

LITHUANIA

ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report authors

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Citation suggestion:

Siarova, H. and D. Buinauskas. 2017. "Lithuania – ECEC Workforce Profile." In *Workforce Profiles in Systems of Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. www.seepro.eu/English/Country_Reports.htm

Funded by:

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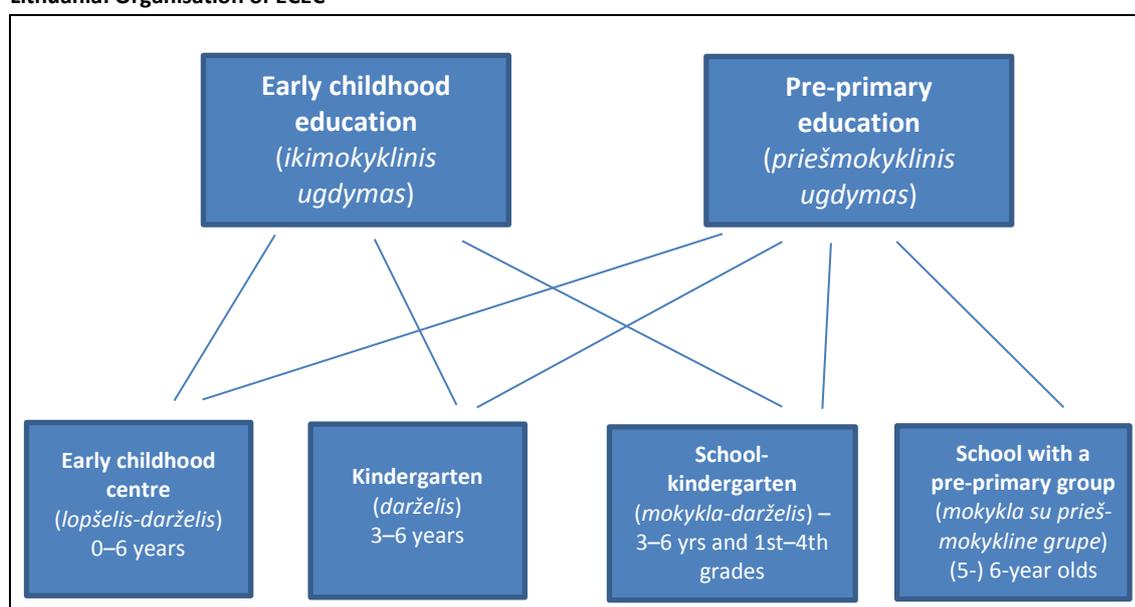


1. ECEC governance

In Lithuania, early childhood education and care for children up to statutory schooling at age 7 is organised as a unitary system in two stages. The Ministry of Education and Science (*Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija*) is responsible for both stages, i.e. for early childhood education (*ikimokyklinis ugdymas*) – literally translated as ‘pre-school education’ in Lithuania – for children from birth up to age 6, and for pre-primary education (*priešmokyklinis ugdymas*), organised as a preparatory class focusing on ‘school readiness’ for 6-year olds (and often 5-year olds). The education system in Lithuania is decentralised, with the state and local levels working closely together. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the development and implementation of educational policy, and for delegating certain aspects to the local level. All ECEC provision comes under the responsibility of the municipal authorities.

Figure 1

Lithuania: Organisation of ECEC



2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

In Lithuania, there are two kinds of core practitioner in ECEC provision. One is an **Early Childhood Pedagogue** (*auklėtojas/auklėtoja*), working in early childhood centres, kindergartens and school-kindergartens, and the other is a **Pre-primary Pedagogue** (*priešmokyklinio ugdymo pedagogas*), working in schools with a pre-primary education group. The core practitioners are generally assisted by a non-qualified co-worker. Early Childhood Pedagogues are entitled to an assistant if there are more than 20 children in the group and there is no chance to create an additional group (MoES 2003). Pedagogue Assistants in Lithuania (*Auklėtojo(-s) padėjėja(-s)*) are considered to be technical workers, and no specific pedagogical background is required; they are in charge of cleaning, feeding the children, and other routine tasks (Ikimokyklinis.lt 2012b). The majority of staff hired in ECEC institutions has a pedagogical qualification which enables them to work either with groups of younger or older children (MoES 2015a). Pedagogue Assistants are required to have a secondary school leaving certificate and to be proficient in the national language. Even though these employees work with children, there is no description of

their duties and qualification requirements. Since the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania does not foresee additional vacations for non-pedagogical staff, Pedagogue Assistants are often forced to take unpaid leave. Moreover, there are no supplements relating to the length of work experience, nor are there professional development courses for this group of co-workers, and they do not enjoy the same privileges as the pedagogue profession (Ikimokyklinis.lt 2012b).

Table 1 gives a brief description of the staff working in centre-based settings in Lithuania, and also categorises the core practitioners (i.e. staff with group or centre responsibility) according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see Box 1 at the end of this section).

