

SPAIN

ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report author

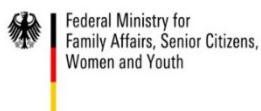
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1. ECEC governance

In Spain, an integrated approach to ECEC was adopted by the 1990 Education Act (*Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo* - LOGSE). This national law explicitly recognised that, from infancy onwards, ECEC provision constitutes the first step along the educational pathway. Since that time, ECEC has come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, currently called the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte* - MECS). ECEC 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 and integrated settings for both cycles (*escuelas infantiles*). Currently, the MECS defines the general framework for the entire national system of ECEC, but it operates as a decentralised governance system in terms of its implementation. This means that the Departments of Education of the 17 Autonomous Communities are responsible for the running of pre-primary education in their territories and that local authorities also play a role in the organisation of the first cycle of ECEC (0- to 2-year olds). This means that responsibilities are distributed on four levels: central government; regional government (autonomous communities); local authorities; and schools/early childhood centres.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

The 1990 Education Act LOGSE not only made provision for a complete restructuring of the education system for children aged 0 to 6 years but also for a reform and up-grading of the professional qualifications needed to work in this field. Since 1990 there are now two main groups of professional workers in early years settings:

- *Maestra especialista en educación infantil* – Early Childhood Education Teacher
- *Técnica superior en educación infantil* – Senior Specialist in Early Childhood Education

Only the *maestras* work as group leaders in the second cycle of early childhood education, whereas in the first cycle, either *maestros* or Senior Specialist in ECE may take on the role as core practitioner with group responsibility. In infant-toddler centres for under-threes, at least one *maestro/maestra* has to be part of the centre team. Following LOGSE, the auxiliary worker training scheme was abolished and minimum entry requirements for the remaining personnel in early childhood services were up-graded considerably.

However, since the 2006 Education Act (*Ley Orgánica 2/2006 de Educación*, LOE), in educational institutions there are different types of professionals responsible for support in the fields of education and/or health of young children. They are specialists who have been specifically trained to perform such duties. Early childhood provision may have all or some of these professionals on their staff depending on the institution's needs and/or features (Royal Decree 1630/2006). According to their qualification, these staff members may be classified as follows:

Higher education graduates: These may include *licenciados* (those who graduated before the Bologna process was adopted), paediatricians, or architects, with duties corresponding to their respective training.

Intermediate graduates:

- Registered Nurses: within the scope of their professional qualifications, they monitor and care for pupils who fall ill, supervise the administration of prescribed medication, etc.
- Speech Therapists: they provide specific treatment for speech disorders in coordination with other professionals involved in each case.
- Physiotherapists: provide specific treatment to students with physical problems and are

responsible for students' health care if there are no nurses on the staff. They are also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the treatment the student is undergoing, in coordination with the rehabilitation physician, as appropriate, and for teaching pupils how to handle and use any equipment or aids adapted to their needs, etc.

- Occupational Therapists: provide specific treatment for functional recovery by teaching students how to handle aids and prostheses, by training them in various kinds of activities and by designing or making adaptations that contribute to students' learning and well-being. They are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the treatment the student is undergoing, in coordination with the other professionals in the institution.

Other qualifications:

- Practical Nurses: professionals with training in intermediate *ciclos formativos* (vocational education/training cycles) in the field of health care. They perform the tasks entrusted to them by a physician/paediatrician or a registered nurse, who supervises their work.
- Play workers: cooperate with the *maestra* to plan leisure and free time activities. They are responsible for carrying out such activities and assisting pupils during such activities; they coordinate and monitor extracurricular teaching and cooperate in monitoring pupils' schooling, liaising between the institution and families, etc.
- Infant Assistants: they help other staff look after pre-primary education pupils, especially in relation to their diet, their well-being and personal attention to children. They are specifically in charge of pupils' hygiene in the classroom.
- *Técnicas Especialistas III* in Education (Supervisors): persons with a second-level vocational training certificate or equivalent qualifications who provide additional support to pupils with disabilities, assisting them on the school bus, helping them with their daily personal care and also in the dining room, during the night and in other similar situations. They also monitor hallways during classroom changes, students' toilets, classrooms (when the teacher is absent) and school playgrounds (during breaks) in coordination with teaching staff, who are directly responsible for such activities.

Table 1 shows the main types of ECEC staff in centre-based settings in Spain 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 end of this section).

