social inclusion from an early age. Specific, long-term objectives often refer to improving academic outcomes and prevent early school leaving. Therefore, in some cases, these measures include programmes to ensure that children are ready for the next stage of education, or to promote continuity between ECEC and primary school (e.g. in Cyprus, Romania and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)).

The main target group is generally children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Learning and attainment measures or programmes are in some cases directed at disadvantaged children within a specific geographic area. Greece and Cyprus, for instance, have established a number of educational measures within 'educational priority zones' in the most deprived regions. In Greece, for instance, a specific curriculum exists in such areas. Similarly, United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland) run central programmes in the most disadvantaged areas with the aim of guaranteeing the best possible start in life by providing quality day care. Some countries also specifically target children from the Roma community (e.g. the Czech Republic).

Programmes to reduce the effects of socio-economic disadvantage often provide assistance to children through family support programmes.

**Romania** operates a summer kindergarten programme (lasting at least 45 days) as a type of catch-up programme for children who have missed out on ECEC for socio-economic reasons.

Sure Start projects in the **United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)** offer a broad range of services, which include a developmental programme for 2-3 year olds. The aim is to enhance social and emotional development, build on communication and language skills and encourage imagination through play.

Most European countries have initiated special **staffing** measures for ECEC settings, which have either higher numbers of children than normal in need of additional support, or those which operate in targeted geographical areas as in Greece and Cyprus. The most popular staffing measures include providing additional staff, employing specialists (see Figure E6) and offering opportunities for specific CPD programmes. Additional salary payments are rare. Settings dealing with children with additional needs may employ additional staff under specific circumstances.

In **Spain**, for instance, ECEC settings may increase staff numbers with the aim of reducing socio-economic, cultural or geographical inequalities. They may also take on extra staff, usually at the beginning of the school year, to help children adapt to their new environment.

In order to create a supportive environment for children with additional needs, ECEC settings in some countries often employ specialists such as physiologists, speech therapists, etc. In other countries, specialists are only employed if there is a high number of children with learning difficulties who need regular care from permanent specialists in a setting. For example, settings in Liechtenstein are allocated additional staff specialised in remedial teaching (*schulische Heilpädagogik*).

Eight educational systems (Belgium (Flemish Community – some *kinderdagverblijven*), Croatia, Latvia, Poland (older children), Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia (older children) and Norway) seek to employ staff from a migrant or minority background. These staff are involved in the teaching process to provide language support to migrant children and those from ethnic minorities to help them integrate in ECEC. In some cases, staff undertake specific training for working with these children. For instance, Norway has launched incentives to encourage settings to employ bilingual assistants and develop

their skills in multicultural and bilingual education. Croatia and Slovenia run projects to train Roma assistants to support Roma children in ECEC, and help to build links between settings and the Roma community. In Latvia and Slovenia, bilingual staff are entitled to additional salary payments.

When dealing with children with additional needs, some countries have introduced measures related to the **organisation** of ECEC settings. These often involve teaching in smaller groups with fewer children or a reduced child/staff ratio (for normal ratios see Figure B6). Additional facilities and equipment may also be provided to settings.

For instance, in **Slovenia**, children from ethnic minorities are placed in groups with lower child/adult ratio and, in addition, the central level (rather than municipalities) funds the investment in property and equipment in ethnically mixed areas.

Around half of European countries have designed special **financial** measures to enable ECEC settings to provide specific support for children with additional needs, especially those from low socio-economic groups and who are at risk of social exclusion. These measures are often translated into subsidies or lump sums paid to settings if they meet specific conditions or run particular educational programmes. However, in a few cases (e.g. Finland and Norway), additional funding is not addressed directly to schools but to the local authorities responsible for ECEC services.

In the **Czech Republic**, settings for older children (*mateřské školy*) are eligible for a subsidy towards salary incentives, if they include at least 15 % of socially disadvantaged children, employ additional staff and create specific conditions to support these children.

In **Hungary**, settings for over 3s (*óvoda*) are entitled to a grant if they provide inclusive teaching in line with the *Integration Pedagogical Programme* set up by the Ministry of Education. These grants may be spent on various actions: individual teaching support; employing additional specialists for improving links between the setting and disadvantaged families; organising parent programmes; CPD courses; and bonuses for staff.

The **Slovak** government's subsidies for the final year in *materská škola* have a double objective: first, to help children at risk of social exclusion in developing good eating habits through meals provided in the setting; second, by providing individual support and specific teaching materials, to ensure they are well-prepared for primary school.

In the **United Kingdom (England)**, primary schools receive extra funds for disadvantaged children in reception classes with the aim of helping these children raise their attainment level.

Finally, of the countries which have set criteria to define children in need of additional support (see Figure G1) only Denmark, Ireland and France have not implemented any central measures specifically for disadvantaged children. Nevertheless, in Denmark and Ireland, local programmes and initiatives address specific priorities in a given area.

In **Denmark**, in the areas with a high proportion of migrants, minorities or other disadvantaged groups, local authorities provide extra support for language learning, for instance, by reducing the number of children in groups or providing extra funds for settings.

Education in the most deprived areas is of a major concern in **Ireland**, where 40 primary schools benefit from the *Early Start Pre-school Programme*. It caters for children in the year before primary education and is intended to support children's general development, improve educational outcomes and offset the effects of social disadvantage.

## SPECIFIC TRAINING TO WORK WITH CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS IN ECEC IS COMPULSORY IN MOST COUNTRIES

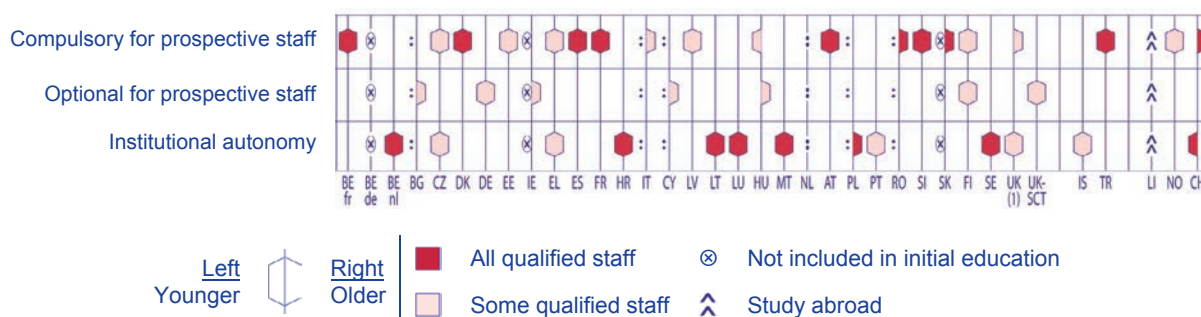
As shown previously (see Figure G2), European countries have introduced many programmes and initiatives targeting children with additional needs. ECEC professionals have a very important role in supporting these children in their daily activities. They interact, systematically observe children's development and provide individual support. Therefore, ECEC staff need special training to work with these children who may be from widely varying backgrounds and have different abilities. The additional skills and competences required for this role are usually obtained through specific training included in initial education or later through CPD courses (see Chapter E).

Figure G3 shows whether specific training for dealing with children with additional needs is incorporated into the initial education of ECEC staff. The length and content of such training is not addressed as these vary considerably both between countries and, in some cases, between institutions within countries.

In most European countries, specific training to prepare ECEC staff for working with children with additional needs is integrated into the initial education process. This training may be compulsory, optional or left to the decision of individual training institutions (institutional autonomy). Furthermore, while in some countries specific training is compulsory for all ECEC staff (Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Spain, France, Austria, Slovenia and Turkey), in others, it is only compulsory for staff preparing to work with older children (Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland).

Finally, it should be noted that in some countries staff working with children with additional needs may be assisted by specialists (see Figure E6).

**Figure G3: Specific training for working with children with additional needs: inclusion in the initial education of ECEC staff, 2012/13**



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

### Explanatory note

For a definition of 'children with additional needs', see the Glossary. See National System Information Sheets for what 'younger' and 'older' correspond to in the context of each country.

### Country specific notes

**Belgium (BE de):** Staff working with children with additional needs can take specialist training through CPD programmes.

**Greece:** Specific education is compulsory for educator assistants.

**Italy:** Specific training is included only in initial education at Master's degree level.

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# GLOSSARY

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## I. CLASSIFICATIONS

### **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997)**

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) was designed to facilitate the compilation and comparison of education statistics both within and across national boundaries. It combines two cross-classification variables (levels and fields of education) with the type of education (general/vocational/pre-vocational) or students' intended destination (tertiary education or direct entry into the labour market). The current version, ISCED 97 <sup>(13)</sup> distinguishes seven levels of education. The lowest level, ISCED 0, covers pre-primary education, but this does not embrace the earliest years of early childhood education and care. The ISCED methodology assumes that a number of criteria exist which can help allocate an education programme to a particular level of education. However, depending on the level and type of education concerned, a hierarchical ranking system of main and subsidiary criteria operates. At pre-primary level, the main criteria include whether the programme is school or centre-based as well as the minimum entry and the upper age limits; subsidiary criteria include staff qualifications.

#### ➤ **ISCED 0: Pre-primary education**

Pre-primary education is defined as the initial stage of organised instruction. It is school- or centre-based and is designed for children aged at least 3 years.

#### ➤ **ISCED 1: Primary education**

This level begins between 5 and 7 years of age, is compulsory in all countries and generally lasts from 4 to 6 years.

#### ➤ **ISCED 2: Lower secondary education**

Continues the basic programmes of primary education, although teaching is typically more subject-focused. Usually, the end of this level coincides with the end of compulsory education.

#### ➤ **ISCED 3: Upper secondary education**

This level generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entrance age is typically 15 or 16 years. Entrance qualifications (completion of compulsory education) and other minimum entry requirements are usually needed. Instruction is often more subject-oriented than at ISCED level 2. The typical duration of ISCED level 3 varies from two to five years.

#### ➤ **ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education**

These programmes straddle the boundary between upper secondary and tertiary education. They serve to broaden the knowledge of ISCED level 3 graduates. Typical examples are programmes designed to prepare pupils for studies at level 5, or programmes designed to prepare pupils for direct entry to the labour market.

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<sup>(13)</sup> [http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=3813\\_201&ID2=DO\\_TOPIC](http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=3813_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)

➤ **ISCED 5: Tertiary education (first stage)**

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4. This level includes tertiary programmes with academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based and tertiary programmes with occupation orientation (type B) which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for entry into the labour market.

➤ **ISCED 6: Tertiary education (second stage)**

This level is reserved for tertiary studies that lead to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Accreditation of ECEC settings** is a process of assessing whether settings intending to provide ECEC comply with the regulations in force, i.e. a certain set of rules and minimum standards.

**Additional hours** refers to the time children spend in ECEC which is more than the allocated number of hours funded by public authorities and consequently is subject to parental fees.

**Additional needs** are understood as educational needs of children arising primarily from socio-economic, cultural and/or linguistic factors.

**Adequately compensated childcare leave:** accumulated length of post-natal maternity, paternity and parental leave for which parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings. In case of flat rate, the payment is considered adequately compensated if it constitutes 65 % of the minimum monthly wage in the country.

**Administrative experience:** Experience acquired in the administration and management of an ECEC setting or school, for example, through holding the post of deputy head.

**Alternative pathways:** Flexible, mostly employment-based training programmes leading to a qualification required for employment in ECEC. They are normally shorter than traditional programmes and are often introduced to attract new people into the profession. Achieving an ECEC qualification through the validation of non-formal and informal learning is also considered as an alternative pathway to ECEC profession.

**At risk of poverty or social exclusion** refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived; or living in a household with a very low work intensity. This particular indicator sums up the number of individuals who belong to either of these groups. 'At risk of poverty' means those people whose disposable income is below their national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. 'Material deprivation' relates to economic strain and inability to afford a selection of items that are considered necessary or desirable. 'Very low work intensity' refers to the number of persons living in a household and who have worked at less than 20 % of their potential during the past year. Children who suffer from more than one dimension of poverty at the same time are counted only once.

**Capacity monitoring in ECEC:** A process which involves the monitoring of the relationship between the supply of ECEC places and actual demand. It is an on-going evaluation of system performance.

**Capital expenditure** refers to expenditure on assets that last longer than one year. It includes spending on construction, renovation and major repair of buildings, as well as expenditure on new or replacement equipment. (It is understood that most countries report small outlays for equipment, below a certain cost threshold, as current rather than capital spending.)

**Central level authorities:** The highest level of government in a state. In the vast majority of countries, central authorities have ultimate responsibility for education. However, in Belgium, Spain and the United Kingdom, regional authorities (Communities, etc.) have responsibility for all or most matters relating to education and are considered the top level authority in this area.

**Centre-based provision** encompasses provision that is within the regulatory framework and is provided outside the home. The services provided are most commonly referred to as nurseries, daycare centres, *crèches* and kindergartens (adapted from OECD, 2012).

**Children with additional educational needs:** Children who are at risk of poor outcomes in their education and who need additional support in order to achieve their full potential. These children often come from a disadvantaged background such as low socio-economic, migrant or ethnic minority groups.

**Current or operational expenditure** refers to expenditure on goods and services consumed within the current year, i.e., expenditure that needs to be made recurrently in order to continue to deliver educational services. This includes expenditure on staff and running costs. Minor expenditure on items of equipment, below a certain cost threshold, is also usually reported as current spending.

**Direct public expenditure** may take one of two forms: (1) payments made by the government agency itself on behalf of educational institutions (e.g. direct payment of teachers' salaries by a central or regional education ministry); (2) payments by a government agency to educational institutions responsible for purchasing their own educational resources and paying their own staff (e.g. a block grant to an institution). Direct expenditure by a government agency does not include tuition payments received from students (or their families) enrolled in public schools under that agency's jurisdiction, even if the tuition payments flow, in the first instance, to the government agency rather than to the institution in question.

**Early childhood education and care (ECEC):** Provision for children from birth through to primary education that falls within a national regulatory framework, i.e., it has to comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures.

**External evaluation of ECEC settings:** A quality control process carried out by individuals or teams from outside an educational/care setting which seeks to evaluate and monitor the performance of settings, report on the quality of provision and suggest ways to improve practice.

**Forward planning** is based on the observation of trends and identification of the most likely scenarios in ECEC supply and demand reflected in demographic projections such as birth rates and migration. Forward planning of ECEC may be carried out on a long-, medium- and/or short-term basis.

**Gross domestic product (GDP):** Gross domestic product is an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs). The sum of the final uses of goods and services (all uses except intermediate consumption) measured in purchasers' prices, less the value of imports of goods and services, or the sum of primary incomes distributed by resident producer units (OECD, 2014).

**Home-based provision** refers to publicly regulated ECEC provision that is delivered in a provider's home. Regulations usually require providers to meet minimum health, safety, and nutrition standards. Home-based provision excludes in-home care (i.e. care which occurs in the child's own home), even where such provision must comply with basic quality standards (e.g. accreditation of staff).

**Household** is defined as a group of two or more people living together in a house or a part of a house and sharing a common budget. Any person stating that they do not belong to any household and that they have their own budget is considered a single-person household.

**Jobless households** are households where no member is in employment, i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive.

**Legal entitlement to ECEC** refers to a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require a place for their child.

**PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS)** was created on the basis of the following variables: the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI); the highest level of education of the student's parents, converted into years of schooling; the PISA index of family wealth; the PISA index of home educational resources; and the PISA index of possessions related to 'classical' culture in the family home.

**Private ECEC settings** may be owned and operated by businesses, which are profit-oriented, or by the voluntary (non-profit) sector which may include charitable organisations. They often operate under license and may be required to meet basic minimum standards of care. Private settings may be:

**Self-financing:** Drawing their funds from private sources, usually parental fees; or

**Publicly subsidised:** Receiving some funding from public sources, in particular, for delivering education and care on behalf of public authorities where children have a legal entitlement to an ECEC place.