Table 1

Lithuania: 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 ¹ level
Auklėtojas/auklėtoja Early Childhood Pedagogue <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Lopšelis-darželis,</i> Early childhood centre 0-6 years <i>Darželis,</i> Kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Darželis-mokykla,</i> School-kindergarten 3-6 years	Core practitioner with group responsibility	0-6 years	Specialist Bachelor's degree ECTS points: 210 EQF: Level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6
<i>Auklėtojos padėjėja</i> Pedagogue Assistant	<i>Lopšelis-darželis,</i> Early childhood centre 0-6 years <i>Darželis,</i> Kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Darželis-mokykla,</i> School-kindergarten 3-6 years	Co-worker (with no relevant qualifications or no formal IPS)	n/a ²	No specific qualification necessary
<i>Priešmokyklinio ugdymo pedagogas</i> Pre-primary Pedagogue <i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary Education Professional	<i>Lopšelis-darželis,</i> Early childhood centre 0-6 years <i>Darželis,</i> Kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Darželis-mokykla,</i> School-kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Mokykla su priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupe</i> School with a pre-primary education group 6-year olds	Core practitioner with group responsibility	0-6 years	Bachelor's degree with ECEC or primary education specialism (in the case of the latter, with an additional re-skilling qualification in ECEC) ECTS points: 210 EQF: Level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6
<i>Pedagogo padėjėjas</i> ECEC and Pre-primary Assistant	<i>Lopšelis-darželis,</i> Early childhood centre 0-6 years <i>Darželis,</i>	Co-worker (with no relevant qualifications)	n/a	No specific qualification necessary

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012, 2014

² n/a = not applicable

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 ¹ level
	Kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Darželis-mokykla,</i> School-kindergarten 3-6 years <i>Mokykla su priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupe</i> School with a pre-primary education group 6-year olds	or no formal IPS)		

Box 1

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional</i> (specialist focus, 0– 6/7 years) • <i>Pre-primary Education Professional</i> (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years) • <i>Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional</i> (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years) • <i>Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional</i> (mainly broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults) • <i>Social Care/Health Care Professional</i> (sometimes early childhood focus, sometimes broad focus, including adults)
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2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Table 2c

Lithuania: Structural composition of ECEC workforce

Pedagogical staff categories	Percentage (Year)
Pedagogical staff with a specialist three-year (or longer) early years higher education degree (<i>Aukštasis išsilavinimas</i>) in total / urban / rural areas	73,0% / 73,4% / 70,6% (2016)
Pedagogical staff with a specialist vocational qualification: post-secondary education (<i>Aukštesnysis išsilavinimas</i>) in total / urban / rural areas	25,7% / 25,4% / 27,7% (2016)
Pedagogical staff with a non-relevant qualification	n/a
Pedagogue Assistants (mostly unqualified) with only secondary education (<i>vidurinis išsilavinimas</i>) in total / urban / rural areas	1,3% / 1,2% / 1,7% (2016)
Specialist support staff who work on site on a regular basis in total / urban / rural areas	Art instructors: 4.5% / 4.6% / 3.6% (2014) Special teachers: 0.6% / 0.6% / 0.2% (2014) Speech therapists: 4.2% / 4.4% / 2.4% (2014) Psychologists: 0.3% / 0.3% / 0.07% (2014) Other pedagogical staff: 3.1% / 3.2%/2.0% (2014)
Leading staff in total / urban / rural areas	Principals: 5.5% / 5.2% / 7.9% (2014) Senior educators: 3.6% / 3.8% / 2.4% (2014)

Pedagogical staff categories	Percentage (Year)
Male practitioners in ECEC (0-2 years) / ECEC (2-6 years) / pre-primary education	Core practitioners: <0.5% / <0.5% / <0.5%*(2014) Centre leaders: 8%/16%/18% (2014)
Staff with a BME (black and minority ethnic) background or a 'background of migration' (definitions vary from country to country – please specify)	n/a

Sources: Statistics Lithuania 2014, 2015; *MoES 2014.

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

Since 2009, pedagogues employed in early childhood and pre-primary institutions are required to have a higher education degree at Bachelor level.³ Up to 2009, the requirement was a post-secondary specialist qualification; up to 1995 an upper secondary specialist qualification (MoES 2005b). Early Childhood Pedagogues have to have a qualification in ECEC, whereas Pre-primary Pedagogues are required to have an ECEC specialism or a primary school specialism complemented with a pre-primary education re-skilling module, or must have additionally participated in a pre-primary education course prepared according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES 2005a). There is a possibility to enter the profession without an official degree in pedagogy; in such cases the employee is required to obtain such a qualification within two years of having started working in an early childhood centre or pre-primary education institution.

In addition, Early Childhood Pedagogues and Pre-primary Pedagogues are required to complete courses in special pedagogy and special psychology (*specialiosios pedagogikos ir specialiosios psichologijos kursas mokytojams*; MoES 2007b). These courses have to be completed within one year after starting work as an Early Childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogue if comparable courses (of 2 ECTS points or 60 hours) have not been followed before or during their initial professional studies. Such requirements do not apply to teachers who completed special pedagogy or special psychology study programmes. Moreover, Early Childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogues have to complete a certificate of competences in computer literacy (*Reikalavimai mokytojų kompiuterinio raštingumo programoms*, MoES 2007c).

Initial professional studies (IPS) for future Early Childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogues are integrated into respective university or college study programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels (Eurydice 2014). Students enrolling to study in early childhood/pre-primary education usually have to provide the IPS institution with three university entrance examination results (*Brandos egzaminas*) and participate in a motivation assessment. In some of the institutions Matura exam results are sufficient to receive a state-funded scholarship for Bachelor studies. Master studies admissions are most often based on previous academic achievements and an admission exam.

The duration of Bachelor studies varies between three and four years: in most cases, full-time early childhood/pre-primary education studies (or childhood pedagogy) taking place at colleges are of three years' duration, whereas university courses usually take four years to complete.

³ Qualifications obtained abroad are also accepted upon request to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (*Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras*). <https://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-studijos/isilavinimo-pripazinimas-patvirtinimas/uzsienyje-igyto-issilavinimo-pripazinimas>

Part-time studies, which are based on individual learning, writing and exams (but include professional practice as well) can take up to 50% more time (MoES 2015b).

Most often, a Master's degree course in early childhood/pre-primary education provides students with knowledge on curriculum formation, education strategies and other higher level educational issues.

Also, there are additional pathways of entering the profession of Early Childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogue (see *Section 3.3*).

