

Workforce profiles in systems of early childhood education and care in Europe

Research specification for national expert reports

Key terms

ECEC provision: All forms of centre-based **early childhood education and care (ECEC)** settings or services for children from birth up to compulsory school age which offer full-time or part-time places. For the purpose of this study, home-based care settings (family day care, childminding) are not included.

Centre staff: All persons working in regular and **direct** contact with children in all types of centre-based early childhood settings (qualified and/or non-specialist qualified or non-qualified co-workers or assistants)

Core practitioners: Fully qualified staff with responsibility for a group of children

Centre heads: On-site managers, centre leaders or principals/directors with overall responsibility for the running of the ECEC centre. In some cases they may also work directly with children.

Initial professional studies (IPS): Pre-service professional study routes (higher or vocational education) which qualify for a position in ECEC provision

Continuing professional development (CPD): All forms of post-IPS professional learning activities for staff in ECEC provision, whether site-based or course-based, informal or formal

EQF – European Qualifications Framework: outcomes based (knowledge, skills, competences), eight-level reference tool to enable comparisons between countries (European Commission undated)

ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System: a system for enhancing student mobility through the Europe-wide recognition of credit transfers and credit accumulation in higher education (European Commission 2017).

ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education: an instrument for comparing levels and fields of education across countries, developed by UNESCO in the 1970s and revised in 1997 and 2011 (UNESCO 2012). The 2013 version classifies education programmes and related qualifications by fields of study (UNESCO 2014).

Contents

1. ECEC governance
2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?
 - 2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision
 - 2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity
3. Initial professional studies (IPS)
 - 3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational
 - 3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes
 - 3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability
4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners
5. Continuing professional development (CPD)
6. Recent policy reforms relating to professionalisation and staffing issues
7. Recent country-specific research relating to professionalisation and staffing issues
8. General workforce issues
 - 8.1 Remuneration
 - 8.2 Full-time and part-time employment
 - 8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace
 - 8.4 Non-contact time
 - 8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies
9. Workforce challenges –country expert assessment
10. References



1. ECEC governance

In terms of an introduction, please give a brief categorisation of the ECEC governance system in your country, with a short explanation:

- unitary/unified/integrated
- partially unified
- bi- or multi-sectoral (childcare/education...)
- centralised/decentralised/federal

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

Please give an overview of all staff categories working directly with children. In countries with separate sectors (e.g. France) or partially unified sectors (e.g. UK), please indicate which staff work in which sector. Please state the:

- occupational title in the original language, together with a literal translation into English
- main workplace settings in the original title, together with a translation into English, and age-range of children in the settings
- main position/s held
- main age-range focus of initial professional studies
- minimum qualification requirement for each post, together with European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) requirements (if applicable) and position in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Example Sweden: ECEC staff in centre-based settings

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF level/ ISCED level
<p><i>Förskollärare</i> Preschool Teacher/ ECEC Teacher</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional</p>	<p><i>Förskola</i> Early childhood centre/preschool 1-5 years</p> <p><i>Förskoleklass</i> Preschool class in schools 6 years</p> <p><i>Öppen förskola</i> Open preschool 1-5 years</p> <p><i>Fritidshem</i> Leisure-time centre 6-12 years</p>	<p>Core practitioner with group responsibility</p> <p>Centre head</p>	1-6 years	<p>Bachelor's degree 3½ years university</p> <p>ECTS points: 210 EQF Level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6</p>

Please assign one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study to each of the job titles:

SEEPRO professional profile categories for core practitioners (adapted from Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010)

- *Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (specialist focus, 0–6/7 years)
- *Pre-primary Education Professional* (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years)
- *Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional* (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- *Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (mainly broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- *Social Care/Health Care Professional* (sometimes early childhood focus, sometimes broad focus, including adults)

2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Please give data on the overall composition of the ECEC workforce (both within sectors and across sectors). Please state the proportion of:

- staff with a specialist three-year (or longer) early years higher education degree
- staff with a specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary, post-secondary)
- staff with a non-relevant qualification
- unqualified staff
- specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists) who work on site on a regular basis
- male practitioners (disaggregated if possible according to: centre leaders, core practitioners, auxiliary staff/assistants)
- staff with a BME (black and minority ethnic) background or a ‘background of migration’ (definitions will vary from country to country – please specify)

Example Estonia: Structural composition of ECEC workforce, 2015/16

Staff categories	Number, Proportion of workforce
Staff with specialist higher education degree	5,359 (66.1%)*
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	2,197 (27.1%)
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	231 (2.9%)
Staff with non-specialist qualification	1,288 (15%)
Unqualified staff	316 (3.9%)
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	108 (1.3%)
Male staff	51 (0.6%)
Staff with a background of migration	No national data available

* Ministry of Education and Science 2016, own calculations.