**Professional duty** means a task described as such in working regulations/contracts/legislation or other regulations on the teaching profession.

**Professional experience in ECEC:** Time spent working professionally in ECEC. The period and type of professional experience required is often specified when recruiting staff to senior positions in ECEC.

**Public ECEC settings** are owned and operated by public authorities at central, regional or local level. They are not profit-driven but aim to provide a public service.

**Purchasing power standard (PPS):** The artificial common reference currency unit used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of cross national comparisons in such a way that price level differences between countries are eliminated. Economic volume aggregates in PPS are obtained by dividing their original value in national currency units by the respective PPP. PPS thus buys the same given volume of goods and services in all countries, whereas different amounts of national currency units are needed to buy the same volume of goods and services in individual countries, depending on the price level.

**Separate ECEC settings:** *Centre-based settings in split ECEC system.*

**Specific training for headship** takes place subsequent to initial education and qualification of ECEC staff. Depending on the circumstances, training may be provided either prior to the application or recruitment procedures for headship, or during the year or two immediately after taking up the post. Its aim is to equip future heads in ECEC with the skills required to carry out their new duties. It is not to be confused with continuing professional development.

**Split ECEC system:** Provision is delivered in separate settings for younger and older children (usually for under and over 3 years of age). The responsibility for ECEC governance, regulation and funding are divided between different authorities. An educational framework is normally only established for older children. The requirements for staff qualifications also usually differ depending on the type of provision. Moreover, conditions of access may vary greatly; with a legal entitlement usually applying to older children and not to younger children.

**Steering documents:** Different kinds of official documents containing regulations, guidelines, and/or recommendations for education institutions. Regulations are laws, rules or other orders prescribed by public authorities to govern settings. Recommendations or guidelines are official documents which advocate particular procedures, methods or strategies but are not mandatory. Steering documents encompass the variety of official approaches that intend to steer or guide ECEC providers. In this perspective, steering documents include any or all of the following educational guidelines: learning content, objectives and outcomes, attainment targets as well as guidelines on pedagogical approaches, learning activities and assessment methods.

**Tax relief:** A scheme or incentive which allows an individual or business to reduce their tax liability. Examples of tax relief include the allowable deduction of certain expenses such as ECEC fees from taxable income, or the availability of tax credits to offset the costs of education and care.

**Total public expenditure on education** includes direct public funding for educational institutions and transfers to households and firms. In general, the public sector finances educational expenditure by assuming direct responsibility for the *current* and *capital expenditure* of schools (direct public financing of schools), or by offering financial support to pupils/students and their families (public-sector grants and loans) and by subsidising the education or training activities of the private business sector or non-profit organisations (transfers to households and firms). Direct public funding for tertiary education may include research and development expenditure in certain countries in which tertiary education institutions are funded from global budgets covering resources earmarked both for teaching and for research and development activities.

**Unitary ECEC system:** Provision for all children of pre-school age is organised in a single phase and delivered in settings catering for the whole age range. Children have no breaks or transfers between institutions until they start primary school. The ministry of education is responsible for ECEC governance, regulation and funding. All care and education for young children is considered to be part of 'early education' services and educational guidelines cover the entire ECEC phase. Unitary settings have a single management team running provision for children of all ages and the same level of staff qualification is required for working with the entire age range. Furthermore, a legal entitlement to ECEC or free ECEC is often granted from a very early age. Unitary systems are sometimes referred to as 'integrated systems'.

**Unitary setting:** *Centre-based setting in unitary ECEC system.*

### III. DATABASES

#### **PISA 2012 international database**

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international survey conducted under the auspices of the OECD to measure the performance levels of pupils aged 15 in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. The survey is based on representative samples of 15-year-old pupils, who may either be in lower secondary or upper secondary education, depending on the structure of the system. Besides measuring performance, PISA 2012 international survey includes questionnaires to identify variables in the school and family context which may shed light on their findings. All indicators cover both public schools and private schools, whether grant-aided or otherwise.

<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/>

#### **PIRLS 2011 international survey**

PIRLS 2011 is the third cycle of IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The survey measures the reading achievement of pupils largely in the fourth year of schooling – described in the survey as 'fourth graders'. In most countries, the pupils are approximately 10 years old and attend primary education. It offers a state-of-the-art assessment of reading comprehension that allows measurement of change since 2001, and includes a full complement of questionnaires to investigate the experiences young children have at home and school in learning to read.

<http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/>



# NATIONAL SYSTEM INFORMATION SHEETS

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These information sheets provide a concise overview of the key features of each country's ECEC system, including:

- Diagram: visual representation of the principal elements of the ECEC structure
- Organisation: description of the main types of ECEC provision
- Participation rates
- Fees for full-time provision
- Current reforms

## Diagram

The diagrams represent the structure of mainstream ECEC that is available to all children in each country. Separate provision outside mainstream ECEC for children with special educational needs is not included (see the exact scope in introduction).

The diagram is structured around the 'age of children' scale. These ages are notional and give an indication of the official minimum age at which children might begin certain types of ECEC.

The first thin line indicates the theoretical length of childcare leave, which is the accumulated length of three possible types of leave: maternity, paternity and parental. Leave is considered as adequately compensated if parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings during this period. For more details, see Figure B3.

The next line(s) show the range of official ages at which children become eligible for admission to certain settings or types of ECEC provision. For most countries, the term relating to the ECEC setting is shown on the diagram. However, in some countries, the type of provision is considered to be more appropriate, and so these terms are given. All terms are provided in the official national language(s) of the country. Centre-based settings are indicated in blue, while home based-settings are in pink (for definitions, see Glossary). Involvement of the Ministry of Education is marked by a lower intensity of the respective colours.

When appropriate, the small vertical lines within the setting represent the division into different types of provision, cycles or key stages.

A second black and white bar indicates the period of education defined by UNESCO as ISCED 0 under the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

When applicable, special symbols indicate the starting age of any legal entitlement to ECEC provision (for definition see Glossary), the availability of free provision for at least some hours a day, and the beginning of compulsory education.

After each diagram, a shaded sentence aims to help the reader to identify which centre-based settings are considered to cater for 'younger' children and which for 'older' children in each country. This distinction is often made in the main text and in many Figures of the report.

## Organisation

A short description of the main types of ECEC is provided in the Organisation section. It also specifies which central authorities are responsible for which types of settings. Additional information on non-mainstream provision is provided as appropriate.

## Participation rates

ISCED 0 and ISCED 1 participation rates for 3 to 7 year-olds are shown using Eurostat data from 2011 (for comparisons between countries, see Figure C2). When available, national data on participation rates for under-3s or national data showing participation by setting is also included, specifying the reference year and source. Differences between rates provided by different sources might be due to disparities in the methodology used.

## Fees

When available, the fee structure is described. For comparability, hourly fees were multiplied by 40 for obtaining weekly fees; weekly fees were converted to monthly by multiplying by a factor of 4.345. Hence, the actual monthly fees may differ slightly. Fees in PPS can be converted back to the national currency using the figures provided in the note. (For comparisons between countries, see Figure D6).

## Current reforms

The section lists the major reforms underway during the reference year 2012/13 or those which have taken place since that period. Only reforms already approved are included (i.e. changes still under discussion are not considered).

## Further information on national education systems and related policies

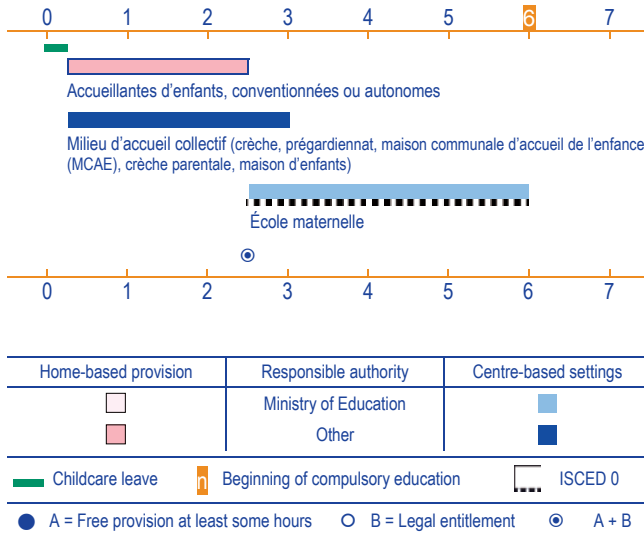
**EURYPEDIA, the European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems** provides up-to-date and comprehensive information by country and level of education.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/euryperia>

## Belgium – French Community

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Belgium (French Community), 'younger children' refers to those in a range of settings in the *milieu d'accueil collectif* and 'older children' to those in the *école maternelle*.

## Organisation

Children from 3 months to 3 years may attend different types of centre-based settings (*milieu d'accueil collectif*), including *crèche*, *prégardiennat*, *maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance* (MCAE) or *maison d'enfants*. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based care, which is delivered by child-minders (*accueillantes d'enfants*) who either work independently (*accueillantes d'enfants autonomes*) or are affiliated to specific child-minding organisations (*accueillantes d'enfants conventionnées*). Home-based and centre-based care for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the organisation ONE (*Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance*), which is under the authority of the Minister of Childhood. From age 2½, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in the *école maternelle*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Education. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 3
Accueillantes d'enfants, conventionnées ou autonomes	29.2
Milieu d'accueil collectif (crèche, prégardiennat, maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance (MCAE), crèche parentale, maison d'enfants)	

Source: ONE, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2012	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
École maternelle	45.0	95.0	97.0	98.0

Source: Indicateurs de l'enseignement, 2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	97.8	98.1	97.0	5.2	0.1
ISCED 1 *	(-)	0.0	1.1	92.7	97.8

\* Data for Belgium (all communities)

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Fees

Fees are regulated for children aged under 2½ in public and publicly subsidised settings to min. PPS 2.1 and max. PPS 32.8 per day (food included), which makes approximately PPS 45 to 644 monthly. The same applies for centre- and home-based ECEC. Fees taken by private (self-financing) providers are not regulated. 22 % of *accueillantes d'enfants* and 32 % of *crèches* do not receive any public subsidies.

ECEC for children aged over 2½ in the *école maternelle* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision in the *garderie*.

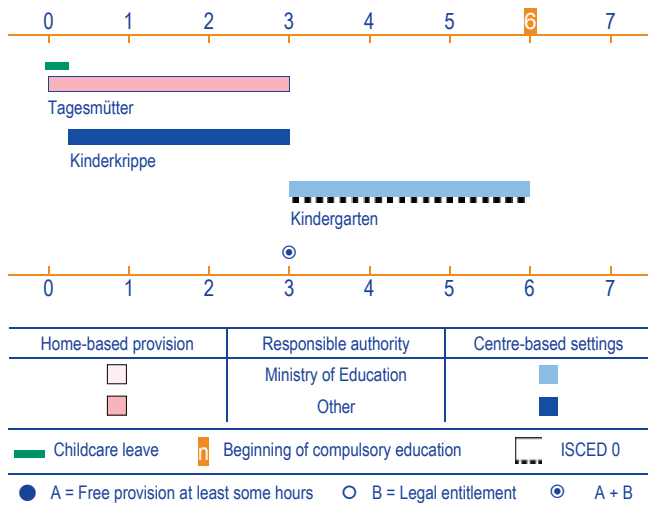
PPS 1 = EUR 1.11881

## No current reforms

## Belgium – German-speaking Community

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Belgium (German-speaking Community), 'younger children' refers to those in *Kinderkrippe* and 'older children' to those in *Kindergarten*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 3 years
Tagesmütter (Selbstständige Tagesmutter or, Tagesmütterdiens – TMD)	31.9
Kinderkrippe	2.2

Source: DKF, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	97.8	98.1	97.0	5.2	0.1
ISCED 1 *	(-)	0.0	1.1	92.7	97.8

\* Data for Belgium (all communities)

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children mostly attend regulated home-based care, which is provided by child-minders (*Tagesmütter*) who either work independently (*Selbstständige Tagesmütter*) or are affiliated to a specific child-minding Organisation (*Tagesmütterdienst – TMD*). There is also a centre-based setting known as *Kinderkrippe*. ECEC for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment, Health and Social Affairs. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in *Kindergarten*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Fees are regulated for children aged under 3 in public and publicly subsidised settings to min PPS 1.2 and max PPS 24.1 per day (food included), which makes approximately PPS 25 to 531 monthly. The same applies for centre- and home-based ECEC.

ECEC for children over 3 in *Kindergarten* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

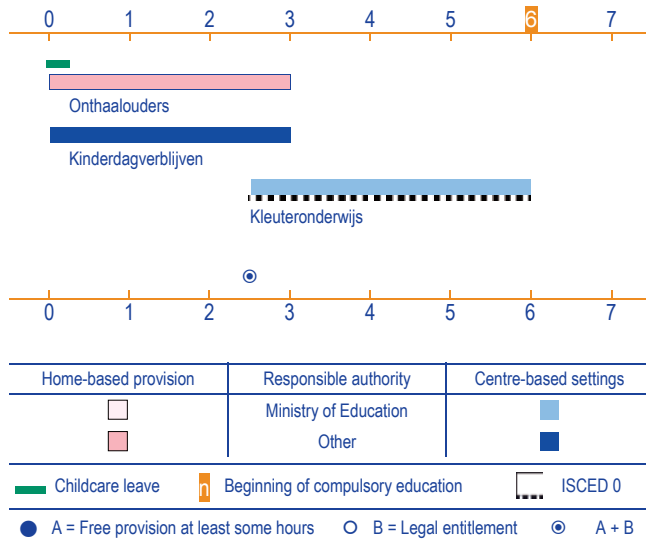
PPS 1 = EUR 1.11881

## No current reforms

## Belgium – Flemish Community

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Belgium (Flemish Community), 'younger children' refers to those in *Kinderdagverblijven* and 'older children' to those in *Kleuteronderwijs*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2010/2011	Under 3 years
Onthaalouders and Kinderdagverblijven*	48.4

\*Source: Kind en Gezin, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2010/11	Under 1 year <sup>1</sup>	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Onthaalouders and Kinderdagverblijven*	50.3	57.9	37.6	(-)	(-)	(-)
Kleuteronderwijs	(-)	(-)	57.0	98.7	98.8	97.7

\* Source: Kind en Gezin, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	97.8	98.1	97.0	5.2	0.1
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	1.1	92.7	97.8

\* Data for Belgium (all communities)

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Early childhood education and care is divided into two main areas: formal child care for children from birth to 3 years that can be home-based (*Onthaalouders*) or centre-based (*Kinderdagverblijven*), and pre-primary education (*Kleuteronderwijs*) for children from age 2½. The first area falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Minister of Welfare, Health and Family and is administered by the agency *Kind en Gezin*. Pre-primary education for children over 2½ falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training. From age 2½, children are legally entitled to free pre-primary education. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Fees are regulated for children under the age of 2½ in public settings. In 2011, it was min. PPS 1.4 and max. PPS 24.5 per day. This amounts to approximately PPS 30 to 585 per month, with an average of PPS 268 per month.