Table 1

Spain: 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
<p><i>Maestro especialista en educación infantil</i> Early Childhood Education Teacher</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional</p>	<p><i>Escuela de educación infantil unificada</i> Integrated early childhood centre 0- to 6-year olds (1st and 2nd cycle)</p> <p><i>Centros incompletos de primer ciclo de educación infantil</i> Separate infant-toddler centre 0- to 3-year olds (1st cycle)</p>	<p>Core practitioner with group responsibility</p> <p>Centre head</p>	0-6 years	<p>Bachelor, 4 years university</p> <p>ECTS points: 240</p> <p>EQF: Level 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0112</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p>

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012, 2014.

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
	<i>Colegio de Educación Infantil y Primaria</i> Early childhood unit in primary school 3- to 6-year olds (2nd cycle)			
<i>Técnica superior en educación infantil</i> Senior Specialist in Early Childhood Education <i>Profile: Social Care/Health Care Professional</i>	<i>Escuela de educación infantil unificada</i> Early childhood integrated centre 0- to 6-year olds (1st and 2nd cycle) <i>Centros incompletos de primer ciclo de educación infantil</i> Separate infant-toddler centre 0 to 3 years (1st cycle)	Core practitioner with group responsibility (only for work with 0- to 3-year olds) Qualified co-worker	0-3 years	Post-secondary Diploma/Higher Technician in Early Childhood Education ECTS points: n/a ² EQF: Level 5 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4
<i>Técnica / Auxiliar en educación infantil</i> ECE Teacher's Assistant	<i>Escuela de educación infantil unificada</i> Early childhood integrated centre 0- to 6-year olds (1st and 2nd cycle) <i>Escuela de educación infantil</i> Early childhood centre 0- to 3-year olds 3- to 6- year olds (1 st and 2nd cycle) <i>Escuelas de educación infantil primer ciclo</i> Early childhood centre/infant-toddler unit 0 to 3 years (1st cycle)	Short-term qualified co-worker	0-6 years	6 months (100-150 hours depending on the Autonomous Community) vocational education + 1-2 months (100-150 hours) in a work placement. ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 3
<i>Monitor/ Animadora de ocio y tiempo libre</i> Play Worker/ Sociocultural Animator	<i>Escuela de educación infantil</i> Early childhood centre <i>Escuela de educación infantil y primaria</i> Early childhood unit in primary school 0- to 3-year olds (1st cycle) 3- to 6-year olds (2nd cycle)	Short-term qualified co-worker	All ages	6 months (100-150 hours depending on the Autonomous Community) vocational education + 1-2 months (100-150 hours) in a work placement. ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 3

² n/a = not applicable.

Box 1

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* (broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- *Social Care/Health Care Professional* (sometimes focus on early childhood, sometimes broad focus, including adults)

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

Table 2:

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

Staff categories	Year / Proportion of workforce
Staff with specialist higher education degree	No systematically compiled national data – but since a Bachelor’s degree is required for working as a core practitioner in early childhood settings (3-6), a high proportion can be assumed*
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	No systematically compiled national data**
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	No systematically compiled national data**
Staff with non-specialist qualification	No systematically compiled national data
Unqualified staff	2014: n/a ***
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	0.9% off-site*
Male staff	2014: 2.3% total* 19.1% centre heads or administrators (12.1% centre heads + 7% centre secretaries)*; unknown core practitioners; unknown qualified co-workers**
Staff with a background of migration	No systematically compiled national data

*In 2014, 6.2% of all teachers across the education system were pre-primary teachers (MECS 2015a: Sections B.3.2, B.3.3 and B.3.4).

** Disaggregated data for this category are not available. The official data from the MECS do not specify the percentages among professionals working in formal ECEC services by type of qualification. The only relevant data are the percentage of staff working with children from 0-3 in non-formal ECEC (with Professional Careers or other careers with no remuneration), which is 18% (MECS 2015b).

*** The 2006 Education Act LOE stipulates that only qualified staff may work with children aged 0 to 6 years.

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

In Spain, both Early Childhood Education Teachers and Primary School Teachers are required to have a Bachelor’s degree. This is considered to be generalist qualification. For all other levels of education requiring a certain subject specialisation, a Master’s degree is required.

Today, following the reform instigated by the 1990 LOGSE Education Act, there are two main kinds of qualified professionals working with young children: (1) university-level trained teachers with a focus on early childhood education (Early Childhood Education Teachers) and (2) Senior Specialists in Early Childhood Education trained at post-secondary level for work mainly with the under-threes.

The following tables outline the professional qualifications and fields of work of the professional groups who work directly and on a daily basis with young children.