Table 3

Lithuania: Early Childhood Pedagogue

Job title in Lithuanian: <i>Auklėtojas/auklėtoja</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
Entry requirements since 2009: University entrance examination, sometimes motivation assessment Professional studies: 3 years at a higher education institution (college) or 4 years at a university plus courses in special pedagogy/psychology (these courses must be completed within 1 year of starting work) Award: Bachelor/Early childhood education – can also be followed by a Master's degree <i>Before 2009:</i> post-secondary level award; <i>before 1995:</i> vocational secondary level award. ECTS points: 210 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6 Main ECEC workplaces: Early childhood centre (<i>Lopšelis-darželis</i>), 0-6 years; Kindergarten (<i>Darželis</i>), 3-6 years; School-kindergarten (<i>Darželis-mokykla</i>), 3-6 years

Table 4

Lithuania: Pre-primary Pedagogue

Job title in Lithuanian: <i>Priešmokyklinio ugdymo pedagogas</i> Profile: Pre-primary Education Professional
Entry requirements since 2009: University entrance examination, sometimes motivation assessment Professional studies: 3 years at a higher education institution (college) or 4 years at a university plus courses in special pedagogy/psychology (these courses must be completed within 1 year of starting work) Award: Bachelor's degree in Early childhood education/Pre-primary education (in the case of the latter: an additional re-skilling module in ECEC) – can also be followed by a Master's degree <i>Before 2009:</i> post-secondary level award; <i>before 1995:</i> vocational secondary level award. ECTS points: 210 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6 Main ECEC workplaces: Early childhood centre (<i>Lopšelis-darželis</i>), 0-6 years; Kindergarten (<i>Darželis</i>), 3-6 years; School-kindergarten (<i>Darželis-mokykla</i>), 3-6 years; school with a pre-primary education group (<i>Mokykla su priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupe</i>), 6-year olds

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes

Competence specifications for pre-school/pre-primary education studies in Lithuania are outlined in the *Standards Regulation for the Training of Pre-school and Pre-primary age Pedagogues (Ikimokyklinio ir priešmokyklinio amžiaus vaikų pedagogo rengimo standartas)*. Three main areas of competence are outlined in the document (see *Table 5*; QVETDC 2008).

Table 5

Lithuania: Competence specifications in early childhood/pre-primary education studies (IPS)

Areas of competence	Competencies
1. Getting to know the child and recognising his/her individuality	1.1. Recognising general and individual characteristics of child development 1.2. Combining general goals of early childhood/pre-primary education with the individual needs of children 1.3. Recognising symptoms of illness, providing first aid.
2. Designing the content of education	2.1. Individualising and integrating educational content 2.2. Planning, organising, evaluating, analysing and documenting children's behaviour in an interactive pedagogical process. 2.3. Creating an environment aimed to stimulate children's physical and intellectual abilities. 2.4. Actively including the children's families in pedagogical interactions
3. Continuing professional development	3.1. Adopting a reflective stance and participating in life-long learning 3.2. Using tools of information and communications technologies 3.3. Using the Lithuanian language correctly in real and virtual professional environments

In addition to the Standards Regulation for early childhood and pre-primary age pedagogues, key competences for ECEC staff are outlined in the Description of Competences for Pedagogues (*Pedagogo profesijos kompetencijų aprašas*). These include (1) personal improvement and learning; (2) cultural knowledge; (3) ability to use new technologies and work with information; (4) professional communication (MoES 2015a). Further competences include: (1) recognising children's differences and capabilities/giving support while learning/motivating children; (2) creating a learning environment with varieties in content and stimulation; (3) achieving goals and supporting development; (4) evaluating children's achievements and progress; (5) analysing professional activities in a methodical way. In addition to the mentioned list of competences, a general cultural (*bendrakultūrinės kompetencijos*) competence framework for teachers of all education levels is also offered by the Ministry of Education (MoES 2007a).

These competence requirements are aimed to help pedagogues in developing curricular content, applying different methods, ensuring that educational strategies match new developments in the respective area of learning and include the newest achievements of science or technology (MoES 2015a). As one example of the IPS for ECEC, the Lithuanian University of Applied Sciences in Vilnius offers a Childhood Pedagogy programme for early childhood and pre-primary education pedagogues⁴. It focuses on the pedagogues' ability to develop children's emotional intelligence, work in a multicultural environment, support early second language acquisition or children's sign language. The studies are module-based. All study programmes in Lithuania are shaped by autonomous higher education institutions and include a variety of courses such as child psychology, physical culture, language and communication, multicultural education, social development, etc.

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

A number of alternative pathways exist to become an Early Childhood Pedagogue or a Pre-primary Pedagogue in Lithuania. Partly, the variety of pathways has been driven due to a need to re-orientate pedagogues from secondary education to early childhood/pre-primary education in the face of demographic issues. Policy reforms in the ECEC sector such as the introduction of compulsory pre-primary education and the expansion of early childhood provision are leading to increased ECEC participation levels and thus to a growing need for more pedagogues.

⁴See description of the study programme in Lithuanian: https://leu.lt/lt/studijos/leu_studiju_programos/leu_bakalauro_studiju_programos/leu_baksp2016/programs/100385.html

In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science announced that pedagogues in ECEC and pre-primary education levels have to obtain the pedagogue qualification in two years if they did not have it before. In the following cases individuals are considered as having a pedagogue qualification if they:

- (1) Have a post-secondary award (pre-2009) or a specialist secondary award (pre-1995), have no less than eight years of pedagogical work experience, and have completed no less than 320 hours (or 12 ECTS points) of pedagogy, psychology and didactics courses; *or*
- (2) Have a higher education degree, have no less than six years of pedagogical experience, and have completed no less than 240 hours (9 ECTS points) of pedagogy, psychology and didactics courses; *or*
- (3) Have a higher education degree awarded by a University, have no less than five years of pedagogical experience, and have completed no less than 160 hours (6 ECTS points) of pedagogy, psychology and didactics courses; *or*
- (4) Have a higher education degree and have completed 1600 hours (60 ECTS points) of pedagogy, psychology and didactics courses during full-time or part-time studies and have passed all exams in these courses (MoES 2014).