ECEC for those aged over 2½ in *Kleuteronderwijs* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.11881

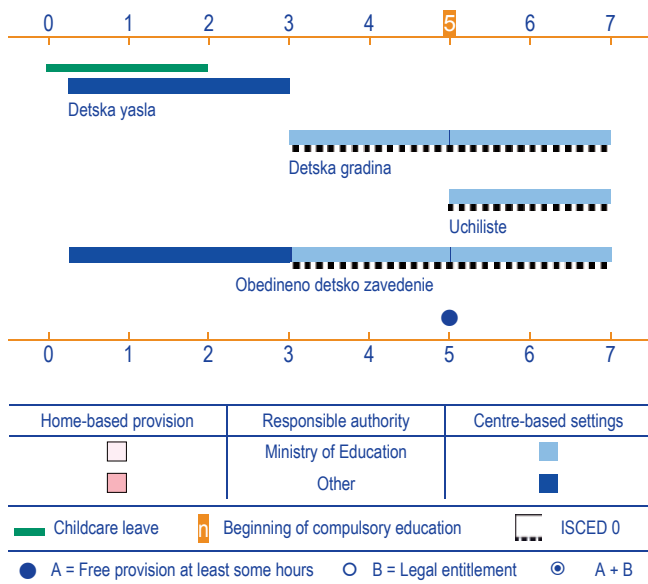
## Current reforms

From 1 April 2014, a new decree on childcare (0 to 3) will be implemented. This will be combined with a whole new regulation. Accreditation and evaluation procedures will be the same for public and private settings in order to strive for more uniform quality in every setting. A new and more uniform subsidy system linking subsidies with specific responsibilities will be introduced.

## Bulgaria

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Bulgaria, 'younger children' refers to those in *detska yasla* and groups for under-3s in *obedineni detski zavedenia*. 'Older children' refers to those in *detska gradina*, *uchiliste* and to groups for over 3s in *obedineni detski zavedenia*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	73.1	78.9	86.3	87.5	1.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	7.2	96.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Children aged between 3 months and 3 years may attend centre-based settings known as *detska yasla*. From age 3, early childhood education is available in *detska gradina*, where the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the education process. The last two years of pre-primary education (i.e. between the ages 5 and 7) are compulsory and children may take them either in *detska gradina* or in primary school (*uchiliste*). In addition to the separate settings for younger and older children, there are also unitary settings (*obedineni detski zavedenia*) intended for children aged between 10 months and 7 years. The provision in these settings is structured according to the above phases (i.e. up to 3 years, between 3 and 5 years, and between 5 and 7 years of age). Primary education starts at age 7.

## Fees

Fees in public ECEC range between PPS 28-68, with an average of PPS 51 per month (food included). Fees in private (self-financing) ECEC can reach PPS 474. No fees are charged in the last two years of pre-primary classes (age 5-7), including free educational material.

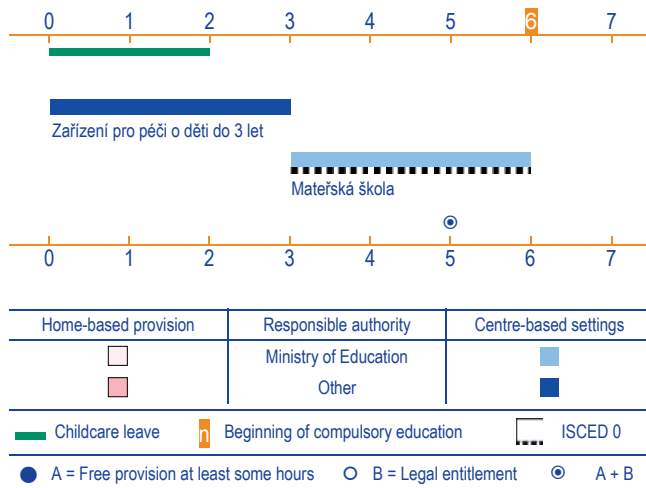
PPS 1 = BGN 0.878823

## No current reforms

## Czech Republic

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to the Czech Republic, 'younger children' refers to those in *zařízení pro péči o děti do 3 let* and 'older children' to those in *mateřská škola*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/2013	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Mateřská škola	26.7	75.2	86.9	88.2

Source: CSU & MEYS, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	58.5	83.7	91.6	46.1	7.5
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.6	50.7	91.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The ECEC system comprises two main structures. Settings for children under 3 years of age (*zařízení pro péči o děti do 3 let*) fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and operate under the Trade Licensing Act and general legal regulations. These settings are normally centre-based but a small number of home-based settings exist. Nursery schools (*mateřské školy*), which fall under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, are intended for children aged between 3 and 6. In addition to nursery schools, the Trade Licensing Act also provides the legal basis for the establishment of centre-based (and possibly home-based) facilities for children over 3 years, but the latter facilities are not publicly subsidised and have not yet been developed to any significant degree and therefore are not represented on the diagram. From age 5, children are legally entitled to pre-primary education. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Experts estimate that fees for children aged under 3 years in public settings are PPS 138 monthly plus costs for food. Monthly fees in *mateřské školy* are PPS 14 (food not included).

PPS 1 = CZK 18.0615

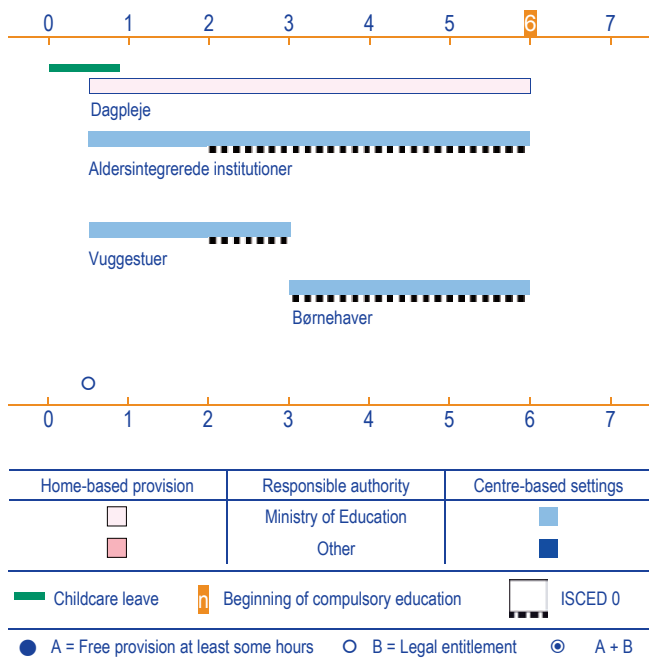
## Current reforms

The legislation covering traditional settings for children under 3 years (*jesle*) was phased out at the end of 2013. Some of the former *jesle* still operate on the basis of the Trade Licensing Act or general legal regulations. A new act on the provision of childcare services for children between 6 months and the beginning of compulsory schooling is currently in preparation.

Denmark

Reference year 2012/13

Diagram



In this report, with respect to Denmark, 'younger children' refers to groups for under-3s in *aldersintegrerede institutioner* and *vuggestuer*. 'Older children' refers to groups for over-3s in *aldersintegrerede institutioner* and *børnehaver*.

Participation rates

(%) Reference Year 2012	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Dagpleje	9.7	39.1	33.1	0.4	0.2	0.2
Aldersintegrerede institutioner	8.9	49.6	59.8	96.1	96.6	79.7

Source: Danmarks Statistik, 2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	90.5	97.5	96.0	9.6	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	2.3	89.3	99.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

Organisation

The ECEC system consists of day-care centres (*daginstitutioner*), which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and can be established either as age-integrated settings for children between 26 weeks and 6 years (*aldersintegrerede institutioner*), or separate settings for younger and older children (*vuggestuer* and *børnehaver*, respectively). In addition to centre-based ECEC provision, there is also a system of regulated home-based provision (*dagpleje*) most of which is publicly funded, and caters for a relatively high number of young children. From 26 weeks, children are legally entitled to publicly subsidised ECEC provision. Primary education starts at age 6.

Fees

Home based *dagpleje* cost on average PPS 226 per month (food included). Fees in *daginstitutioner* depend on the child's age and are PPS 270 for children aged 0 to 2 years and PPS 152 for older children. The ECEC is predominantly public, only 5 % of *daginstitutioner* are private (publicly subsidised).

PPS 1 = DKK 10.1993

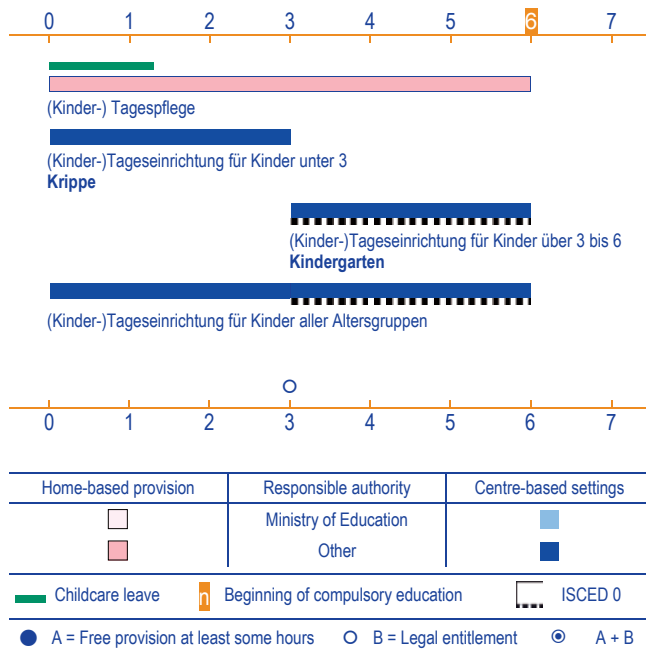
No current reforms



## Germany

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Germany 'younger children' refers to *Krippen* and groups for under-3s in *Tageseinrichtung für Kinder aller Altersgruppen*. 'Older children' refers to *Kindergarten* and groups for children over 3 in *Tageseinrichtung für Kinder aller Altersgruppen*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
(Kinder-)Tagespflege	0.9	5.6	5.2	1.5	0.9	0.7
(Kinder-)Tageseinrichtung	1.6	20.2	42.0	86.4	95.6	96.6

Source: Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	89.9	95.6	96.7	35.4	0.9
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.4	62.5	98.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The ECEC system is highly decentralised and comprises several different types of setting. Childcare centres (*Tageseinrichtung*) provide for either younger or older children separately (in *Krippen* and *Kindergarten*, respectively) or operate as one setting for the entire ECEC phase. In addition to centre-based ECEC provision, there is also a system of regulated and publicly subsidised home-based care (*Tagespflege*), which mainly caters for the youngest children (between 0 and 3), but may also deliver part-time provision for older children. Prior to the beginning of primary education, some *Länder* provide pre-school education (*Vorschuleinrichtung*). However, this provision only covers a very small proportion of children and is therefore not represented in the diagram. At the federal/national level, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible for ECEC in both home-based and centre-based provision. At *Länder* level, it can be either the ministry of family affairs or the ministry of education.

Until 2013, parents were legally entitled to a publicly subsidised childcare place when their child reached age 3. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

On average, fees in 2009 amounted to PPS 187; with a minimum of PPS 23 and a maximum of PPS 817 (Rauschenbach, 2012).

Some *Länder* have abolished fees payable by parents, either for the last year in ECEC before school entry (Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia), for the last three years in kindergarten (Berlin), or from age 2 years (Rhineland-Palatinate).

PPS 1 = EUR 1.04077

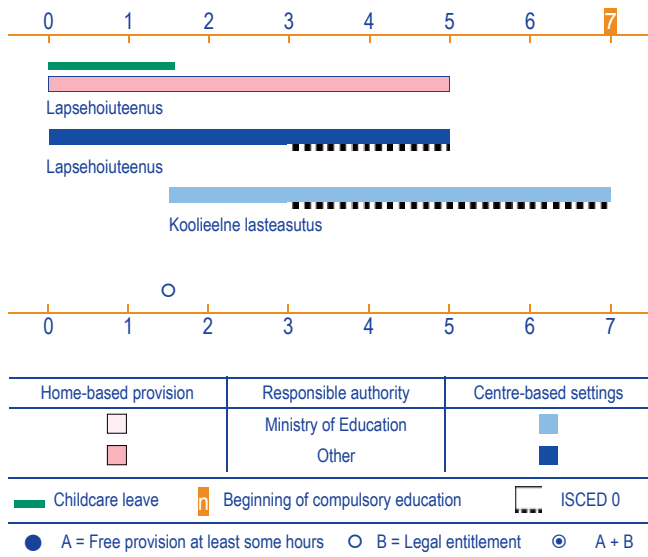
## Current reforms

From August 2013, the starting age for the legal entitlement to subsidised ECEC has been lowered to 1 year.

## Estonia

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Estonia, the 'younger children' referred to are in *lapsehoiuteenus* and *koolieelne lasteasutus*, and the 'older children' are in *koolieelne lasteasutus*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Koolieelne lasteasutus	87.0	93.0	94.0	100*
Lapsehoiuteenus	5.0	3.0	(-)	(-)

\* Including ISCED 1.

Source: EHIS, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	84.6	89.1	89.4	75.3	1.9
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	13.5	94.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend unitary child-care institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*) catering for children from age 1½ to 7 years. These fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. In addition, there is also a system of childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*) catering mainly for the youngest children which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs. These services can be either centre- or home-based. According to the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act, all children aged between 18 months and 7 years are legally entitled to an ECEC place. However, local authorities are not always able to ensure that provision meets demand. Primary education starts at age 7.

## Fees

Fees in all ECEC settings are regulated and range from PPS 21 to 88, with an average PPS 50 monthly (food included). The maximum fees cannot exceed 20 % of the minimum salary.

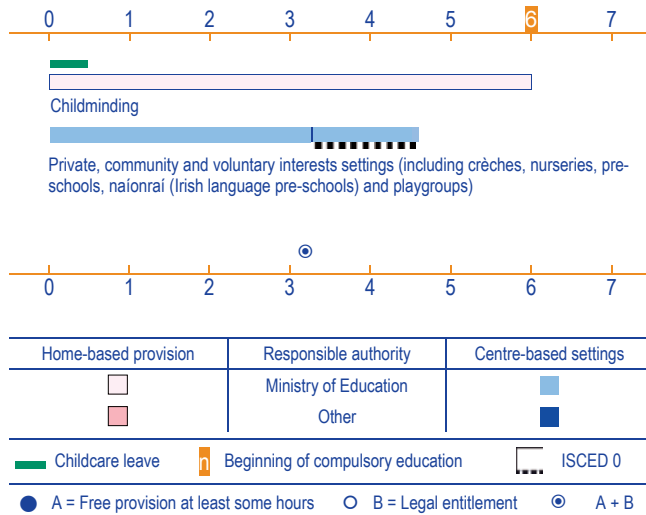
PPS 1 = EEK 0.725388

## No current reforms

## Ireland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Ireland, the 'younger children' referred to are in the diverse range of private, community and voluntary provisions. 'Older children' are in the free pre-school year (ISCED 0).

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	46.6	55.1	0.0	(-)	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	38.8	98.3	100	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The education and care of children up to age 4 falls under the responsibility of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and is mainly delivered by a diverse range of private, community or voluntary organisations in settings known as *crèches*, *nurseries*, *pre-schools*, *naíonraí* (Irish language pre-schools), *playgroups* and *day-care services*. However, there is also a system of regulated home-based care, called *childminding*.

All children aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months are entitled to a free pre-school year that can be delivered in centre- or home-based settings. From age 4, children may be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools, which are formally regarded as primary education (ISCED 1). While primary education starts at age 4, schooling only becomes compulsory when children reach age 6.

## Fees

ECEC for infants under 1 year old costs on average PPS 702 monthly, for older children it is PPS 674 (additional charges for food may be made in some settings).

All children aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months are entitled to a free pre-school year that can be delivered in centre- or home-based settings. Parents are expected to contribute to meals and any additional hours of provision.