Early Childhood Education Teacher (*Maestra especialista en educación infantil*)

A four-year university-level degree with a specialisation in early childhood education is the required qualification for Early Childhood Education Teachers wishing to work in both public and privately run ECEC provision (Royal Decree 476/2013). The initial qualification route was transferred to university colleges specialising in teacher preparation in 1970, and the post-1990 route for prospective early childhood education teachers (*maestros especialistas en educación infantil*) stipulated higher entry requirements. The professional education/training syllabus was reformed in accordance with the Bologna Process, and currently the study route takes four years to complete and comprises 240 ECTS points. Today, the IPS programme takes place at university-based Teacher Education faculties and qualifies for the age-group 0 to 6 years. It is a Bachelor-level qualification (*primer ciclo de formación universitaria*), in contrast to the Master's degree which is the requirement for teachers working in all stages of the education system except pre-primary and primary.

Table 3

Spain: Early Childhood Education Teacher (IPS)

Job title in Spanish: <i>Maestra en educación infantil</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
<p><i>Since 2006:</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 10 years of compulsory schooling (up to 16) + 2 pre-university foundation years from 16 to 18; school leaving certificate – <i>Bachillerato</i>.</p> <p>Professional studies: 4 years higher education at a university faculty for teacher training (<i>Facultad universitaria de formación de profesorado</i>) – specialised training for work with 0- to 6-year olds</p> <p>Award: University Bachelor's degree/Early Childhood Education, <i>Grado en Maestro/a en Educación Infantil</i>.</p> <p>ECTS points: 240</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0112</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: Early childhood centre (<i>Escuela de educación infantil</i>), 0- to 3-year olds (1st cycle), 3- to 6-year olds (2nd cycle); Early Childhood Education and Primary School (<i>Escuela de Educación Infantil y Primaria</i>), 3- to 6-year olds and 6- to 12-year olds.</p> <p><i>From 1990 to 2006:</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 12 years of schooling + school leaving certificate + 1 pre-university foundation year (COU)</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years vocational higher education at a university college for teacher education (<i>Escuela universitaria de formación de profesorado</i>) – specialised training for work with 0- to 6-year olds</p> <p>Award: University degree/Early Childhood Education, <i>Diplomado Maestro Especialidad en Educación Infantil</i></p> <p>ECTS points: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: n/a</p> <p>ISCED 1997: 5A</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: see above</p>

Senior Specialist in Early Childhood Education (*Técnico superior en educación infantil*)

A number of transition regulations applied up to 2000 for those who had a job before the 1990 legislation came into force. In 1987 and 1993, a specific form of training was developed for practitioners working in early childhood centres without formal qualifications. This qualifying route was designed to take into account previously accumulated work experience and to enable them to continue working as an early childhood centre employee. The 2006 Education Act

LOE stipulates that only qualified staff may work with children aged 0 to 6 years.

Table 4

Spain: Senior Specialist in Early Childhood Education (IPS)

<p>Job title in Spanish: <i>Técnico superior en educación infantil</i> Profile: Social Care/Health Care Professional</p>
<p><i>Since 2006:</i> Entry requirements: 10 years of schooling (6 to 16 years) + 2 years pre-university foundation; school leaving certificate (<i>Bachillerato</i>) or a successfully completed access test for higher professional training (minimum age 20 years) Professional studies: Approx. 1½ years (1,600 hours) post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational education + 3 months (400 hours) in a work placement. Focus on age-group 0 to 3 years. Award: Diploma/Higher Technician in Early Childhood Education, <i>Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil</i> ECTS points: 120 EQF level: 5 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4 Main ECEC workplace: Early childhood integrated centres/infant-toddler unit in separated settings (<i>Escuelas de educación infantil unificadas/unidades de primer ciclo en centros separados</i>), 0 to 3 years (1st cycle).</p> <p><i>From 1990 to 2006:</i> Entry requirements: 12 years schooling + leaving certificate (<i>BUP</i>) + 1 pre-university foundation year (<i>COU</i>) or <i>bachillerato experimental or Formación profesional, módulo 2</i>); minimum entry age 18 years Professional studies: Approx. 1 year (900 hours) post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational education + 3 months (400 hours) in a work placement. Focus on age-group 0 to 3 years. Award: Diploma/ Higher Technician in Early Childhood Education, <i>Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil</i> ECTS points: n/a EQF level: n/a ISCED 1997: 5B Main ECEC workplace: see above</p>

ECE Teacher's Assistant (*Técnica/Auxiliar en educación infantil*)