In this respect there is a possibility for current school teachers and graduates in education, the humanities or social sciences to change their profession and qualify as an Early Childhood or a Pre-primary Pedagogue. For instance, primary or secondary school teachers with a completed Bachelor's degree can gain an additional qualification in ECEC by attending a special module (90 ECTS points) provided by higher education institutions. For those applying for a modular course in a pedagogical specialisation (*Pedagoginės specializacijos modulio studijos*), the University accepts up to 30 ECTS points for previously completed similar courses (in terms of content and duration). For instance, a study programme of this kind is offered by the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences or Panevėžys College.

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

Learning in the early childhood workplace is not regulated in detail through national or regional guidelines. The only requirement for the IPS institutions is to dedicate at least 30 ECTS points to learning in the early childhood/pre-primary education environment (MoES 2012b). The way in which higher education institutions or post-secondary schools arrange placements/practica within the professional curriculum is the responsibility of each individual IPS institution.

During the programme, students are prepared for their future work as a pedagogue and learn how to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Work placements/internships are organised in early childhood/pre-primary education institutions. The skills and competences which students are expected to develop during their field-based studies are as follows: learn how to provide professional education support to children, evaluate the quality of education and children's achievements, reflect on and plan a child's progress (LUES n.d.). During the internship student pedagogues are assigned a mentor. A mentor is an experienced and practising pedagogue who supports students during their pedagogical practice at educational institutions. According to the Regulation of Pedagogue Preparation (*Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas*), mentors should have five years or more experience in pedagogy. The quality of the student's completion of the expected tasks during the practicum, the individual activities of students and their contribution to the educational programme are discussed between the IPS supervisor, the mentor and the student. Furthermore, at the end of the placement period, the principal of the institution, the centre team, the mentor, the IPS supervisor and the students discuss the results of the work placement together. Mentors spend up to 60% of the total placement time with the student.

Remuneration for the task of mentoring is agreed upon on an individual basis, as are all additional assignments carried out by Early Childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogues.

Future Early Childhood and Pre-primary Pedagogues follow initial professional studies in eight higher education institutions at Bachelor level (in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Marijampolė), and can continue with a master's programme in Pre-school Educology (*Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences*) dedicated to aspects such as consultancy, ECE analysis, educational policy as well as curricula design and the quality of implementation (LAMA BPO n.d.).

The table below provides an overview of workplace-based learning offered in different initial professional studies programmes.

Table 6

Lithuania: Workplace-based learning in different IPS study programmes

Institution	Name of the programme	ECTS points allocated to workplace learning ⁵
Kaunas University of Applied Sciences (Kauno kolegija)	Pre-school education (full-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinis ugdymas (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical practice 1, 6 ECTS points (3rd semester) • Pedagogical practice 2, 6 ECTS points (4th semester) • Pedagogical practice 3, 6 ECTS points (5th semester) • Practice of educational activity, 9 ECTS points (6th semester)
	Pre-school education (part-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinis ugdymas (sesijinė I)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical practice 1, 6 ECTS points (3rd semester) • Pedagogical practice 2, 6 ECTS points (4th semester) • Pedagogical practice 3, 6 ECTS points (5th semester) • Practice of educational activity, 9 ECTS points (6th semester)
Klaipėda State College (Klaipėdos valstybinė kolegija)	Pedagogy of pre-school and pre-primary education (full-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Practice of Learning Activities, 9 ECTS points (3rd semester) • Pre-school and primary teaching practice, 7 ECTS points (4th semester) • Pre-school and primary teaching practice, 9 ECTS points (5th semester) • Final teaching practice, 11 ECTS points (6th semester)
	Pedagogy of pre-school and pre-primary education (part-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika (sesijinė I)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observational practice, 3 ECTS points (3rd semester) • Test Practice of Learning Activities, 9 ECTS points (5th semester) • Pre-school and primary teaching practice, 7 ECTS points (6th semester) • Pre-primary teaching practice, 7 ECTS points (7th semester) • Final teaching practice, 11 ECTS points (8th semester)
Klaipėda University (Klaipėdos universitetas)	Childhood pedagogy (full-time) (<i>Vaikystės pedagogika (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory practice in educational institutions (5 ECTS points, 1st semester) • Pedagogical practice (8 ECTS points, 6th semester) • Autonomous practice of pedagogical work (17 ECTS points, 7th semester)
	Childhood pedagogy (part-time) (<i>Vaikystės pedagogika (sesijinė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory practice in educational institutions (5 ECTS points, 1st semester) • Pedagogical practice (8 ECTS points, 6th semester) • Autonomous practice of pedagogical work (17 ECTS points, 7th semester)
Marijampolė College (Marijampolės kolegija)	Pre-school education (part-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinis ugdymas (sesijinė I)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 ECTS points dedicated to the professional practice (pedagogical practice, practice of pedagogue assistant, educational practice, educational-pre-primary practice, final practice)
Panevėžys College (Panevėžio kolegija)	Pedagogy of pre-school education (part-time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory practice • Practice as a pedagogue assistant

⁵ 1 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credit is equal to 25-30 hours of work.
http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/ects-guide_lt.pdf