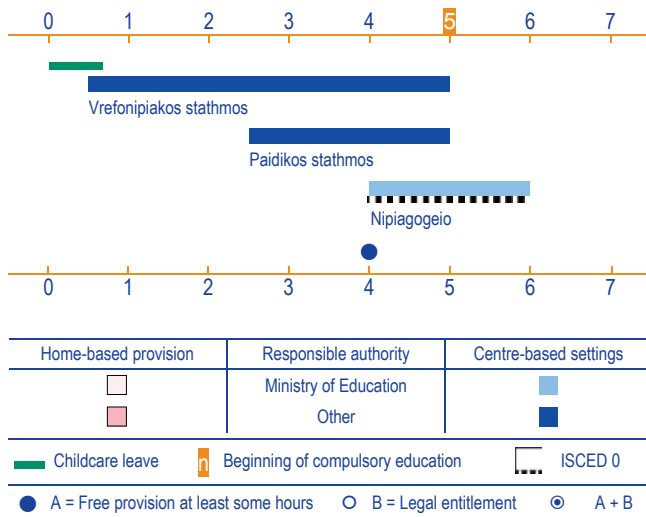
PPS 1 = EUR 1.07819

## No current reforms

## Greece

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Greece, the 'younger children' referred to are in *vrefonipiakos stathmos*. References to 'older children' include those in all three types of settings.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	:	54.3	95.6	1.6	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	97.2	99.2

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

From 6 months to 5 years, children can attend infant centres (*vrefonipiakos stathmos*). Between the ages of 2½ and 5, parents can opt for a place in a child centre (*paidikos stathmos*). Both types of centres must set up their rules of operation in compliance with the regulations specified in the ministerial decision currently in force. These rules of operation must then be approved by the relevant municipal council. From age 4, children can attend a pre-primary school (*nipiagogeio*), which is compulsory for those aged between 5 and 6. This type of provision falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Fees in public *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* range between PPS 56 and 134 per month (estimates from the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government), food included. In private sector, fees range between PPS 233 and PPS 746 monthly.

Pre-primary classes for 4 to 6 year-olds in *nipiagogeio* are free.

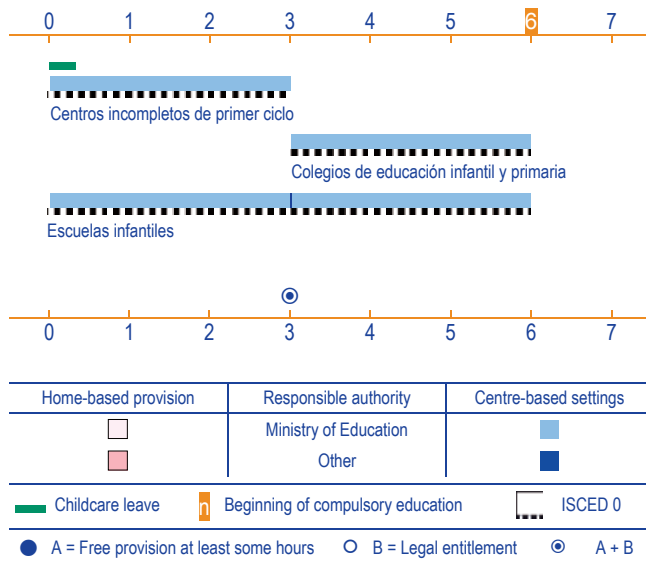
PPS 1 = EUR 0.893907

## No current reforms

## Spain

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Spain, 'younger children' refers to those in the first cycle (0-3) in *centros incompletos de primer ciclo* and *escuelas infantil*. 'Older children' refers to those in the second cycle (3-6) in *colegios de educación infantil y primaria* and *escuelas infantiles*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2010/11	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Escuelas Infantiles						
Centros incompletos de primer ciclo	8.6	29.0	48.1	(-)	(-)	(-)
Colegios de Educación Infantil y Primaria	(-)	(-)	(-)	96.6	100.0	99.9

Source: MECD, 2013

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	96.6	100.0	99.3	1.0	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.5	98.2	98.3

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Pre-primary education is divided into two cycles (0-3 and 3-6 years), which can be provided either in separate settings (*centros incompletos de primer ciclo* and *colegios de educación infantil y primaria*, respectively) or in combined settings for both cycles (*escuelas infantiles*). The two cycles mainly differ in terms of the qualifications required for teachers, the curriculum and the guarantee of free places for children. The general principles and goals of pre-primary education policy are established at the central level for the whole stage 0-6 years. However, while for the second cycle (3-6 years) there is a national core curriculum as well as regulations on the organisation and functioning of schools, the first cycle (0-3 years) falls under the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free pre-primary education. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

For the under-3s, fees are regulated in public settings which are attended by 52 % of children. The maximum fees are capped at PPS 349 (food not included). ECEC for children over 3 is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

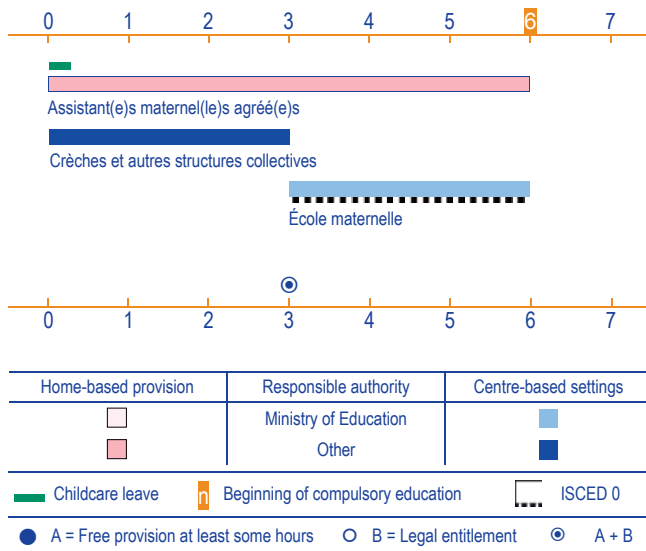
PPS 1 = EUR 0.916021

## No current reforms

## France

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to France, 'younger children' refers to those in *crèches* and other *structures collectives*. 'Older children' refers to those in the *école maternelle*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 3
Assistant(e)s maternel(le)s agréé(e)s	28.2
Crèches et autres structures collectives	15.1
Écoles maternelles *	4.6
Total	49.9

\* Exceptional admission of 2-years-old in disadvantaged areas and according to socioeconomic criteria.

Source: CNAF, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	99.6	100.0	99.1	1.3	0.3
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	1.0	99.0	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The ECEC system includes various types of provision, especially for the youngest children. Provision for the under-3s consists of centre-based *crèches* and other *structures collectives* (group settings) (e.g. *jardins d'éveil*, *classes passerelles*, etc.), which are complemented by regulated home-based provision provided by *assistant(e)s maternel(le)s agréé(e)s*. ECEC policies and subsidies aim to provide choice and flexibility for parents to use more than one type of provision at the same time. The statistics provided show only the main forms of provision. Home-based ECEC is often used to complement centre-based ECEC.

From age 3, all children are enrolled in pre-primary schools (*écoles maternelles*) which are coordinated by the Ministry of Education. Most children attend free public schools in their catchment area, while less than a third enrol in fee-paying (although subsidised) private schools.

Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Fees in home-based care under *assistant(e)s maternel(le)s agréé(e)s*, which are attended by a majority of children under 3 years old, range between PPS 221 and 531 with an average of PPS 358 monthly (food included). The fees in centre-based *crèches* are PPS 89-336.

ECEC for children over 3 years in the *école maternelle* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision in the *halte-garderie*.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.12957

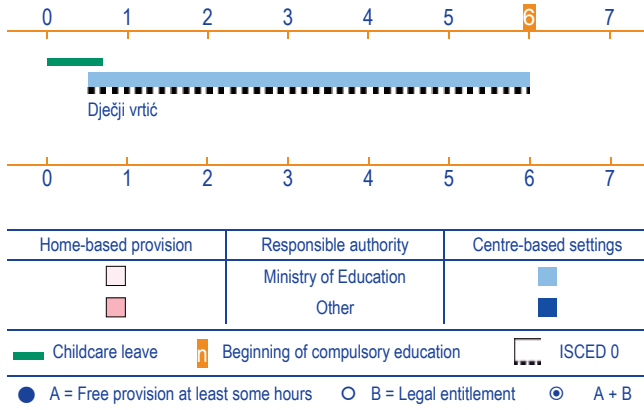
## Current reforms

As of 2013/14, children from the age of 2 may be enrolled in pre-primary schools (*écoles maternelles*). This measure is being implemented progressively with priority given to children from socially disadvantaged areas. The educational staff-pupil ratio for 2 year-old children is lower than for older children.

## Croatia

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Croatia, both 'younger' and 'older' children refer to those in *dječji vrtić*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Total	0.5	19.0	29.0	52.0	59.0	62.0	73.0

Source: CROSTAT, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	51.8	57.4	62.0	72.1	1.2
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	20.8	97.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

There is a unitary system of ECEC providing education and care for children from 6 months to 6 (7) years. ECEC is delivered in centre-based settings known as *dječji vrtić*, which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. In addition to the *dječji vrtić* represented in the diagram, children can also participate in playgroups (*igraonica*), which are hosted by various organisations whose primary activity is not ECEC (e.g. libraries, hospitals, sports clubs, cultural institutions or welfare organisations). These settings must be accredited by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and their provision focuses on various short-duration programmes. The system of regulated home-based provision is currently being phased in. Officially, primary education starts at age 6, but many children stay in ECEC till they reach 7.

## Fees

Fees are determined by each local authority so they vary significantly. However, at national level, the approximate upper limit of the monthly fee in public kindergartens is PPS 120 (food included).

PPS 1 = HRK 4.96925

## Current reforms

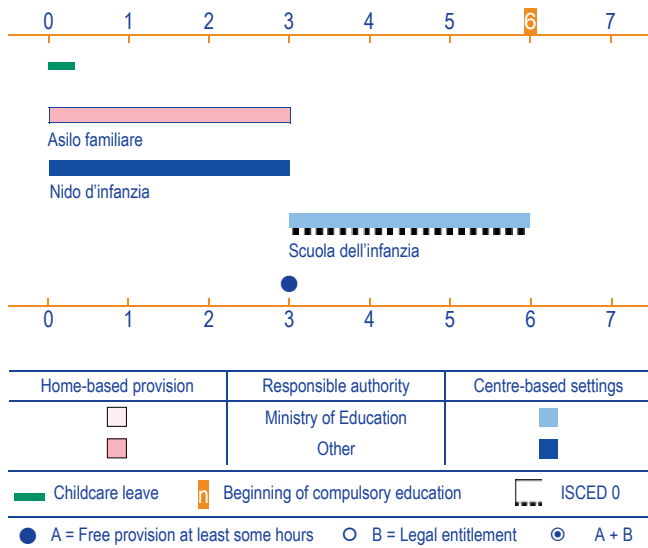
From 2014/15, all children will be obliged to participate in the pre-school programmes for one year prior to starting school.

In April 2013, legislation regulating home-based provision was passed.

## Italy

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Italy, 'younger children' refers to those in *nido d'infanzia* and 'older children' to those in *scuola dell'infanzia*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	92.3	96.2	88.8	2.3	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	8.5	96.9	98.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The system of early childhood education and care includes settings for children between 0 and 3 years known as *nido d'infanzia* and settings for children between 3 and 6 years (*scuola dell'infanzia*). The latter settings fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, while the provision for young children is highly decentralised and managed at local level by Communes according to their own regulations. Alongside centre-based provision, home-based provision (*asilo familiare*) is becoming more and more common. However, it is not regulated centrally and is not available across the whole country. In addition to the settings represented in the diagram, there are also other types of provision for young children, including 'spring sections (*sezioni primavera*)' aimed at children aged from 2 to 3 years. This new service has been introduced to meet the demand of families. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Parents pay fees for ECEC for the under-3s, but no data is available on the level of these fees. ECEC for over-3s is free in public settings, but no data is available for private settings.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.02349

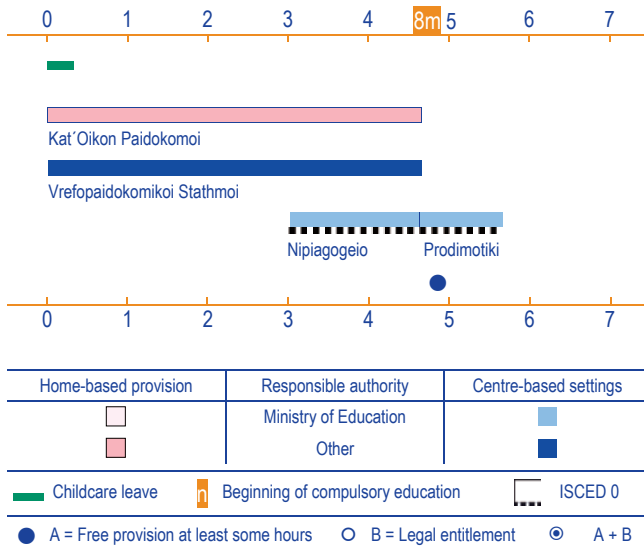
## No current reforms



## Cyprus

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Cyprus, the 'younger children' referred to are those in *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi* and the 'older children' are in *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi* and *nipiagogeio* (including *prodimitiki*).

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	43.7	73.3	96.3	2.8	0.2
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	1.0	96.4	98.3

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Children aged between 0 and 4 years 8 months may attend day nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*) or home-based care (*kat'Oikon Paidokomoi*). These operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. From age 3, children may also attend kindergartens (*nipiagogia*), which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This means that children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 8 months may attend either a kindergarten or a day care centre. Pre-primary classes (*prodimitiki*), which take place in *nipiagogia*, are compulsory and free for children aged between 4 years and 8 months and 5 years and 8 months. Primary education starts at age 5 years and 8 months.

## Fees

Monthly fees in private (self-financing) *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 81 % of children are enrolled, range between PPS 170 and 397. In publicly subsidised private *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 17.2 % of children are enrolled, fees range between PPS 68 and 193. In public *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 1.9 % of children are enrolled, fees range between PPS 108 and 227.

The average monthly fees in public *nipiagogeio*, where 51 % of children are enrolled, are PPS 48. In private publicly subsidised *nipiagogeio*, where 24 % of children are enrolled, the average fees are PPS 91, and in private (self-financing) *nipiagogeio* (attended by 25 % of children), the fees are PPS 295.

Pre-primary classes (*prodimitiki*) are free in public and publicly subsidised private settings. Only 1 % of children attend private (self-financing) pre-primary classes (*prodimitiki*), where the average monthly fees amount to PPS 295.

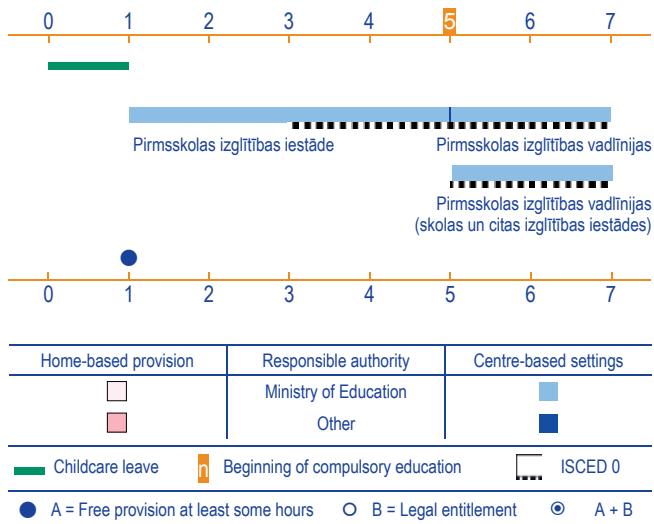
PPS 1 = EUR 0.882524

## No current reforms

## Latvia

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Latvia, the 'younger children' referred to are in *pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes* and the 'older children' are in *pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes* and *pirmsskolas izglītības vadlīnijas*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011/12	Under 1	1 year- olds	2 year- olds	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds	6 year- olds
Pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde	0.1	10.9	49.7	79.5	87.1	95.7	92.4

Source: Latvijas statistika, 2011/2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds	6 year- olds	7 year- olds
ISCED 0	77.6	85.9	95.5	91.7	7.0
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	5.5	90.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Children from age 1 to 7 can attend unitary pre-school education settings (*pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes*), which follow the curriculum developed by the Ministry for Education and Science. Education is compulsory from age 5, although primary education (ISCED 1) only starts when children reach age 7. From the age when education becomes compulsory, children have to follow a specific programme (*pirmsskolas izglītības vadlīnijas*), which is delivered in pre-school education institutions and in other educational institutions, including schools and other types of education centres (*skolas un citas izglītības iestādes*).