The *Técnicos o Auxiliares en Educación Infantil* assist other staff to look after early childhood education pupils, especially in relation to their diet, their well-being and personal attention to children. Mostly, they are specifically in charge of children's hygiene in the classroom or attending them during meal times. There is no national regulation for this professional profile. The 2006 Education Act LOE stipulated that only qualified staff may work with children aged 0 to 6 years. However, the Infant Assistant certificate is partly recognised, that means, not on a national basis by the MECS, but by some of the Autonomous Services of Employment, and it is mainly offered in agreement with certain private training institutions

The professionalisation of this sector has been an important reform to improve the quality of the provision especially for the first cycle of the stage and in order to guarantee the equality of attention due to the integration of vulnerable groups that represent a challenge within the ECEC provision.

Table 5

Spain: ECE Teacher's Assistant (IPS)

<p>Job title in Spanish: <i>Técnica/Auxiliar en educación infantil</i></p>
<p><i>Since 2006:</i> Entry requirements: 10 years of schooling (6 to 16 years) (minimum age 16 years) Professional studies: ½ year (100-150 hours depending on the autonomous community) vocational education + 1-2 months (100-150 hours) in a work placement. Award: Certificate of Infant Assistant in Early Childhood Education, <i>Técnica/Auxiliar en Educación Infantil</i></p>



Job title in Spanish: Técnica/Auxiliar en educación infantil

ECTS points: n/a

EQF level: 3

ISCED 2013-F: 0922

ISCED 2011: 3

Main ECEC workplace: Early childhood centre (*Escuela de educación infantil*), 0- to 3-year olds (1st cycle), 3- to 6-year olds (2nd cycle); Early childhood centre/infant-toddler unit (*Escuelas de educación infantil primer ciclo*), 0 to 3 years (1st cycle)

From 1990 to 2006:

Entry requirements: 8 years of schooling + school leaving certificate

Professional studies: Approx. 1 year of vocational education. Focus on age-group 0 to 3 years.

Award: Kindergarten auxiliary specialist, *Técnica auxiliar de jardín de infancia*

ECTS points: n/a

EQF level: n/a

ISCED 1997: 2

Main ECEC workplace: see above

Play Worker/Sociocultural Animator (*Monitor/Animador de ocio y tiempo libre*)

Play Workers are not specialists in early childhood education, but in leisure and free time activities in various educational institutions. They generally work independently with children before and after school hours and during the break times. However, in the case of settings for children below age 3, they may also sometimes work alongside the teacher, or even as a substitute for the teacher, particularly in private settings. The certificate of Play Worker for leisure and free time is recognised as a vocational education route on a national basis by the MECS, but the competence to establish the IPS route lies in the responsibility of the Education Authorities of each Autonomous Community (Institut Valencià de la Juventut 2002:7).

In Spain, the initial training of professionals in the leisure and free time field began in the 1960s with courses for play workers and managers of leisure time. Later, in 1988, the degree of Technician in Sociocultural Animation was regulated on a national basis (Figueres and Morros 2005). However, the training received by sociocultural animator still faces some complications, as they receive very small practical learning against a very broad theoretical syllabus and little time to explore and extend this knowledge (Morros 2008).

Table 6

Spain: Play Worker/Sociocultural Animator (IPS)

Job title in Spanish: Monitor/Animador de ocio y tiempo libre

Since 2006:

Entry requirements: 10 years of schooling (6 to 16 years) (minimum age 16 years)

Professional studies: 6 months (100-150 hours depending on the Autonomous Community) vocational education + 1-2 months (100-150 hours) in a work placement.

Award: Certificate of Play Worker for leisure and free time, *Monitor/Animador de ocio y tiempo libre*.

ECTS points: n/a

EQF level: 3

ISCED 2013-F: 0922

ISCED 2011: 3

Main ECEC workplace: Early childhood centres, Early childhood Education and Primary School (*Escuela de educación infantil, Escuela de Educación Infantil y Primaria*), 0- to 3-year olds (1st cycle), 3- to 6-year olds (2nd cycle)

From 1990 to 2006:

Job title in Spanish: *Monitor/Animador de ocio y tiempo libre*

Entry requirements: 8 years of schooling + school leaving certificate

Professional studies: Approx. 1 year (900 hours) of regulated vocational education. Focus on leisure and free time in schools

Award: Play worker Specialist, *Técnico en Animación sociocultural*

ECTS points: n/a

EQF level: n/a

ISCED 1997: 3

Main ECEC workplace: see above

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes of core practitioners

Early Childhood Education Teacher (*Maestra especialista en educación infantil*)