Institution	Name of the programme	ECTS points allocated to workplace learning ⁵
	<i>(Ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogika (sesijinė I))</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated practice in pre-school education groups • Integrated practice in pre-primary education groups • Final practice (no specific info on ECTS points)
Šiauliai University (<i>Šiaulių universitetas</i>)	Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education (full-time) (<i>Pradinio ugdymo pedagogika ir ikimokyklinis ugdymas (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical practice, 4 ECTS points • Pedagogical practice, 9 ECTS points • Pedagogical practice, 11 ECTS points • Pedagogical practice, 6 ECTS points
Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (<i>Lietuvos edukologijos universitetas</i>)	Pre-school and pre-primary education (full-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice as a pedagogue assistant (3rd semester, 10 ECTS points) • Pedagogical practice with a mentor (5th semester, 10 ECTS points) • Autonomous pedagogical practice (7th semester, 10 ECTS points) • Students also have a possibility to enrol for professional practice abroad.
	Pre-school and pre-primary education (part-time) (<i>Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika (sesijinė I)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice of pre-school teacher assistant (4th semester, 10 ECTS points) • Pedagogical practice with a mentor (7th semester, 10 ECTS points) • Autonomous pedagogical practice (9th semester, 10 ECTS points)
	Pre-school and pre-primary education (in English language for Foreign students)	• n/a
Vilnius University of Applied Sciences (<i>Vilniaus kolegija</i>)	Childhood pedagogy (full-time) (<i>Vaikystės pedagogika (dieninė NL)</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice of pedagogue assistant 1 • Practice of pedagogue assistant 2 • Pedagogical practice with a mentor • Autonomous pedagogical practice
	Childhood pedagogy (part-time) (<i>Vaikystės pedagogika (sesijinė I)</i>)	• n/a

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

The Education Development Centre (*Ugdymo Plėtotės Centras*), a national agency affiliated to the Ministry of Education and Science, regulates the in-service teacher and pedagogue training in Lithuania. This includes: the expert evaluation and accreditation of training programmes for teachers/pedagogues and heads of schools and ECEC centres; the external evaluation and accreditation of institutions implementing training programmes; the evaluation of school/ECEC staff's performance in the classroom.

Earlier, a Teacher Competence Centre, established in 2003, was responsible for organising the supervision of qualification developments in the pedagogue sector and accrediting institutions providing IPS and CPD programmes. When this institution ceased to exist, most of its duties were transferred back to the Education Development Centre. The majority of the CPD forms are available only for pedagogical staff (core practitioners and qualified co-workers) and does not include pedagogue assistants without a relevant qualification.

Core practitioners are entitled to five days per year for their professional development; however, they are not obliged to make use of this opportunity. As with other issues, there is no specific regulation for the professional development of pedagogue assistants since they are not considered to be part of the core educational staff.

Pedagogues do not have to pay for continuing professional development. Costs are covered either by the ECEC institution where the pedagogue is employed or by the state (organised nationally through the Education Development Centre).

Participation in further study routes such as Master-level studies is financially supported by the state according to the regulation applicable to all higher education programmes in Lithuania. Depending on their previous study achievements and/or an admission test as well as competition in the study area, students can receive full funding from the government.

CPD for early childhood and pre-primary education staff can be provided by the following institutions, according to the *Concept of Continuing Pedagogue Development (Pedagogų kvalifikacijos tobulinimo koncepcija)*: higher education institutions, state and municipal institutions (education centres and other educational support institutions), other organisations as well as private individuals provided they have a license for offering training services (they can participate in the competition for providing qualification development for pedagogues; MoES 2012c).

Specific forms of CPD are formally recognised in terms of career advancement: according to the *Description of the Remuneration for Education Institutions Staff and Pedagogues in other Institutions (Švietimo įstaigų darbuotojų ir kitų įstaigų pedagoginių darbuotojų darbo apmokėjimo tvarkos aprašas; MoES 2013a)*, pedagogues with an additional qualification (Master's degree) have a right to a salary supplement of 0.5 Basic Monthly Salary (*Bazinė menesinė alga*, equal to 35.50€). Additionally, their regular salary depends upon a teacher's qualifications; therefore, participating in CPD activities is a way of improving the salary as well as career prospects.

There are no specific additional requirements for principals/centre heads of ECEC provision in Lithuania. In contrast to the regulations for primary and secondary education, a college higher education degree and three years of pedagogical experience is a sufficient basis for becoming a centre head (MoES 2011).

No large scale research projects could be identified which have received funding to analyse CPD activities of ECEC personnel during the last five years (other than those outlined in Section 7).

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

New Trade Union initiative

On August 6th 2015, a number of initiatives to improve early childhood/pre-primary education financing, quality and employee conditions were raised in a meeting between the Ministry of Education and representatives of the Trade Union for Lithuanian Education Institutions. MoE was encouraged to: (1) change the current pre-school basket of four daily hours to eight daily hours using EU Structural Funds, government funding and education sector savings; (2) increase ECEC employees' salary coefficients to reach school teachers' level; (3) create new workplaces for Early Childhood Pedagogues, assistants, speech therapists, and psychologists to meet the demand of a growing ECEC child population; (4) increase non-contact time from three to six hours without increasing the current total of 36 hours weekly; (5) change the regulation for remuneration of early childhood and Pre-primary Pedagogues by including work experience and qualification category into the coefficient for their regular monthly salary; (6) start considering the occupation of early childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogue assistants as pedagogical by giving financial and organisational opportunity to obtain necessary qualification and by acknowledging the importance of their role and responsibility regarding increased emotional-psychological pressure (LSIPS 2015).

Recent national training project

From January 2012 to August 2015 a national training project on the *Development of Pre-school and Pre-primary Education (Ikimokyklinio ir priešmokyklinio ugdymo plėtra)* aimed to increase the accessibility of early childhood and pre-primary education and its variety, ensure the quality of ECEC and to provide the necessary education support according to the individual needs of children. The target groups of the project were pedagogues, educational support specialists as well as children. The competence specifications of the target groups were developed during the project through workshops attended by both pedagogues and deputy heads (responsible for the curriculum in ECEC centres) of pre-school and pre-primary education institutions (UPC 2009).