## Fees

Fees are not charged in public ECEC settings, however parents have to pay for children's meals (provided three times per day, which cost ca. PPS 2 per day). Some charges may be made for additional services, for instance, foreign language teaching for children. Children from low income families may receive free meals (depending on the local authority).

Monthly fees in publicly subsidised private ECEC, where 4.3 % of children are enrolled, range between PPS 104 and 624 (on average PPS 374). In some municipalities, parents who are forced to enrol their child in private ECEC due to the lack of availability of public ECEC can obtain co-financing, which varies between PPS 104 and 270.

PPS 1 = LVL 0.480921

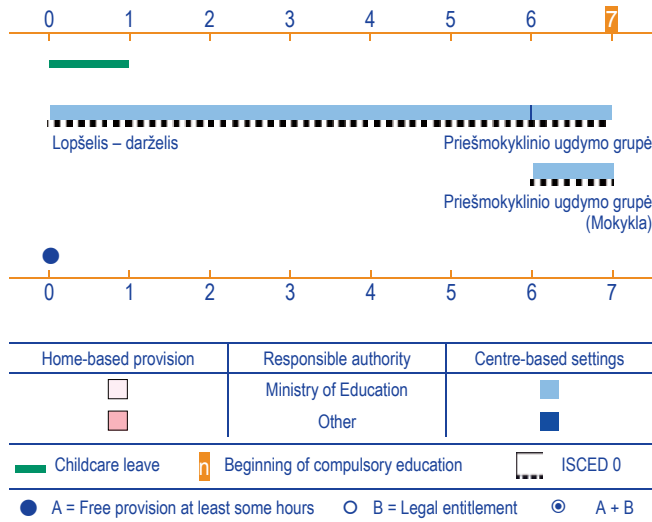
## Current reforms

Since September 2013, home-based ECEC has been available. Childminders (*aukles*) may receive state support providing they have no criminal record and have undertaken 40 hours of specialised training.

## Lithuania

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Lithuania, the 'younger children' referred to are in *lopšelis-darželis* and the 'older children' are in both types of setting.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference Year 2011/2012	Under 1	1 year- olds	2 year- olds	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds	6 year- olds
Lopšelis – darželis	0.1	5.4	43.0	58.9	60.7	60.4	56.0
Darželis	(-)	0.1	1.2	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.1
Mokykla	:	0.5	4.2	8.3	9.8	12.2	36.3
Total	0.1	6.0	48.4	71.4	74.9	77.1	96.4

Source: Lietuvos statistikos departamentas, 2011/2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds	6 year- olds	7 year- olds
ISCED 0	69.8	73.2	77.3	95.7	2.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	6.5	99.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend unitary pre-primary settings (*lopšelis-darželis*) until the beginning of compulsory primary education at age 7. These settings fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. During the year that precedes the beginning of compulsory education, virtually all children participate in pre-primary groups (*priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupės*), which take place either in pre-primary settings or in primary schools (*mokykla*). In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also separate settings for older children (*darželis*), but the participation in these settings is rather low compared to unitary settings. In addition, in areas with low numbers of children, the entire phase of ECEC can be provided in general schools or in multi-functional centres.

## Fees

There are no monthly fees in the public settings that enrol the majority of children (98.7 %); parents pay only for meals (monthly PPS 94 for three meals a day for under-3s, and PPS 103 for children over 3). In some municipalities, a small additional fee for education materials is collected.

Monthly fees in publicly subsidised private ECEC can reach PPS 843.

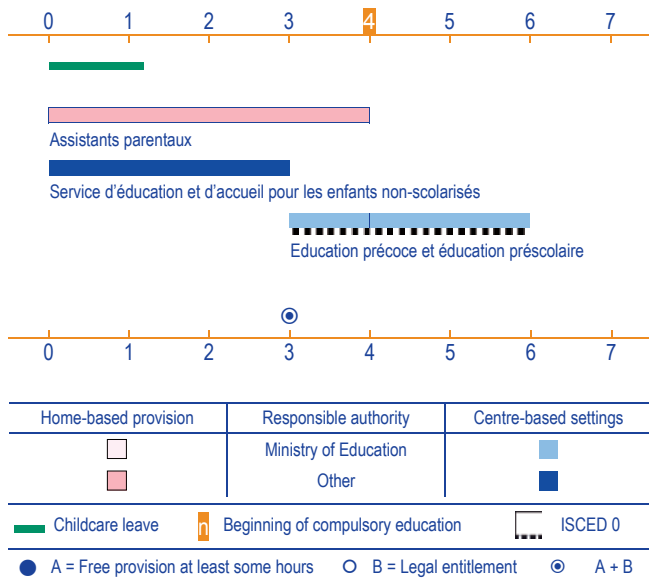
PPS 1 = LTL 2.13334

## No current reforms

## Luxembourg

Reference year 2012/13

### Diagram



In this report, with respect to Luxembourg, 'younger children' refers to those in the *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*. 'Older children' refers to those in *éducation précoce* and *éducation préscolaire*.

### Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	72.0	94.6	91.4	4.0	0.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	5.3	89.2	97.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children may attend centre-based provision known as *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*, which is delivered in *crèches* or *foyer de jour*. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based care delivered by child-minders (*assistants parentaux*). Between the ages of 3 and 4, children are legally entitled to free ECEC provision (*éducation précoce*) and from age 4, pre-primary education (*éducation préscolaire*) becomes compulsory. Both *éducation précoce* and *éducation préscolaire* fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and are delivered in school settings. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, parents of older children (aged 3 and above) can also benefit from part-time after-school ECEC services (*service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants scolarisés*) complementing the provision to which children are entitled. Primary education starts at age 6.

### Fees

Monthly fees for home based *assistants parentaux* can reach up to PPS 580 (food not included). There is no public or publicly subsidised home-based provision, but parents using ECEC receive subsidies via vouchers.

Monthly fees for private (self-financing) *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*, which enrolls 62 % of children, range between PPS 319 and 1244. In public and publicly subsidised services the fees range between PPS 41 and 966.

ECEC in *éducation précoce* is free from age 3, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

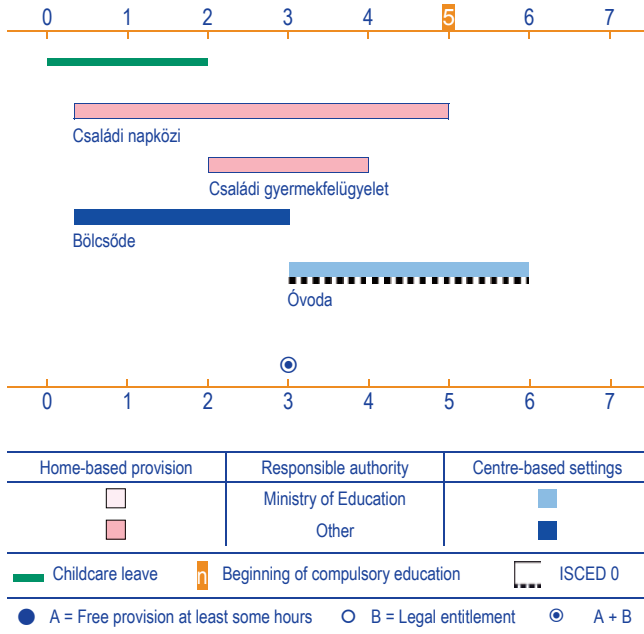
PPS 1 = EUR 1.20592

### No current reforms

## Hungary

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Hungary, 'younger children' refers to those in *bölcsőde* and 'older children' to those in *óvoda*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/13	under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
Családi napközi*	0.03	0.8	2.9	1.5		0.4		(-)
Bölcsőde*	0.1	3.7	23.2	13.3		(-)	(-)	(-)
Óvoda**	(-)	(-)	8.4	75.3	93.1	96.2	68.8	3.1

Note: In addition, 0.6 per cent of the entire population of 2-year-olds is in *egységes óvoda és bölcsőde*. There are no data on *családi gyermekfelügyelet*.

Sources: \* KSH, 2013; \*\* Köznevelés- statisztikai adatgyűjtés 2012/13.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	74.1	92.9	96.2	71.5	3.7
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	21.9	93.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Centre-based provision includes nurseries aimed at children from 20 weeks to 3 years (*bölcsődék*) and kindergartens for children between 3 and 6 years (*óvodák*). *Bölcsőde* falls under the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Social Affairs, while *óvoda* is regarded as a part of the educational sector and falls under the State Secretariat for Education (both secretariats are a part of the Ministry of Human Resources). In addition, there are also two systems of home-based care (*családi gyermekfelügyelet* and *családi napközi*), which mainly differ in terms of age groups covered and staff-child ratios. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free ECEC provision. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, unitary settings (*egységes óvoda és bölcsőde*) operate in low-populated areas (however they do not accept children younger than 2 years). Education is compulsory from age 5, i.e. one year prior to primary education, which starts at age 6.

## Fees

Monthly fees are regulated, in *bölcsőde* fees and meals cannot exceed 25 % of net family income per person. In home-based ECEC, the limit is drawn at 50 % of net family income per person. Some municipalities offer free ECEC from 4 months and charge only for meals.

There are no fees in public *óvoda*, although parents pay for children's meals. Monthly fees in publicly subsidised private settings (attended by 2.7 % of children) are approximately PPS 413 (food not included).

PPS 1 = HUF 169.345

## Current reforms

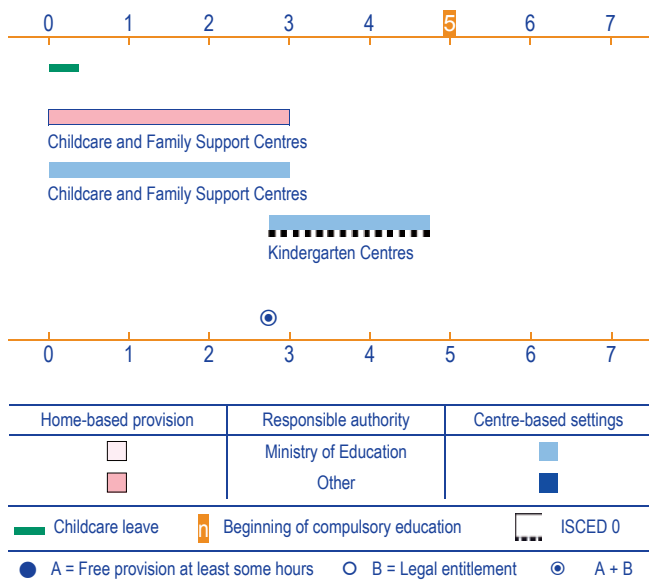
According to the 2011 Act on National Public Education, from 1 September 2015 kindergarten attendance will be compulsory from age 3.

From 1 January 2013, an assistant pedagogue will be provided for every three groups of children and one psychologist to every 500 children.

**Malta**

Reference year 2012/13

**Diagram**



In this report, with respect to Malta, 'younger children' refers to those in *childcare and family support centres* and 'older children' to those in *kindergarten centres*.

**Participation rates**

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds
Childcare and Family Support Centres	0.99	10.6	25.7	(-)	(-)

Source: DSWS, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2012/13	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds
Kindergarten Centres	(-)	(-)	(-)	98.0	100.0

Source: Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012/2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	45.5	100.0	72.0	0.8	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	29.1	99.5	96.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

**Current reforms**

From 2015/16, the required level of qualification for staff working in *kindergarten centres* will be raised to Bachelor's degree level with four years of study or two-years of study for holders of the MCAST-BTEC Higher National Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years. From April 2014, children with parents in ⇒

**Organisation**

Early childhood education and care is mainly delivered in *kindergarten centres* aimed at children from 2 years and 9 months to 4 years and 9 months. These centres fall under the responsibility of the Ministry for Education and Employment. Parents are legally entitled to this type of provision, which is free in state and church establishments.

Younger children (up to age 3) can attend *childcare and family support centres*, which are a more recent addition to the education services and can be home-based or centre-based. Alongside the settings represented in the diagram, parents can also use after-school care services for children aged between 3 and 16 years. Parents are charged for these services.

Children are enrolled in primary education during the year they reach their fifth birthday, so some children may only be 4 years 9 months old when they begin compulsory education.

**Fees**

The average monthly fees are approximately PPS 365. Fees for the under-3s attending publicly non-subsidised settings (catering for 66 % of children) vary from PPS 2 to 7 per hour (depending on the number of hours the child attends per week or month). This may reach a maximum of PPS 631 monthly, based on a 40-hour week. State-run settings (attended by 27 % of children) are free for low-income parents, but may charge up to PPS 203 monthly. In the three centres which are publicly subsidised, the monthly rates range from PPS 108 to 379.

Public *kindergarten centres* (attended by 70 % of children) are free of charge and even offer one glass of milk per child daily and one free portion of fruit or vegetables per week.

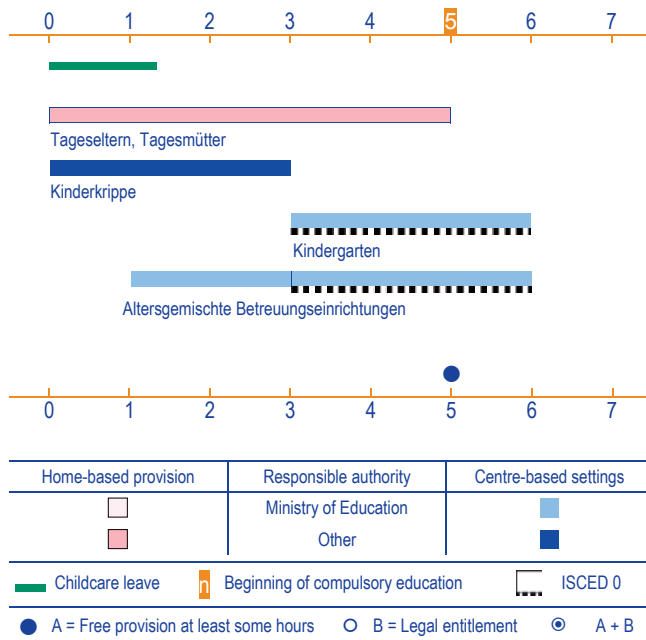
PPS 1 = EUR 0.738884

⇒ education or employment are able to attend free ECEC (up to full-time). The government will pay the childcare centre PPS 4.06 per hour per child.

## Austria

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Austria, 'younger children' refers to those in *Kinderkrippe* and groups for under-3s in *Altersgemischte Betreuungseinrichtungen*. 'Older children' refers to those in *Kindergarten*, but also to groups for children over 3 in *Altersgemischte Betreuungseinrichtungen*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011/2012	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Total	1.3	14.9	43.1	80.2	94.2	96.3
Kinderkrippe	0.9	11.1	16.5	1.1	0.2	0.2
Kindergarten	(-)	0.3	17.5	68.9	86.0	88.1
Altersgemischte Einrichtungen	0.3	3.4	9.1	10.3	8.0	8.0

Source: Statistik Austria, 2011/2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	60.4	91.5	97.2	38.4	1.5
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	58.2	96.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Up to the age of 3, early childhood care is provided in centre-based settings *Kinderkrippen*. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based care, which is ensured by day care parents/mothers (*Tageseltern/Tagesmütter*). From age 3 (and sometimes even slightly earlier), children may attend *Kindergarten*. Between the ages 5 and 6, i.e. one year prior to the beginning of primary education (ISCED 1), attendance at *Kindergarten* is compulsory and free of charge. In addition to these main structures, approximately 13 % of children attend mixed-age groups (*Altersgemischte Betreuungseinrichtungen*) for children from 1 to 6 years, which are mostly provided in *Kindertagesstätten*.