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

Please state for each staff category:

- Entry requirements
- Professional studies: main qualifying routes and level (upper secondary/vocational; post-secondary/vocational; higher education); duration of studies; ISCED level; EQF-level; ECTS points
- Award (e.g. Bachelor, Early Childhood Education)

- Main fields of work

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes

Please outline for each qualifying route the main

- competency specifications
- curricular areas
- pedagogic-didactic approaches

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Please state:

- alternative pathways of entry into ECEC work and of qualification accrue ment for (1) core practitioners (e.g. predominantly workplace-based training routes) and (2) qualified and non-qualified co-workers
- formal opportunities for moving up and across qualifications frameworks
- options for men and women with non-specialist qualifications (career changers)

4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners

What role does learning in the early childhood workplace (variously termed: e.g. placement, practicum, workplace-based learning) play in the initial professional studies of core practitioners? Please state:

- whether this element of IPS is regulated by national and/or regional and/or provider guidelines and how explicit these are about the cooperation between and complementary roles of IPS institutions and ECEC centres
- the length of time spent overall in the workplace (in weeks or days) throughout the course of studies and how the time blocks are structured
- the number of ECTS allocated to workplace learning in the professional study routes for core practitioners
- the skills and competencies students are expected to develop in the workplace
- forms of student self-evaluation and external evaluation
- whether mentoring/supervising staff in ECEC centres are *expected to or have to* complete a specific qualifying course for the task of supporting students in the workplace
- whether mentoring/supervising staff in ECEC centres have a designated role, with time allocation specifications for mentoring, and whether/how they are remunerated for their work
- recent reforms, trends and debates

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

Please give a brief description of the following aspects of continuing professional development for staff in ECEC provision.

- Are there specific national, regional and/or provider framework for regulating the CPD of ECEC personnel?
- What are the main forms of CPD (a) for core practitioners and (b) for qualified and non-qualified co-workers?
- Please state the relevant leave entitlement specifications. How many days per year are granted for CPD activities during working hours?
- Are specific CPD activities optional or obligatory? Please differentiate between (a) core practitioners and (b) qualified and non-qualified co-workers.
- Do ECEC employers cover the costs of attending CPD activities?
- Are there regularly occurring problems regarding access opportunities to CPD (a) for core practitioners and (b) for qualified and non-qualified co-workers (e.g. no supply staff available)?
- Who are the main providers of CPD across the country?
- Is participation in specific forms of CPD formally recognized in terms of career advancement (e.g. credit endorsements for specialist posts)?
- What are the specific qualification requirements for heads of ECEC provision? Please describe the general availability of specialist courses/modules.
- Please describe the general availability and thematic focus of specialist courses/modules for other specified posts (e.g. student mentor in ECEC setting; language support coach).
- What options are available for supplementary/additional study routes (e.g. master's degree). Is participation supported by state or employer funding?
- Have large-scale research projects on the CPD activities of ECEC personnel received funding over the past five years?
- Please identify three current reforms/trends/debates regarding the continuing professional development of staff in ECEC provision.

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

Please give a brief description of three relevant national reforms or reform initiatives regarding the staffing of ECEC provision which have been introduced over the past five years.

7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues

Please give a brief description of the aims, procedures and findings of three relevant research projects conducted over the past five years.

8. General workforce issues

Please give a brief description of general workforce issues. These may include (but not be limited to):

8.1 Remuneration

For example:

Are core practitioners in ECEC provision paid the same as primary school teachers?

Is it possible to live on this salary without additional support (e.g. living as a single parent with one child in a major city)?

Do staff receive a higher salary for posts of responsibility (e.g. as centre leader, deputy leader, student mentor/supervisor)?

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

How many hours do full-time staff work in your country? What is the relation between full-time and part-time posts?

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

For example:

To what extent are organised induction measures available for newly qualified staff?

Is there an organised system of on-site mentoring or regional networking in place aimed at improving the quality of the professional work?

8.4 Non-contact time

For example:

How much paid working time (so-called non-contact time) is allocated weekly for preparation work, staff meetings, cooperation with parents, networking in the community and other activities?

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

Please note any severe staff shortages and whether specific recruitment strategies are in place to deal with this problem.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

Please give a brief personal assessment of potential workforce challenges that your country is likely to face, both in the near future and in a longer-term perspective.

10. References

For bibliographic details please consult the following link (Chicago style):

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

European Commission. 2017. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/european-credit-transfer-accumulation-system_en

European Commission. Undated. Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe.

[https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f\[0\]=im_field_entity_type%3A97](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f[0]=im_field_entity_type%3A97)

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012. *International Standard Classification of Education 2011*.

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2014. *ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013 (ISCED-F 2013)*. DOI

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15220/978-92-9189-150-4-en> (18-20)