Competence specifications: Prospective ECE Teachers will be expected to acquire competencies related to the implementation of curricular goals and content. These include addressing diversity; knowledge of ICT; school organisation; learning to live together both inside and outside the classroom; addressing language learning within multicultural and multilingual contexts; working effectively with families; reflecting on classroom practice; and knowledge of quality improvement models (Oberhuemer et al. 2010). Specifically, legislation regulating the new university bachelor degrees in pre-primary and primary education establishes the competences and abilities to be acquired by students (Royal Decree 1594/2011):

- Being familiar with the goals, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood/Pre-Primary Education;
- Designing and regulating learning environments in diversity contexts attending to the singular educational needs of children, gender equality, equity and respect to human rights;
- Promoting coexistence in and outside the classroom and dealing with the peaceful settlement of conflicts; being able to observe systematically learning and coexistence contexts and to be able to reflect on them; reflecting in the group on the acceptance of rules and respect for others; promoting children's autonomy and singularity as factors for educating emotions, feelings and values in early childhood,
- Knowing about language evolution during early childhood, being able to identify possible dysfunction and ensure the right intervention; dealing with situations for learning languages in multicultural and multilingual contexts; mastering the use of different techniques of expression in oral and written language;
- Knowing about the educational implications of Communication and Information Technologies and, mainly, of television in early childhood;
- Knowing about the foundations of child nutrition and hygiene;
- Knowing the foundations of early attention, psychological, learning and personality-building processes during early childhood;
- Knowing about the organisation of ECEC centres;
- Viewing teaching as a professional activity needing continuous improvement and adaptation according to scientific, pedagogic and social changes;
- Acting as a counsellor for parents regarding family education with children aged 0 to 6 years old and mastering social abilities in the treatment and relationship with the family of each child and with all families;
- Reflecting on class practices in terms of innovating and improving teaching work;
- Acquiring habits and skills for autonomous and cooperative learning and promoting this among children;

- Understanding the function, possibilities and limits of education in current society and the key competences that affect ECEC centres and pre-primary education and their professionals;
- Knowing about models for improving quality in educational institutions;
- Mastering the Castilian language equivalent to level C1 (in those Autonomous Communities with a co-official language, the co-official language equivalent to the level C1) apart from a foreign language equivalent to the level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Curricular areas: The initial professional study route for prospective ECE Teachers is organised in three curricular areas or modules: (1) theoretical frameworks, (2) didactic and disciplinary training, and (3) practical work placement/field-based studies.

The Bachelor study programmes are required nationwide to include the following modules and contents, without jeopardising the universities' autonomy (Royal Decree 1027/2011):

- **Basic education:** Education processes, learning and personality development (0-6 years old); Learning difficulties and developmental disorders; Society, family and school; Childhood, health and food; Organisation of the school room, materials and teaching abilities; Systematic observation and contexts analysis; Pre-Primary Education School/ECEC centre.
- **Didactic and disciplinary education:** Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Mathematics; Languages and Reading and Writing Literacy; Music, plastic expression and body language.
- **Practicum:** periods spent in educational institutions and the preparation of the Bachelor thesis project.
- **Qualifying mention (*mención cualificadora*):** Special subject/topic (e.g. working with children with special needs, children with autism) proposed by the university when the students choose and develop their Bachelor thesis project.

Apart from these common core subjects, in all study programmes there are compulsory subjects to be included according to each specialisation. In addition to these subjects, which are called common core compulsory subjects and common core specialised subjects, each university, in the exercise of its autonomy, is entitled to establish other compulsory as well as optional subjects. The pedagogic-didactic approach of the Bachelor studies emphasizes the autonomous student work in experiential learning. The IPS study route for Early Childhood Education Teachers was conceptualised under this approach, hence the realisation of field-based studies and work experience in early childhood centres settings has an important place in the overall studies. According to Eurydice (2017), 50 ECTS points are allocated to practical work experience, representing around one fifth of the total (BA=240 ECTS points), starting during the first semester of the study programme. The remaining credits are allocated to modules of basic education (100 ECTS points), didactic and disciplinary education (60 ECTS points), and the qualifying mention (*mención cualificadora*) (30-60 ECTS points) which means that the student can obtain a specialised degree after taking a minimum of 30 ECTS points.