The central authorities involved in ECEC provision include the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, which are responsible for designing and co-financing ECEC policies. The system is, however, highly decentralised. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

Monthly fees in *Kinderkrippen* vary greatly, from PPS 135 to PPS 306 (food included). Monthly fees for home-based care vary between PPS 321 and 362 (food included).

*Kindergarten* fees tend to be lower and half-day ECEC provision is free for 5 year-olds. Some *Länder* offer free ECEC for broader age groups.

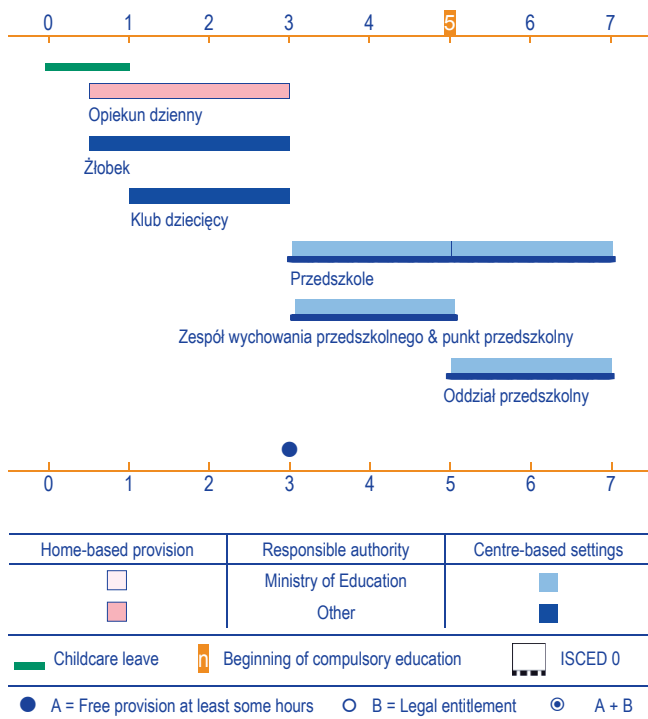
PPS 1 = EUR 1.09542

## No current reforms

## Poland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Poland, 'younger children' refers to those in *żłobek* & *klub dziecięcy* and 'older children' to those in *przedszkole*, *zespoły wychowania przedszkolnego* & *punkty przedszkolne* and *oddział przedszkolny*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	Under 3
Niania i opiekun dzienny	0.01
Żłobek & klub dziecięcy	4.5

Source: MPiPS, 2012.

(%) Reference year 2012	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Przedszkole	5.5	47.7	59.0	64.2	42.9
Oddział przedszkolny	0.2	2.1	4.3	26.5	34.6
Zespół wychowania przedszkolnego & punkt przedszkolny	0.5	2.5	3.1	1.3	0.1

Source: SIO, 2012/2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	47.6	62.2	79.3	85.5	2.2
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	9.3	94.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Early childhood education and care in Poland is divided into two stages. ECEC for children under 3 is supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, while pre-school education for children over 3 years old falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Children aged under 3 years may attend *żłobki* and *kluby dziecięce*. There are no differences in regulations between the two forms, except that *żłobki* are available for 10 hours daily for children aged 6 months to 3 years, while *kluby dziecięce* are available only for 5 hours daily and do not accept children younger than 1 year. The accumulated length of leave related to childcare was extended to one year from June 2013.

Children aged 3-6 years may be enrolled in *przedszkole*, and those aged 5-6 years in pre-school classes (*oddział przedszkolny*) in primary schools. In order to tackle the shortage of ECEC places, part-time provision (minimum 3 hours daily, 12 hours a week) for 3-5 year olds may also be offered in settings called *zespoły wychowania przedszkolnego* and *punkty przedszkolne*. One year of pre-primary education is compulsory for 5 year-olds. Legislation provides for home-based provision but currently few *opiekunowie dzienni* are registered.

## Fees

Monthly fees (food included) in public *żłobek* are PPS 92, and PPS 205 in publicly subsidised private *żłobek*. *Przedszkole* is free of charge for 5 hours a day, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision. As of September 2013 parents are charged for the additional hours at a maximum of PPS 0.41 per hour.

PPS 1 = PLN 2.46209

## Current reforms

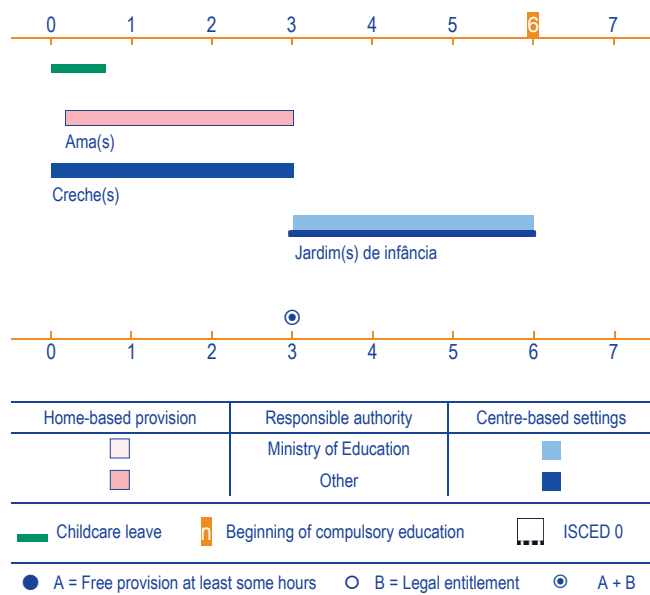
Over the period 2009-2014, the age of entry into primary education is being gradually lowered from 7 to 6 years. In 2015, all 6-year-olds will be obliged to start primary education. As from 2015, all 4 year-olds will be legally entitled to pre-primary education, and from 2017 – all 3 year olds.



# Portugal

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Portugal, 'younger children' refers to those in *Creches* and 'older children' to those in *Jardim de infância*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2010/2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Ama(s) *	1.0	2.2	2.0	0.1	(-)	(-)
Creche(s) *	16.7	31.3	42.0	3.4	(-)	(-)
Jardim(s)-de-infância **	(-)	(-)	(-)	75.4	87.6	93.2
Total	17.6	33.5	44.0	79.0	87.6	93.2

Sources: \* Ministério da Solidariedade, Emprego e Segurança Social, 2011; \*\* DGEEC – MEC, 2010/2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	79.4	92.6	97.5	5.2	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.6	100	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Up to the age of 3, early childhood care is provided in centre-based settings known as *creches*. There is also a system of regulated home-based provision, aimed at children from 3 months to 3 years, which is ensured by nannies (*amas*) who either work independently or as a part of formal groups known as 'family creches'. Home-based and centre-based care for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in a *jardim de infância*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there is also a travelling pre-school education system (*educação pré-escolar itinerante*), aimed at children between 3 and 5 years living in rural areas. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

No information is available on fees for *amas* and *crèches*. No fees are charged for 5 hours daily in *jardim de infância*, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

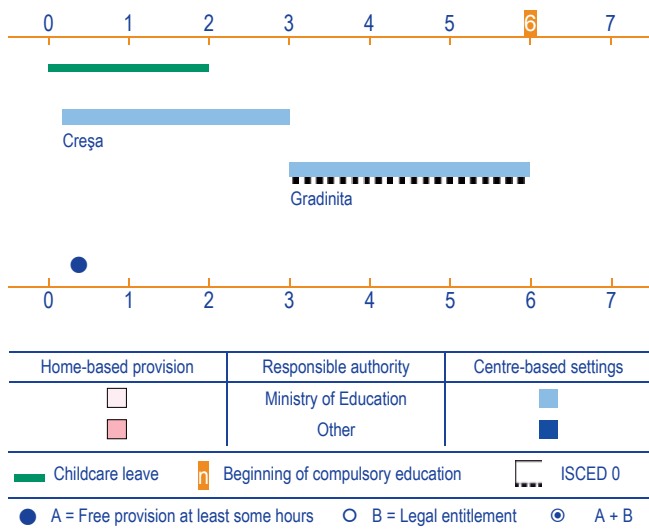
PPS 1 = EUR 0.814422

## No current reforms

## Romania

Reference year 2012/13

### Diagram



In this report, with respect to Romania, 'younger children' refers to those in *creşa* and 'older children' to those in *gradinita*.

### Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	66.7	78.4	85.7	77.3	5.8
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	18.7	89.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children are provided early childhood care in centre-based settings known as *creşa*. From age 3 years (sometimes even from age 2) up to 6 years, children may attend a centre-based *gradinita*. The Ministry of National Education is entirely responsible for the ECEC of children over 3 years of age in *gradinita*. However, it shares responsibility with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly for children under 3 years.

Primary education starts at age 6. However, prior to entry into force of the Law of National Education 1/2011, parents could choose where to enrol their children: at the age of 6, a child could be either in kindergarten or at school, in grade 1.

### Fees

No fees are charged in public ECEC institutions; however parents have to pay for children's meals, which cost max PPS 60 in *creşa* and between PPS 82 and 127 in *gradinita*. Children from low income families may receive free meals.

Parents of the 2.5 % of children that attend private (self-financing) *gradinita* pay between PPS 127 and 1137.

PPS 1 = RON 2.19865

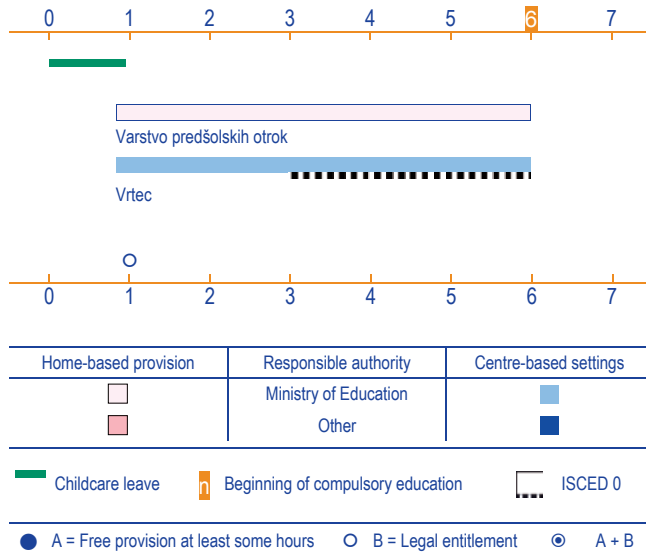
### Current reforms

From 2014 September, children aged 5 to 6 will have a legal right to a place in a *gradinita*.

## Slovenia

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Slovenia, references to both 'younger' and 'older' children relate to those in *vrtec*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/13	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Varstvo predšolskih otrok *	0.7	0.5	0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Vrtec **	42.1	69.2	83.6	93.6	92.9

Sources: \* MIZS; \*\* Statistični urad RS, 2012/2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	82.8	88.9	90.7	6.3	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	93.2	97.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

There is a unitary ECEC system providing education and care to children from 11 months to age 6 (when children must enter compulsory primary education). ECEC is delivered in centre-based settings known as *vrta*, which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based provision (*varstvo predšolskih otrok*), which is aimed at the same age-range of children. However, the latter system only involves a very small proportion of children. From age 11 months, children are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised ECEC place. However, local authorities are not always able to satisfy the demand for places for younger children.

## Fees

The average monthly fees for home-based provision (*varstvo predšolskih otrok*) which is solely undertaken by private providers are PPS 364 (food included). The average monthly fees for *vrtec* are PPS 168, but can reach PPS 505 for under-3s and up to PPS 446 for older children. 3 % of children attend kindergarten for free.

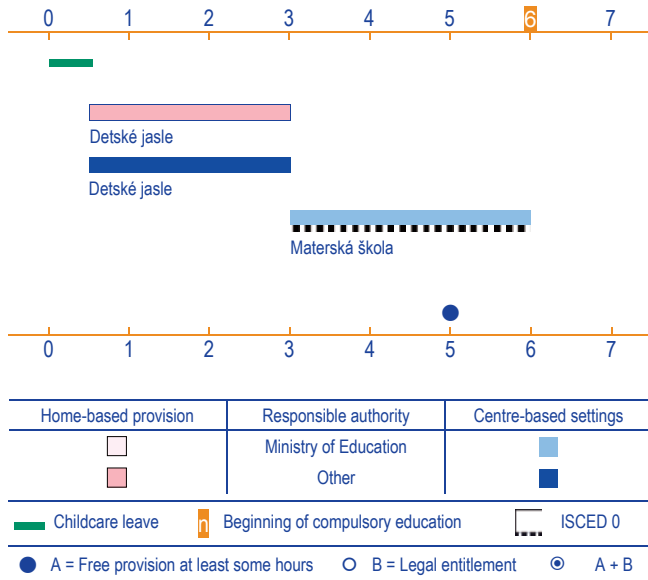
PPS 1 = EUR 0.823417

## No current reforms

## Slovakia

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Slovakia, 'younger children' refers to those in *detské jasle* and 'older children' to those in *materská škola*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011/2012	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Materská škola	(-)	10.3	62.2	72.3	80.5	35.9

Source: UIPS, 2011/2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	60.1	72.3	81.5	39.9	2.9
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	50.2	92.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children may attend centre- or home-based *detské jasle*. Between 3 and 6 years (and sometimes even slightly earlier), children attend centre-based *materské školy*, which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also settings known as mother-/child-centres (*materské/detské centrá*) intended for the youngest children (up to age 3) together with their parents. These are usually run by parents' associations and are not publicly subsidised. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

No information is available on fees for *detské jasle*. The average monthly fee in the public *materská škola* in which 96 % of children are enrolled is PPS 22-29 (food not included). The last year of ECEC is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals.

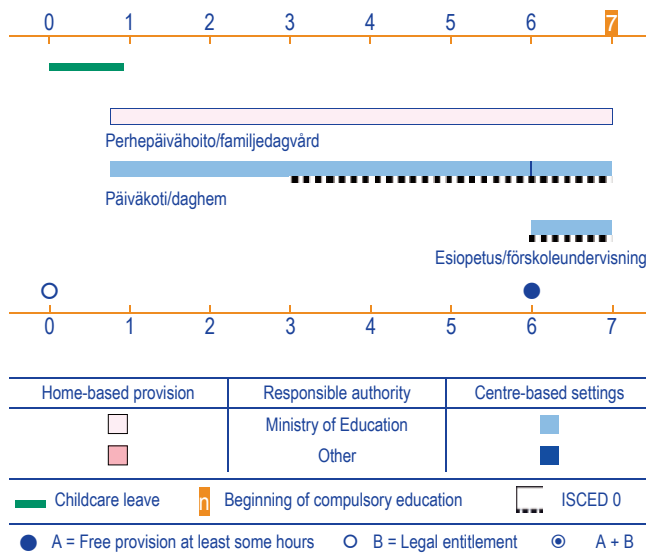
PPS 1 = EUR 0.688163

## No current reforms

## Finland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Finland, the 'younger children' referred to are in *päiväkoti/daghem*. 'Older children' are in *päiväkoti/daghem* and *esiopetus/förskoleundervisning*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Päiväkoti/daghem	0.4	17.8	34.9	50.8	59.2	66.5	66.5
Perhepäivähoito/familjedagvård	0.5	12.0	16.7	17.0	14.3	11.0	3.2
Esiopetus/förskoleundervisning	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	98.4
Total	1.0	29.7	51.6	67.7	73.5	77.7	98.4

Source: THL, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	48.7	57.4	66.7	97.8	1.6
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	0.4	96.2

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Current reforms

The drafting of legislation, steering and the administration of early childhood education and day care services was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture from 1 January 2013.