New national professional organisation for physical activities in ECEC provision

On August 21st 2014, a national association of early childhood physical activities pedagogues (*Respublikinė ikimokyklinio ugdymo kūno kultūros pedagogų asociacija*) was established. It is an autonomous, voluntary, non-profit organisation which unites all Lithuanian Early Childhood Pedagogues who are willing to develop skills in mentoring physical activity classes as well as general cooperation. The association is planning to organise seminars, conferences, various projects as well as workshops.

Long-term internships for practising teachers

The third phase in the development of an In-service Teachers' Training and Retraining System (*Pedagogų kvalifikacijos tobulinimo ir perkvalifikavimo sistemos plėtra (III etapas)*) was organised between December 2012 and June 2015. During long-term internships (1 to 12 months in length), practising Early Childhood Pedagogues, pre-primary and general education teachers had a chance to detach themselves from their direct work and develop professional skills, get new experiences and learn to adapt in a different working environment. The following types of internships were organised during the project period: studies at university; development of education tools and textbooks; management of education projects or participation in project activities; internships in Lithuanian education, science, culture institutions and business companies in Lithuania and abroad. The project was aiming to create conditions for permanent teachers' qualification improvement by testing new forms of long-term internships as well as to evaluate an experience of long-term internships and envision opportunities for their further implementation (UPC 2015).

Teaching Lithuanian as an additional language

Methodical tools for the teachers who work with children whose first language is other than Lithuanian have been developed in a book published in 2015 by the Ministry of Education "Second language in early childhood", aiming to introduce teachers to various methods of teaching language and to different stages of language development (Ikimokyklinis 2015).

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

Mentoring competence model

Source: Monkevičienė, O. and B. Autukevičienė 2011. (see *References* for details)

Aims: To theoretically and empirically define a competence model for mentors who supervise and support early childhood pedagogy students during their practical work placements.

Procedure: The authors carried out a theoretical analysis of the professional competences of mentors as well as a survey of pre-school education mentors. It was then followed by the quantitative data analysis.

Findings: The empirical research confirmed the theoretical model of mentoring competence in pre-school education and emphasized the importance of distinguishing between skills and competencies. The authors highlight in particular the importance of a mentor's personal and assessment competence, expertise and ability to encourage reflection.

Professional Development of Pre-school Education Pedagogues.

Source: Bankauskienė N. and R. Masaitytė 2014. (see *References* for details)

Aims: The paper aims to analyse a specific professional development concept, its parameters, and ways in which (social) pedagogues in preschool education institutions have to organise their professional development taking into account their role and activities in ECEC.

Procedure: Qualitative research has been used to disclose the opinion of the informants on the concept of professional development, to indicate the activity fields of (social) pedagogues working in preschool institutions, to discuss ways of further development and the frequency of this process and to indicate what forms of development they would like to see in the future.

Findings: According to the study, it is essential to ensure systemic, specific, continuous professional development for (social) pedagogues in pre-school education institutions.

Typical features of dynamics, variety and evaluation of quality management systems in institutions of preschool education based on the views of centre heads and pedagogues

Source: Martišauskienė, D. 2011. (see *References* for details)

Aims: The paper aims to introduce theoretical knowledge of quality and its conception identifying typical features, principles and their dynamics in quality management.

Procedure: Empirical research was conducted by interviewing the heads and pedagogues of pre-school education institutions in Western Lithuania. This research included 470 respondents: 130 centre heads and 340 pedagogues working in pre-school education institutions.

Findings: The results reveal the difficulty of defining quality, its conceptualisation and the typical features of a quality management system. The study confirms that both the heads and pedagogues realise that the main indication for quality management is providing good quality early childhood education and meeting the demands of the children and parents.

8. General workforce issues

8.1 Remuneration

The remuneration of education staff is low compared to the average salaries for other specialists in Lithuania. In the first quarter of 2016, the average monthly salary of teachers working at all levels of public sector education was 634.90€ after and 820.50€ before deductions (Statistics Lithuania 2016). The dissatisfaction of pedagogues at all levels is made publicly visible through regular participation in strikes and demonstrations. It is important to note, that the salaries of ECEC practitioners are lower than those of primary school teachers even though the qualification requirements are comparable. Moreover, compared with other countries, Lithuanian pre-school institutions have the highest numbers of children per pedagogue (European

Commission, EACEA, Eurydice, and Eurostat 2014). No national data are available on the average salaries of early childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogues.

This reflects the low salary situation in the public services sector in general, including such professions as medical staff, police officers, fire-fighters etc. It is a challenge to live in a major city on an Early Childhood Pedagogue's salary.

Furthermore, it is essential to highlight the case of the pedagogue assistants in ECEC institutions. Despite the fact, that the importance of early childhood educational staff and assistants is repeatedly underlined in the international literature, these employees are experiencing the largest discrepancy between their responsibilities and the government-endorsed wage levels.

The specific salary of Early Childhood Pedagogues depends on their qualification category, experience and whether they work full-time or part-time. According to the *Description of the Remuneration for Education Institutions Staff and Pedagogues in other Institutions* (MoES 2013a), the service ratio for the salary is defined by the head of a specific educational institution after coming to an agreement with employee representatives. However, the document provides principals of ECEC provision with exact coefficient boundaries depending on the pedagogue's experience. Ratios and salary supplements are defined according to the Salary Fund confirmed for each institution. Summing up, the municipal and individual institution levels have considerable autonomy in deciding on the salaries of employees.