Senior Specialist in Early Childhood Education (*Técnico superior en educación infantil*)

The Royal Decree 1394/2007 (18 July) set out the conditions for this advanced vocational qualification. In addition, each Autonomous Community established a regulatory framework for the examinations required. Intermediate and higher vocational training may be provided in institutions exclusively devoted to vocational education/training, or in regular schools with a specific upper secondary vocational route. In the latter case, the vocational training is organised independently, but personnel and material resources may be shared.

According to the Royal Decree 1538/2006, all these institutions must meet a series of requirements and conditions which apply throughout the whole of Spain.

The qualifying route for the *técnico superior* is fairly short and emphasises the birth to 3 age phase. It was upgraded considerably following LOGSE in 1990, and again in 2006 when the course length was extended from one year to one and a half years, with an additional three months (400 hours) spent in a work placement. This may be in the infant-toddler unit of an early childhood centre, in a children's hospital ward or in other childcare and social institutions.

Competence specifications: Senior Specialists in Early Childhood Education are expected to acquire the following competencies during their IPS (Royal Decree 1394/2007):

- Organising resources according to the children's needs and characteristics.
- Developing the programmed activities, employing the appropriate resources and methodological strategies and creating a climate of confidence.
- Designing and applying appropriate action strategies with families related to the goals and procedures of the ECEC institution;
- Coping with uncertainties regarding people, resources or environment, transmitting security and confidence;
- Evaluating the intervention process and the results achieved; preparing and managing the documentation associated with the process, with the goal of improving the quality of the service;
- Updating research and technical knowledge regarding their professional activity, using the available resources for lifelong learning;
- Maintaining relationships with the children, their families, community groups and other professionals;
- Managing cultural diversity and providing solutions to the conflicts that may occur;
- Creating safe environments, respecting the regulations and security protocols in the planning and development of activities;
- Exercising their rights and complying with their obligations under the current labour relations agreements;
- Managing their professional career, analysing work opportunities, self-employment and learning;
- Creating and managing a small enterprise, carrying out a products feasibility study, planning the production and marketing;
- Participating actively in economic, social and cultural issues, with a critical and responsible attitude.

Curricular areas: Qualification routes at the Advanced Vocational level required to adhere to a state-regulated Core Curriculum framework including (see Eurydice 2017):

- Didactics of Pre-Primary Education: 125 hours (14 ECTS points).
- Personal autonomy and child education: 105 hours (12 ECTS points).
- Children's play and methodology: 105 hours (12 ECTS points).
- Expression and communication: 100 hours (11 ECTS points).
- Cognitive and motor development: 105 hours (12 ECTS points).
- Social and emotional development: 75 hours (8 ECTS points).
- Social abilities: 60 hours (6 ECTS points).
- Intervention with families and attention to children at social risk: 60 hours (6 ECTS points).
- Projects to become familiarised with alternative services in early childhood education and care 25 hours (5 ECTS points).
- First aid: 35 hours (3 ECTS points).
- Work training and guidance: 50 hours (5 ECTS points).
- Enterprise and entrepreneurial initiative: 35 hours (4 ECTS points).
- Placements in various workplaces: 220 hours (22 ECTS points).

These studies are fully or partly provided, and some vocational modules are delivered in different modalities: in person, at a distance, or mixed. The number of credits allocated to this

qualification is 120 ECTS points. 20% of the time is spent in a work placement, and just over 18% of the ECTS points are awarded for work placements.

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Both levels of initial vocational education/training (intermediate and higher) are open to applicants who do not have the usual academic requirements, provided they pass a specific test proving that their background in the area will enable them to take full advantage of such training. In order to gain access to intermediate vocational training, pupils must hold the *Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* certificate. Pupils successfully completing these studies are awarded a *Técnico* certificate, with which they have access to Bachelor studies such as the degree of *Maestro en Educación Infantil*.

Also, plans are underway to establish a system for evaluating and accrediting knowledge and skills acquired through experience or non-formal means and for adapting and updating vocational qualification routes according to real market needs. The 2002 *Ley Orgánica de las Cualificaciones y de la Formación Profesional*, LOCFP (Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training) aimed to organise a comprehensive system of vocational training, qualifications and accreditation that provides a solution to social and economic demands through different types of training, including in-company and occupational training, and training addressed to the integration and reintegration of workers into the labour market. In this respect, among other measures, a system of grants and financial assistance was put in place for workers between 18 and 24 with no vocational training qualification to be able to combine their employment with the training activities required for obtaining that qualification (Royal Decree 1224/2009).