A comprehensive legislative reform is under way in the ECEC sector. In December 2012, the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed a working group to prepare a proposal for a new law on early childhood education and care.

The Government outlined in its Programme in June ⇒

## Organisation

Children are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised ECEC place from the end of the parental leave period. The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*), aimed at the 0-7 age group which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. A relatively significant proportion of children attend regulated home-based provision (*perhepäivähoito/ familjedagvård*). During the year that precedes the beginning of compulsory education, virtually all children participate in pre-primary education, which is organised either in day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*) or in schools providing basic education (*perusopetus/grundläggande utbildning*).

In addition to the ECEC provision represented in the diagram, many local authorities also offer ECEC services open to all in playgrounds and in 'open day-care centres'. The church and non-governmental organisations also provide early childhood education and care open to all. Basic education (ISCED 1) starts in the August of the year in which the child turns 7.

## Fees

The same regulations apply for home- and centre-based ECEC. Maximum monthly fees including meals are capped at PPS 216 and are paid by parents for 27 % of children. 16 % of children do not pay fees (THL, 2011). The half-day provision of pre-primary education – *esiopetus/förskoleundervisning* – during the last year of ECEC is free of charge. The majority of children in pre-primary education also attend paid day care afterwards. A free meal is provided on every day of pre-primary education.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.22499

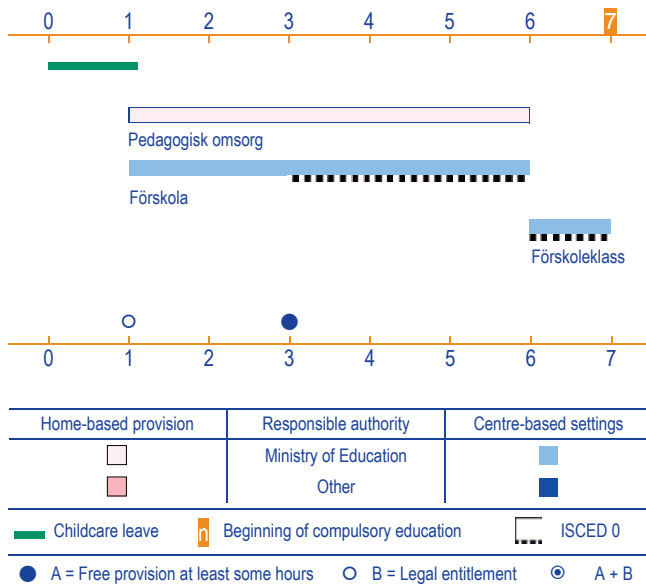
⇒ 2011 that the possibility of making pre-primary education compulsory will be explored. In November 2013, the Government decision on the implementation of a structural policy programme included the introduction of compulsory pre-primary education.

The national core curriculum for pre-primary education is currently being renewed in the context of a wider curricular reform in general education. The new core curriculum will be completed by the end of 2014 and the new curricula based on it will be implemented as from August 2016.

## Sweden

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Sweden, the 'younger children' referred to are in the *förskola*. 'Older children' are in both the *förskola* and *förskoleklass*.

## Participation rates

(%)	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Förskola*	49.3	88.5	93.1	94.6	94.7	1.3
Pedagogisk omsorg**	2.1	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.0	(-)
Förskoleklass***	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	0.8	95.1
Total	51.4	92.2	96.7	97.9	98.5	96.4

\* Reference year: 2012; \*\* Reference year: 2011; \*\*\* Reference year: 2012/2013

Source: Skolverket, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	92.0	94.0	95.3	95.4	1.3
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	1.2	96.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The ECEC system consists of unitary pre-school centres (*förskola*), aimed at children aged between 1 and 6 years. Between 6 and 7, children can attend pre-primary classes (*förskoleklass*). *Förskoleklass* is usually closely associated with the school the pupils will attend. All the above provision falls under the responsibility of the National Agency for Education. In addition, there is also a system known as pedagogical care (*pedagogisk omsorg*), which is run by registered child minders and can be organised in various ways (i.e. either within childminders' homes or elsewhere). Pedagogical care is governed by the Education Act and falls under the same regulatory framework as the *förskola*. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, many local authorities also offer ECEC services in open pre-schools (*öppna förskolan*), where parents (or childminders) come along with their children whenever they wish. From age 1, children are entitled to publicly subsidised ECEC provision and from age 3, they are entitled to provision that is free of charge. Primary education starts at age 7.

## Fees

The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector; the maximum monthly fee is capped to PPS 110 (food included). From age 3, children are legally entitled to a minimum 525 hours of ECEC free of charge (*allmän förskola*) per year. In practice, this means that monthly fees for a full-time place are proportionally lower than for under 3s. *Förskoleklass* is free of charge. Children whose parents are working or studying have the right to a publicly subsidised place in an after-school centre (*fritidshem*).

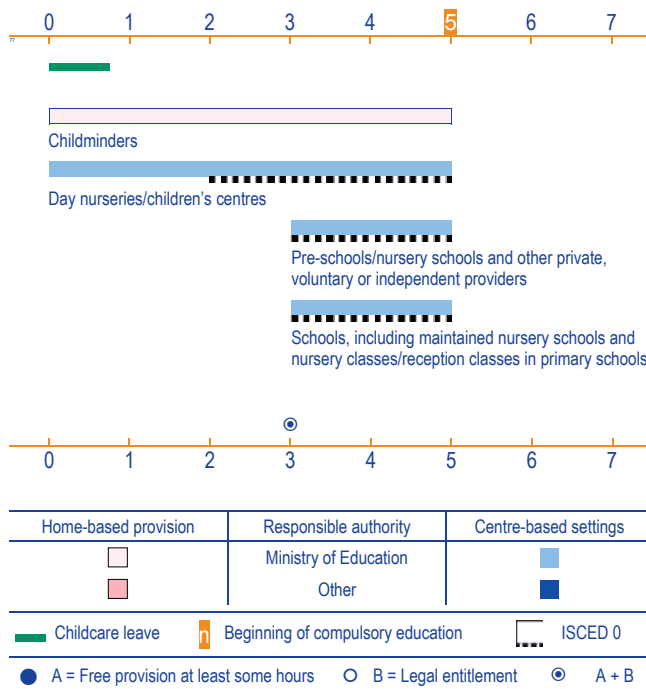
PPS 1 = SEK 11.4273

## No current reforms

## United Kingdom – England

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



'Younger' in figures of this report for England refers to provision for children under the age of 3 in *day nurseries* and *children's centres*. 'Older' refers to a range of public or private settings (*pre-schools*, *nursery/reception classes* in primary schools), as well as *day nurseries* and *children's centres*, delivering legal entitlement to free ECEC provision.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 3	3-4 years
Childminders	5.0	4.0
Day nursery	17.0	13.0
Playgroup or pre-school	7.0	15.0
Nursery school	5.0	14.0
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	1.0	17.0
Reception class	(-)	29.0

Source: DfE, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	85.7	67.4	1.2	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	29.7	98.5	99.2	99

\* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

From birth to age of 5 (when compulsory primary education begins), children can attend *day nurseries* or *children's centres*, or they can be looked after by *child-minders*. From age 3, children are legally entitled to 15 weekly hours of free ECEC provision. This entitlement can be used in any of the types of ECEC providers shown in the diagram. Free provision is also offered to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds. The Department for Education sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5 in all types of ECEC provision.

In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also various additional ECEC structures, including *mother and toddler groups* (or *playgroups*), *crèches* and *after-school/breakfast/activity clubs*.

Primary education starts at age 5.

## Fees

Children over 3 (and the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds) are entitled to 15 hours free ECEC a week for 38 weeks of the year.

Monthly fees for full-time ECEC by *childminders* range between PPS 776 and 1046 in different regions. For children over 3 using the free entitlement, the fees decrease to PPS 486-641 for 25 additional hours of ECEC. Monthly fees for full-time *nursery* range between PPS 851 and 1063. For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 532-622.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.870992

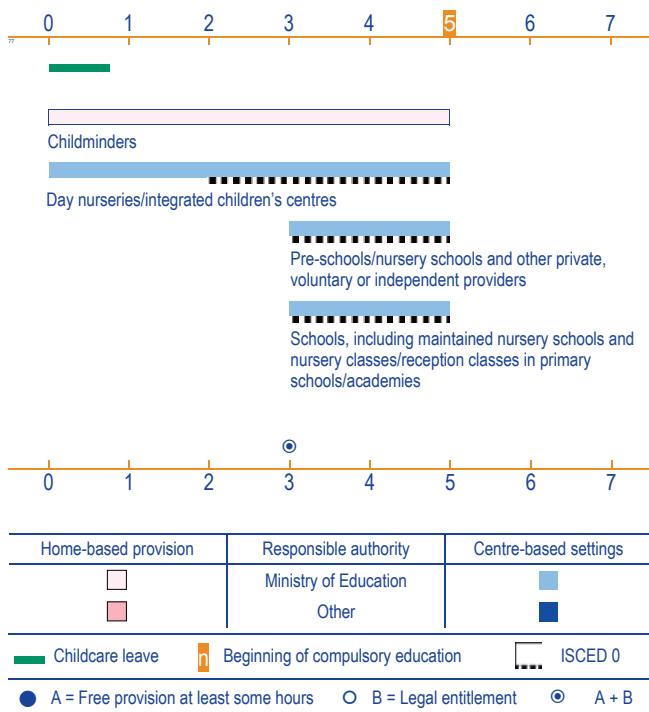
## Current reforms

From September 2013, all looked-after 2 year-olds and 2 year-olds from families who meet the criteria for free school meals (approximately 130 000 children) are also entitled to 15 hours a week of early education. From September 2014, the number of early learning places for 2 year-olds will be extended further, to around 260 000 children (about 40 % of all 2 year-olds).

## United Kingdom – Wales

Reference year 2012/13

### Diagram



'Younger' in figures of this report for Wales refers to provision for children under the age of 3 in *day nurseries* and *children's centres*. 'Older' refers to a range of public or private settings (*pre-schools, nursery/reception classes in primary schools etc.*), as well as *day nurseries* and *children's centres* delivering legal entitlement to free ECEC provision.

### Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2009	Under 3	3-4 years
Childminders	5.0	3.0
Day nurseries/integrated children's centres	22.8	8.0
Playgroup or pre-school	10.0	12.0
Reception class	(-)	30.0
Nursery school	2.0	7.0
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	(-)	35.0

Source: Welsh Assembly Government, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	85.7	67.4	1.2	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	29.7	98.5	99.2	99

\* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Organisation

From birth to age of 5 (when compulsory primary education begins), children can attend *day nurseries* or *children's centres*, or they can be looked after by *childminders*. From age 3, children are legally entitled to 10 weekly hours of free ECEC provision. This entitlement can be used in any of the types of ECEC providers shown in the diagram. Free provision is also offered to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds. The Department for Education and Skills sets the standards for learning, development and care for children in all types of ECEC provision as part of a framework (the Early Years Foundation Phase) spanning the years from birth to age 7.

In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also various additional ECEC structures, including *mother and toddler groups* (or *playgroups*), *crèches* and *after-school/breakfast/activity clubs*.

Primary education (ISCED 1) starts at age 5.

### Fees

Children over 3 (and the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds) are entitled to 12.5 hours free ECEC a week for 38 weeks of the year.

Average monthly fees for full-time ECEC by *childminders* are PPS 763. For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 521 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

Average monthly fees for full-time *nursery* are PPS 737. For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 496 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.870992

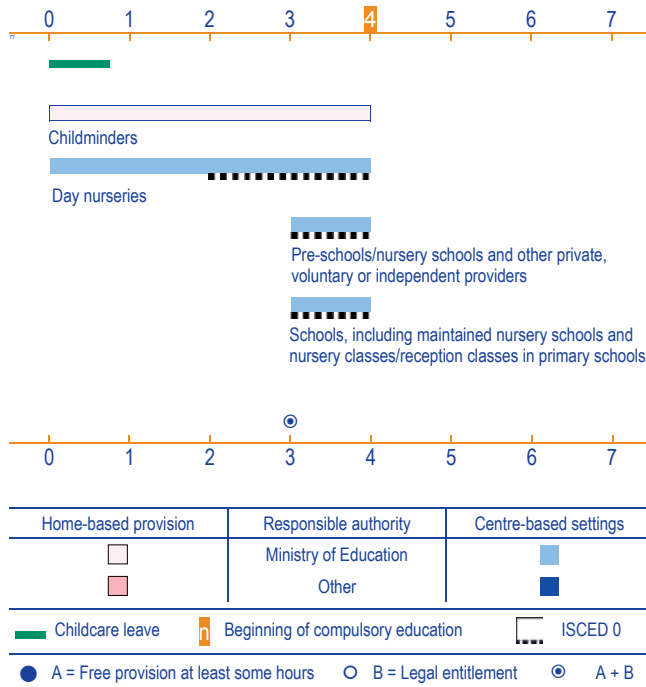
### No current reforms



## United Kingdom – Northern Ireland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



'Younger' in figures of this report for Northern Ireland refers to provision for children under the age of 3 in *day nurseries* and *children's centres*. 'Older' refers to a range of public or private settings (*pre-schools*, *nursery/reception classes* in primary schools), as well as *day nurseries* delivering legal entitlement to free ECEC provision.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	85.7	67.4	1.2	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	29.7	98.5	99.2	99

\* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

From birth to age of 4 (when compulsory primary education begins), children can attend *day nurseries* or *children's centres*, or they can be looked after by *child-minders*. From age 3, children are legally entitled to 12.5 weekly hours of free ECEC provision. This entitlement can be used in any of the types of ECEC providers shown in the diagram. Free provision is also offered to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds. The Department of Education sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 4 in all types of ECEC provision.

In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also various additional ECEC structures, including *playgroups*, *crèches* and *after-school/breakfast/activity clubs*.

Primary education starts at age 4.

## Fees

Children over 3 (and the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds) are entitled to 12.5 hours free ECEC a week for 38 weeks of the year.

Average monthly fees for full-time ECEC by *childminders* are PPS 627. For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 431 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

Average monthly fees for full-time nursery are PPS 618. For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 425 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.870992

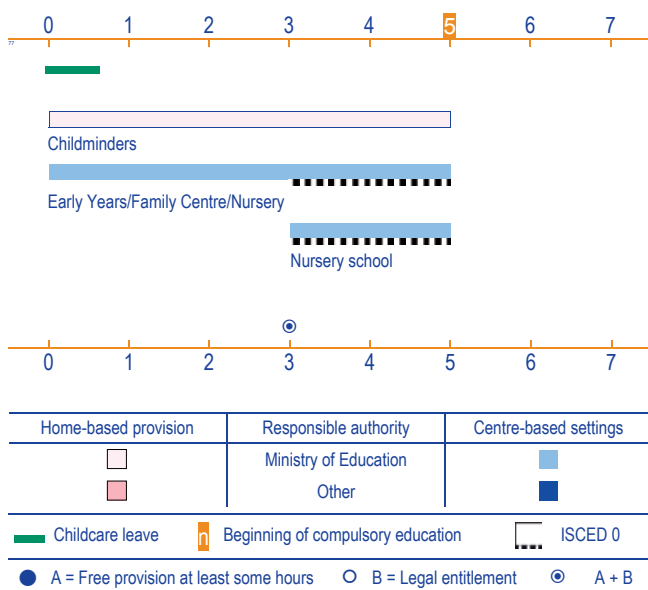
## Current reforms

In October 2013, 'Learning to Learn: A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning' was published by the Department of Education. It sets out the basis for future planning and development of early years education and learning services including extending the Foundation Stage (currently years 1 and 2 of compulsory education, age 4-6) to incorporate the non-compulsory pre-school year.