With the increasing number of children now participating in pre-school education and the disproportionately slow increase of national and municipal resources, the financing of pre-school education per child has been shrinking for some years despite the introduction of a pre-school children's "basket".⁶ Since this is one of the most important sources for ECEC staff salaries, basically no increase of remuneration can be noted during recent years. Neither the Department of Statistics nor the Ministry of Education provides information on an 'average salary' for early childhood/Pre-primary Pedagogues. With the national rise in the monthly minimum wage in Lithuania, remuneration for the lowest-paid employees (non-educational/technical staff) has experienced an increase to a threshold of 350€. The minimum wage was further increased to 380€ on 1st July, 2016 (BNS 2015).

Educational staff can receive additional remuneration for extra responsibilities or additional work such as mentoring and supervising students during their work placements/field studies. This is decided by the centre head in accordance with the Salary Fund capacity allocated to the institution. There is also a salary supplement which accounts for 5-20% of the total salary; awarding this supplement is also decided by the centre head, depending on the capacity of the Salary Fund (MoES 2013a).

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

Full time staff work 36 hours per week. Work contract issues such as being employed part-time or additional hours are agreed upon at the municipal level. For instance, the principals of pre-school education institutions in Vilnius can change the dedicated plans for each workplace under the condition that no additional workplaces are created and the annual Salary Fund is not exceeded (Ikimokyklinis.lt, 2013). Therefore, it is foreseen that employees and their representatives participate in the decision-making process regarding the planning of the workload and a fair calculation of the salary.

⁶ In Lithuania, educational institutions are funded on the principle of 'the money follows the pupil'. In early childhood education and care the 'basket' method was introduced in 2011. The 'pupil's basket' which consists of funds for education is provided to both state and private educational institutions (Eurydice 2016).

Table 7

Lithuania: Number of employees in the ECEC workforce, full- and part-time, 2015

	Full-time employees	Part-time employees	Average full-time equivalent number of employees ⁷
Early childhood education pedagogues	7,764	1,896	8,951
Pre-primary education pedagogues	1,289	437	1,540
Art education pedagogues	518	644	787
Administration and technical staff (including pedagogue assistants)	6,010	3,759	8,222

Source: Statistics Lithuania 2015

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

One of the easily accessible platforms available for practising Early Childhood Pedagogues is a dedicated website on pre-school education (www.ikimokyklinis.lt), which supplies relevant, systemised information to the employees who are willing to develop their competences. In addition to this, there is also an E-School website (*Portalas emokykla*) which aims to improve conditions of information retrieval and to provide electronic services to pedagogues as well as to children and their parents.

The Centre for Special Pedagogy and Psychology (*Specialiosios pedagogikos ir psichologijos centras*) develops special pedagogical/psychological and social pedagogical support systems in the country, carries out supervision and gives specialist support to municipal ECEC services. The centre also organises professional development events for pedagogues.

Core practitioners in Lithuania are represented by the Lithuanian Education Employees Trade Union which is most visible in public as an advocate for teacher/pedagogue salary issues and as a platform for demonstrations or strikes. Pedagogue assistants are not represented by any union, which further undermines their interests in the workplace.

Since July 2011, new Child Wellbeing Committees (*Vaiko gerovės komisija*) have been initiated for all pre-school education institutions. Their goal is to organise and coordinate preventive work, educational support, create a safe and friendly environment for children's education, tailor education programmes to children with special educational needs, conduct an initial evaluation of children's special educational needs and other activities related to ensuring children's wellbeing. Committee members generally, but not always, include: the centre head, a senior pedagogue, the head of the education programme department, educational support specialists (social pedagogue, psychologist, special pedagogue, speech therapist), a health care specialist, group leaders (curators), Early Childhood Pedagogues, parents (foster-parents, guardians), representatives of the local community and parishes as well as other members of society (NMVA 2015).

There is neither an organised system for on-site mentoring in Lithuania nor a formal induction programme for newly qualified teachers (European Commission 2015). This can perhaps be explained by the overall lack of young pedagogues involved in pre-school education institutions as well as by the requirement for higher education institutions to organise field-based studies during their IPS programmes; therefore, induction programmes are not deemed necessary at the policy level.

8.4 Non-contact time

Core practitioners working full-time in municipal pre-school institutions have 33 hours weekly to fulfil their regular duties with children. In addition to that, three hours of non-contact time are granted for complementary work such as planning or working with parents. In the case of

⁷ Vidutinis sąlyginis darbuotojų skaičius – relative number of employees recalculated as working full-time (complete month, daily-full time)

pedagogue assistants there are no such regulations since they are not considered part of the pedagogical staff (MoES 2013a).

The regulation differs for Pre-primary Pedagogues. The principal of an early childhood institution or a school with a pre-primary education group prepares a specific description of the pre-primary education pedagogue's workload in which the number of hours to be spent on each activity are set down according to the pre-primary education organisation model approved by the municipality (or, in a few cases, state institution; Ikimokyklinis.lt 2012a).

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

Recent policy changes in early childhood and pre-primary education (compulsory pre-primary participation and expansion of pre-school sector) have led to an increase in the ECEC population, meaning that additional pedagogues are needed. To increase the number of ECEC staff, the Ministry of Education has initiated a requalification programme for teachers who have lost their job due to a decreasing number of pupils to start working in pre-school and pre-primary education programmes without initially having the necessary competences for such work (see also section 3.3; MoES 2012a). The selection of pedagogues for the relevant IPS courses is carried out by the Education Development Centre (*Ugdymo plėtotės centras*).

However, overall the attractiveness of profession is undermined by the low wages offered to the employees by municipal institutions and the low social prestige of the profession.