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

The practicum component of initial professional studies of both ECE Teachers and Senior Specialists in ECE includes periods spent in educational institutions and the preparation of a final project, which is necessary to get the qualifying mention (see above). Work placements are field-based studies supervised by a mentor at the institution where it takes place and by an academic tutor of the university or the vocational training centre. Their main objective is to enable students to apply and complement the acquired knowledge in their academic training.

Table 7 compares the practicum in the IPS of core practitioners in its different dimensions:

- 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 the 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 points 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.

Table 7

Spain: Characteristics of workplace-based learning

	Early Childhood Education Teachers	Senior Specialists in ECE	ECE Teachers' Assistants
Regulation/Provider	Public and private provider agreements*	Public and private provider agreements**	Only private agreements***
Length/time blocks	First and last year of studies 1 semester	Final year of studies 3 months	Final year of studies 1-2 months
ECTS points awarded	50	22	n/a
Skills/ competences	Practising professional activities; facilitating their occupation; encouraging their entrepreneurial ability	n/a	n/a
Self-evaluation and external evaluation	Bachelor project with mentor at the IPS institution	Final project with mentor at the IPS institution	Unknown
Mandatory course for mentors	No	No	Unknown
Specified time allocation/remuneration for mentoring	No	No	Unknown

* Real Decreto 1027/2011; ** Real Decreto 1543/2011; *** Orden ESD/4066/2008

Recent reforms, trends and debates

There are no recent reforms or debates on this issue, but a worrying trend is emerging due to the latest reform of employment and labour in Spain which includes a new type of contract called “in placement” (*Contrato en prácticas*). This particular type of contract and the time students spend in the ECEC institution during the practicum are being used by private providers to cover their needs for staff during certain periods of the school year. This is having an impact on the quality of provision and of the work placements. One negative effect is the lack of staff in the institution who can take on a mentoring and supervising role with the students; another is that students are being used as substitute staff during their placement and are left to work alone with no supervision, despite the fact that taking on responsibility for a group of children is not permitted.

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

National, regional and/or provider framework for regulating the CPD of ECEC personnel

National regulations regarding the CPD of ECEC personnel have been provided only for fully-qualified teachers. Professionals with lower qualifications are encouraged to pursue higher education studies in order to improve their initial education/training and to gain access to jobs in the public sector, which in turn guarantee free access to CPD.

Early Childhood Education Teachers have a right and an obligation to pursue lifelong learning (Article 102.1 of the Education Act 2/2006). Continuing professional development is thus a responsibility for the Education Authorities and educational institutions. ECE Teachers and Senior ECE Specialists are expected to continually update their knowledge in the areas of early childhood research, didactics and professional issues. However, participation in CPD activities is voluntary.

Education Authorities plan training activities for the teaching staff working in public schools, including ECEC provision. They guarantee a diversity of courses which are available free of charge, and take the necessary measures to foster teacher participation in these activities.

There are financial supports available for participants wishing to attend activities offered by other institutions.

The Education Authorities also facilitate teacher access to qualifications which allow mobility between the different teaching areas, including university education, through appropriate agreements with the universities. In turn, the MECS may also provide State in-service training programmes for teachers working at any of the educational levels regulated by the law and establish the relevant agreements with other institutions. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the 17 Autonomous Communities, is responsible for fostering the international mobility of public school teachers, post-to-post teacher exchanges and visits to other countries.

CPD programmes for ECE Teachers are planned according to the priorities of the specific Autonomous Community and to the professional development needs expressed by teachers themselves. The Autonomous Communities are free to establish their own priority guidelines, taking into account the training needs of the teaching staff within their jurisdiction. This implies that both the content of the training and the institutions in charge of its provision differ from one Autonomous Community to another.

CPD courses are organised according to the specific age-level and specialisation (e.g. ECE). The Communities regulate the announcements, validations, certificates, activities registrations, equivalences between research activities and university degrees, priority lines in lifelong learning, and so on. After taking part in these activities, educators receive attendance certificates.

The 2013 Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education, which modifies the 2006 Education Act, lays down several guidelines for the CPD framework offered by the Education Authorities of the Autonomous Communities. These guidelines are: to adapt knowledge and teaching methods to trends in research and specific teaching methodologies; to offer training related to coordination, guidance, tutorship, attention to diversity and school organisation; to establish training programmes in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and foreign languages; to promote educational research and innovation programmes; and to provide specific training as regards equal opportunities between men and women, and coeducation.