## United Kingdom – Scotland

Reference year 2012/13

### Diagram



'Younger' in figures of this report for Scotland refers to provision for children under the age of 3 in *early years, family centres* or *nurseries*. 'Older children' are in a range of public or private settings, delivering the legal entitlement to free pre-primary education.

### Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year old	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Childminders	1.7	6.3	6.8	5.3		
Early Years/ Family Centre	0.7	1.6	3.4	2.5		
Nursery schools/ nursery classes	3.5	15.7	37.8	41.2		
Total	5.9	23.6	48.0	49.0		

Source: Care Inspectorate, 2012.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0*	85.7	67.4	1.2	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1*	(-)	29.7	98.5	99.2	99

\* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Current reforms

From August 2014, the entitlement for 3 and 4 year-olds (as well as some 2 year olds) will be increased from 475 to 600 hours. This will be further expanded in August 2015 to a wider group of 2-year-olds based on current free school meal eligibility – representing around 27 % of all 2 year olds.

### Organisation

Up to the age of 5 (when compulsory primary education begins), children can attend *early years, family centres* or *nurseries*, or they can be looked after by *childminders*. As from age 3, children are legally entitled to 475 hours of free pre-primary education per year. This entitlement can be used in any of the types of ECEC providers shown in the diagram. The entitlement is extended for 2 year-olds who are looked after or under a kinship care order. All ECEC settings have to consider policies and guidance implemented through independent bodies responsible for regulating ECEC settings (Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council), these bodies are accountable to Ministers and through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government also issues guidance to local authorities in relation to provision of free pre-primary education.

In addition to the settings represented in the diagram, there are also various additional ECEC structures, including *playgroups, crèches, out-of-school clubs* and *holiday play schemes*.

Primary education starts at age 5.

### Fees

Children over 3 are entitled to 475 hours free ECEC a year, which is usually delivered as a 2.5 hour session during school term (this equals to 12.5 hours for 38 weeks). This entitlement can be used in any of the ECEC providers shown in the diagram.

Average monthly fees for full-time ECEC by *childminders* are PPS 744 (food included). For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 510 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

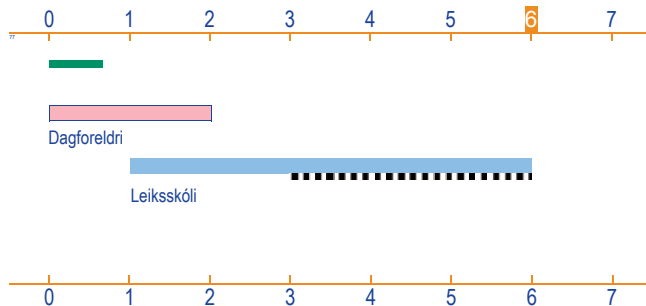
Average monthly fees for full-time *early years/family centre* or *nursery school* are PPS 808 (food included). For children over 3 using the free entitlement the fees decrease to PPS 518 for 27.5 additional hours of ECEC.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.870992

## Iceland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



Home-based provision	Responsible authority	Centre-based settings
	Ministry of Education	
	Other	

Childcare leave    Beginning of compulsory education    ISCED 0  
 A = Free provision at least some hours    B = Legal entitlement    A + B

In this report, with respect to Iceland, both the 'younger' and 'older' children referred to are to in *leiksskóli*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Dagforeldri	6.6	35.6	1.0			
Leiksskóli	1.0	29.0	97.0	99.0	98.0	97.0
Total	7.6	64.6	98.0	99.0	98.0	97.0

Source: Hagstofa Íslands, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	95.5	96.8	95.8	0.1	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.4	98.1	98.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

From age 1 until age 6, children can attend pre-school centres (*Leiksskóli*), which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education. There is also a system of regulated and publicly subsidised home-based provision (*Dagforeldri*), aimed at the youngest children (from birth up to age 2), which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

ECEC fees are not regulated centrally and vary between municipalities. For example, the fee is around PPS 140 for 8 hours a day in *Leiksskóli* in the largest municipality (Reykjavík). A common monthly fee for *Dagforeldri* is approximately PPS 484 (food included).

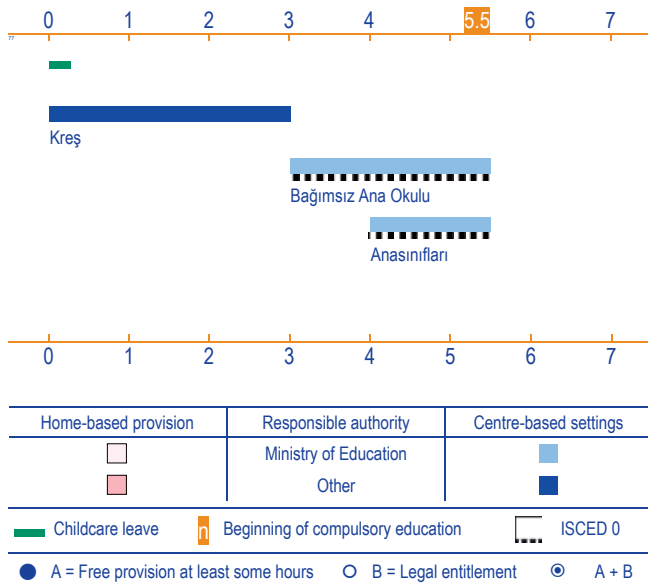
PPS 1 = ISK 185.843

## No current reforms

## Turkey

Reference year 2012/13

### Diagram



In this report, with respect to Turkey, 'younger children' refers to those in *Kreş*. 'Older children' refers to those in *Bağımsız Ana Okulu* and *Anasınıfları*.

### Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	4.2	19.2	67.3	(-)	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.1	96.5	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

### Organisation

Up to age 3, children can attend crèche and day-care centres (*Kreş*), which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. From age 3 to 5½ years, children attend *Bağımsız Ana Okulu*. In addition, children aged between 4 and 5½ can also attend pre-primary classes (*Anasınıfları*) in primary schools. Both *Bağımsız Ana Okulu* and *Anasınıfları* fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education – the General Directorate of Basic Education. Primary education starts at age 5½.

### Fees

The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector; the minimum monthly fee is PPS 11, while maximum fee is capped to PPS 218 (food included).

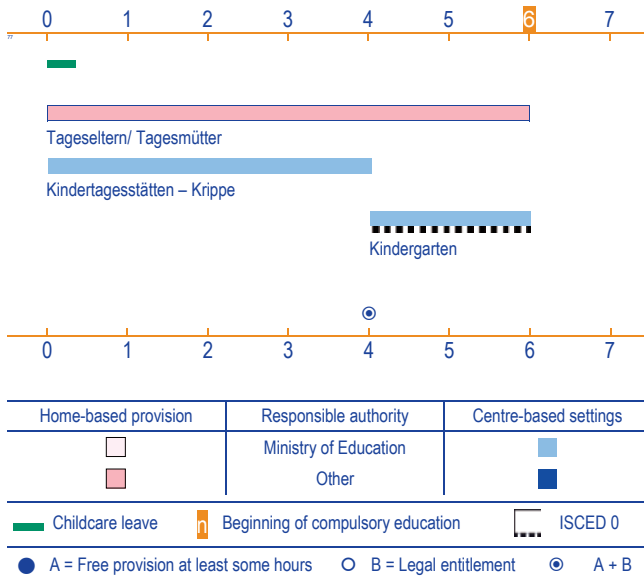
PPS 1 = TL 1.37571

### No current reforms

## Liechtenstein

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Liechtenstein, 'younger children' refers to those in *Kindertagesstätte – Krippe*. 'Older children' refers to those in *Kindergarten*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	0.3	51.2	98.2	42.3	0.3
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	56.6	96

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

Up to age 4, children are provided early childhood education and care in centre-based settings known as *Kindertagesstätte/Kinderkrippe*. There is also a system of regulated home-based care, which is delivered by day care parents/mothers (*Tageseltern/Tagesmütter*). From age 4, children are legally entitled to the provision delivered in *Kindergartens*, which is generally free. All centre-based provision falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. While *Kindergartens* do exist as separate settings, there is a growing tendency for them to be integrated within primary schools. In addition to the main settings represented in the diagram, parents may also benefit from additional childcare services provided within day-care centres (*Tagesstrukturen*), 'short-time' care services (*Hütendienste*) and playgroups (*Spielgruppen*). These services generally last 2-3 hours a day and are mainly intended for older children who attend 28 weekly hours of free ECEC in *Kindergartens*. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

ECEC fees are regulated, in *Kinderkrippe* the minimum monthly fee is PPS 142, while the maximum fee is capped to PPS 786 (food included). Public *Kindergartens* enrol 97 % of children and are free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals.

Hourly fees for *Tageseltern/Tagesmütter* are capped at PPS 4, which over a month amounts to PPS 664. For children from age 2 a fee for food (PPS 4) is charged. In addition, parents also have to pay a one-time fee of PPS 66, as well as an annual membership fee of PPS 27 to the agency *Eltern-Kind-Forum*.

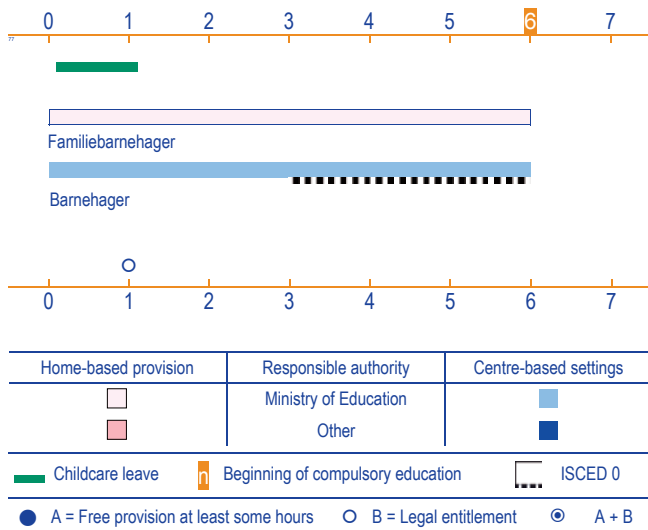
PPS 1 = CHF 1.8312

## No current reforms

## Norway

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Norway, both the 'younger' and 'older' children referred to are in the *barnehager*.

## Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/2013	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Barnehager	3.5	65.6	87.4	94.1	96.2	96.9
Familiebarnehager	0.3	4.0	3.1	1.2	0.9	0.7

Source: BASIL, 2012/13.

(%) Reference year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	95.1	97.1	97.4	0.8	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	99.9	99.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Organisation

The majority of children attend unitary pre-school centres (*barnehager*), which are under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, there are also family kindergartens (*familiebarnehager*) that provide early childhood education and care in a home-based environment. Both centre-based and home-based ECEC is regulated by the Kindergarten Act. Alongside the provision represented in the diagram, there are also open kindergartens (*åpne barnehager*), which are regulated, to a limited degree, by the above act and are intended for children who for some reason do not use ordinary kindergarten provision. From age 1, children are legally entitled to publicly subsidised provision. Primary education starts at age 6.

## Fees

The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector. The maximum monthly fee is capped to PPS 200 (food costs are decided at local level). This corresponds to the most commonly paid fee.

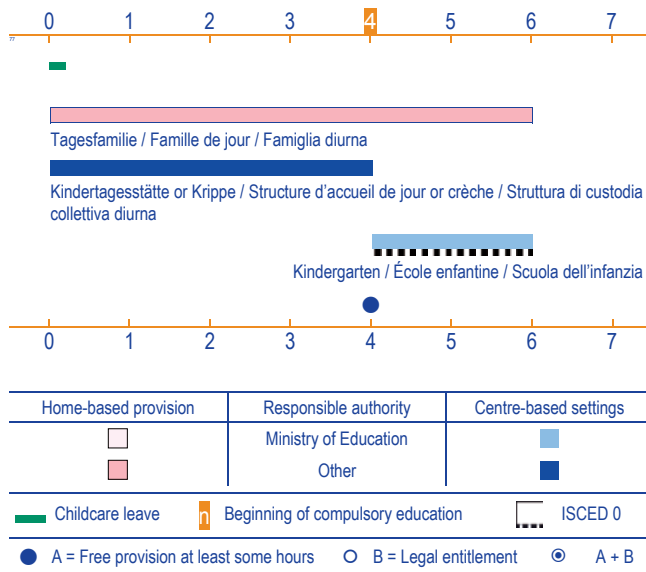
PPS 1 = NOK 11.6324

## No current reforms

## Switzerland

Reference year 2012/13

## Diagram



In this report, with respect to Switzerland, the 'younger children' referred to are in *Kindertagesstätte or Krippe/Structure d'accueil de jour or crèche/Struttura di custodia collettiva diurna*. 'Older children' are in *Kindergarten/École enfantine/Scuola dell'infanzia*.

## Participation rates

(%) Ref. year 2011	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	3.4	40.3	93.9	54.8	0.9
ISCED 1	(-)	0.3	1.2	44.1	98.3

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

## Fees

Fees for home-based ECEC are regulated in 10 cantons for publicly subsidised providers and in 3 cantons for private (self-financing) settings. Fees can range from PPS 109 (in cantons with the lowest minimum) to PPS 1 365 (in cantons with the highest fees). Fees for centre-based ECEC are regulated in 9 cantons for public settings, in 11 cantons for publicly subsidised private settings, and in 3 cantons for private (self-financing) settings. Fees can range from PPS 109 (in cantons with the lowest minimum) to PPS 1 398 (in cantons with the highest fees).

Compulsory ECEC in *Kindergarten/École enfantine/Scuola dell'infanzia* is free for, on average, 20 hours per week.

PPS 1 = CHF 1.8312

## Organisation

Due to the federal structure the ECEC system in Switzerland is highly decentralized and differs across 26 cantons. There are, however, some characteristics common to the whole system.

Centre-based ECEC (in *Kindertagesstätten or Krippen/Structures d'accueil collectif de jour or crèches/Strutture di custodia collettiva diurna*) is available for children between 3.5 months up to age 4 (until the start of compulsory education). In some cantons, it is also available for children up to age 5 or 6 for additional hours of provision. There is also home-based ECEC (*Tagesfamilie/Famille de jour/Famiglia diurna*) that usually caters for children between 3.5 months up to the start of compulsory education, but they are also open to older children. The majority of settings for the youngest children fall under the responsibility of the cantonal ministries of social affairs, while in a few cantons they are under the responsibility of the cantonal ministry of education.

From the beginning of compulsory education, which in most cantons starts at age 4 (in a few at age 5 or 6), children must attend pre-primary institutions (*Kindergärten/Ecoles enfantines/Scuole dell'infanzia*), which fall under the responsibility of cantonal ministers of education. Primary education starts at age 6.

Complementing compulsory education, in most cantons fee-paying out of school hours provision (*Schulergänzende Betreuung/Accueil parascolaire/Strutture di custodia parascolastiche*) including midday meals, is available.

## Current reforms

15 out of 26 cantons have signed the 'Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonisation of Compulsory Education' (*HarmoS Agreement*), which aims to ensure harmonised regulation of certain benchmarks in education. In ECEC this implies introducing compulsory pre-school from age 4 and fee paying out-of-school hours' provision to meet local needs by the beginning of the 2015/16 school year.





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## Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2014 Edition

This report, published jointly with Eurostat provides 61 indicators as well as a comparative analysis on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) throughout 32 European countries (37 education systems). The study demonstrates the challenges facing European countries when it comes to providing quality ECEC services for the 32 million children in Europe in the age range to use ECEC services. It covers a number of specific issues important to policy-makers such as access to ECEC, governance, quality assurance, affordability, qualifications and training among staff, leadership, parent involvement, and measures to support disadvantaged children. Information on ECEC policy and central measures was provided by Eurydice National Units, while Eurostat has undertaken the preparation and production of statistical indicators. The reference year for all policy information is 2012/13.

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The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>.