Moreover, 87.5% of teachers in schools and ECEC centres in Lithuania are female. The overall share of male teachers across the country is very low; however, the number of male pedagogues in early childhood education institutions is even lower and accounts for less than 1% of the workforce (MoES, ŠVIS 2016). This can be partly explained by the rather unfavourable and biased views towards male Early Childhood Pedagogues amongst the general population.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

The future of early childhood and pre-primary education is dependent on attracting well-educated and professionally prepared pedagogues. Unfortunately, the current **attractiveness** of pedagogical and educational studies is very low: In recent years, the grade point average for the admission to the ECEC and school education programmes was among the lowest - 15.62 in 2012. By way of comparison, medicine and health studies had an average of 19.22 in the same year. It clearly shows that the most advanced and educated students are not choosing education as their future profession (MoES 2013b).

It is clear that one of the main issues of this lack of attractiveness is related to the low remuneration for specialists in this sector. This is an issue that has to be solved in order to ensure a well-educated and motivated workforce for this level of the education system. At the very least, salaries for early childhood and Pre-primary Pedagogues should be aligned to those of the general teacher workforce, since working with young children brings with it the same emotional challenges and responsibilities.

In order to ensure the growth of quality in early childhood and pre-primary education, it is essential to guarantee the financial, psychological and social satisfaction of the pedagogue profession. Young specialists are not applying to the workplaces in ECEC institutions and are looking for other opportunities. Meanwhile, the average age of the workforce in ECEC, compared with staff working at other levels of the education system, is growing at a fast pace (NMVA 2015).

Newly prepared pedagogues who start working in the ECEC institutions just after completion of a higher education programme possess **insufficient competencies**. This situation is widespread despite the fact that the *Regulation on the Preparation of Pedagogues (Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas, 2010)* underlines the importance of education and developing the competences of ECEC pedagogues through professional development activities both in IPS programmes and when they are members of the workforce (Stankevičienė and Monkevičienė 2008).

Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that far more attention should be paid to the conditions of **Pedagogue Assistants** who have been in a precarious situation for many years. As outlined in section 6.1., a number of changes regarding pedagogue assistants need to be made, including changing the imbalance between remuneration and duties/responsibilities. Moreover, a clear pathway towards qualification development for such employees should be ensured. The current situation creates dissatisfaction among the pedagogue assistants as well as tensions between non-pedagogical and pedagogical staff due to a number of inequalities.

Experts identify several existing **obstacles for effective initial professional studies** for early childhood education and care pedagogues in Lithuania. Firstly, there is a general unwillingness to accept innovations. Secondly, the national education policy direction is not clear whereas the institutions themselves do not pay adequate attention to the evaluation of their study programmes. Thirdly, the first level degree studies for future ECEC pedagogues are very similar and lack specialisation. Fourthly, the quality of academic research is not sufficient. Also, there is too much attention on task fulfilment rather than reflection on future pedagogues' skills development. Lastly, a high number of successful job searches (98%) after completing studies is creating a false image that the preparation of pedagogues is on the right track, even though it can be simply explained by a shortage within the ECEC workforce and lower numbers of students in study programmes (Gražienė 2015).

According to a *General Report on the Colleges and Universities 2013 - Pre-school Education Programs*, conducted by the IPS Quality and Evaluation Centre, initial professional studies for ECEC pedagogues face a number of problems and challenges ahead (SKVC 2013). These include: lack of quality control; low student numbers in programmes; lack of a detailed focus on psychology related to 0- to 7-year olds; a high drop-out rate; poor participation in exchange programmes; low standards of final thesis; lack of proper data on various aspects of studies; unclear focus of Master-level studies and other issues (SKVC 2013).

Initial teacher education providers need to improve their strategies for field-based studies related to developing criteria for selecting the early childhood centres/schools with pre-primary groups, the rotation of the institutions, payment to the pre-school and pre-primary education institutions for student internships, etc. Moreover, workplace-based learning needs to become a core element in the IPS programmes (Gražienė 2015).

There are noticeable differences between the accessibility and quality of ECEC in urban and rural areas. As illustrated in *Table 2* (see section 2.2), rural pre-school education institutions have a very small number of additional pedagogical staff working on their premises. This results in various issues such as the core practitioners having to take on additional responsibility and workload as well as affecting the overall quality of education. The most striking issue in this context is the inaccessibility of psychological support for both children and Early Childhood Pedagogues in rural pre-school education institutions.

As mentioned before, one of the issues is the pronounced unequal distribution of gender in the early childhood and pre-primary workforce, which does not reflect the child population and fails to ensure a diverse approach towards ECEC. Moreover, at the moment, most of the pedagogues are barely prepared to work with diversity. Currently the whole education system in the country tends to be rather segregated (with some Polish and Russian minority groups having their own pre-school institutions) and with a potential growth of other ethnic minorities, the lack of preparation among the pedagogue workforce could become an issue.

In our view, the following objectives should be followed in order to ensure a professional and prepared workforce in early childhood and pre-primary education: (a) making efforts to attract young people to the profession; (b) developing high quality modern study programmes which include up-to-date knowledge and give future pedagogues the possibility to improve their competences and attitudes (c) strengthening the motivation of pedagogues by regularly offering possibilities of continuing professional development in various spheres and by giving them a chance to return to a higher education institution for a semester; (d) stimulating constant knowledge sharing between pedagogues in national and foreign contexts; (e) strengthening society's trust in the educational system as well as the pedagogues' self-confidence.

A further issue is connected with the decentralisation of the curriculum for pre-school education institutions. Pedagogues were formerly used to working with well-structured programmes. Currently they lack clear guidelines on how to effectively support children's learning processes: for many it is difficult to recognise the different levels of pre-school children achievements, create an evaluation framework for these achievements, and to individualise their education programme and to connect it with the real needs of children (Monkevičienė et al. 2009).

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