Main forms of CPD for ECE Teachers

Continuing professional development can be implemented through in-person or on-line courses, seminars and working groups or training projects in educational institutions. ECE Teachers can take part in these activities outside their teaching hours, during the hours spent in the ECEC centre or during working hours if they are carried out outside the educational institution. To take part in some of these activities, teachers may have to comply with several admission requirements, usually related to their university qualifications or teaching experience at certain educational levels.

CPD activities can be grouped according to three basic types: (1) courses requiring attendance or participation in online courses, (2) seminars and (3) team work. CPD also takes place on-site. This form is considered to be an effective tool for meeting the training needs of a team or group of practitioners who work at a particular early childhood centre. Such projects are aimed at the theoretical and practical training of ECE Teachers and may include issues regarding centre administration, management and organisation, innovative projects and their development, and so on. The Spanish Institute for Education Technologies and Teacher Training (INTEF) also establishes the relevant agreements with other institutions to this end.

Leave entitlement specifications

The educational administrations of the Autonomous Communities encourage and grant paid study leave for teaching staff in the public ECEC centres they manage (Article 105.2.d of the Education Act 2/2006). The purpose of these leaves is to promote their participation in activities regarding training and educational research and innovation. CPD provided by public insti-

tutions is free of charge, whereas CPD offered by other types of institution is fee paying, but teachers receive financial support for participation. Terms and conditions are determined by the corresponding authority with competencies in the field of education in each Autonomous Community, and the amount of financial support depends on the available budget. Official internship periods are granted through a selective process and, if successful, teachers receive leave for this time.

Main providers of CPD for ECE Teachers

The Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, through the Spanish Institute for Education Technologies and Teacher Training (INTEF), annually determines the priority guidelines of in-service teacher training programmes, and it establishes the relevant agreements with other institutions to this end.

All Autonomous Communities have a network of institutions which provide teacher training activities. Although they have different names, the most widespread term is Teachers' and Resource Centres and they are the main institutions responsible for providing formal CPD activities. Their tasks and powers are related to the organisation and development of the training plan within their area of activity, the promotion of interinstitutional working teams supporting the dissemination of knowledge, the provision of resources to the teaching staff to contribute to the development of their teaching activity and the improvement of educational innovation.

Each institution is responsible for a variable number of primary (including ECEC centres within primary schools) and secondary educational institutions to which they provide support in relation to professional development, resources or guidance to carry out innovation and improvement initiatives. In all the Autonomous Communities there are also other institutions involved in the continuing professional development of teachers, such as university departments, institutes of education, professional associations, unions or educational reform movements (Eurydice 2015).

Finally, there are numerous private associations, groups or institutions (such as official professional associations, unions, pedagogical reform groups, foundations, etc.) whose aim is to foster in-service teacher training; Education Authorities may grant these institutions financial assistance to help them achieve such an objective.

Formal recognition of CPD

Undertaking CPD activities has a direct impact on teachers' professional careers, since they are regarded as merits in competitive examinations (merit for transfers, secondments, management of educational institutions) or as a necessary requirement to be eligible for a salary bonus. The amount and name of this bonus varies in the different Autonomous Communities.

In 2011 several agreements were reached between the MECS and the regional Ministries or Departments of Education of the Autonomous Communities in terms of continuing professional development for school teachers, including ECE Teachers. Education Authorities are required to recognise the CPD activities, research and innovation carried out by teaching staff in their jurisdiction, providing that they have been previously accredited by the education authority where they were implemented. The recognition of these activities is considered a merit in any call including the assessment of continuing professional development activities; in order to receive the specific additional remuneration for continuing professional development (Eurydice 2015).

The Education Authorities of the Autonomous Communities encourage the development of paid study leaves for teachers working in public educational institutions, with the aim of promoting their participation in activities regarding training and education research and innovation.

Content of CPD courses

The 2013 Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education, which modifies the 2006 Education Act (Ley Orgánica 2/2006), lays down several guidelines for the in-service training programmes offered by the Education Authorities of the Autonomous Communities. These guidelines are: to adapt knowledge and teaching methods to trends in science and specific teaching methodologies; to offer training related to coordination, guidance, tutorship, attention to diversity and school organisation; to establish training programmes in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and foreign languages; to promote educational research and innovation programmes; and to provide specific training as regards equal opportunities between men and women, and coeducation.

In addition, each Community offers specific guidelines for different groups of teachers, depending on the demands and needs of the particular stage of education in which they are working (e.g. early childhood education). In fact, CPD for Early Childhood Teachers in Spain has been distinctly diverse since there are so many different entities offering such education and there has been little regulation in this regard (Úcar Martínez *et. al* 2007).

There have been no large-scale research projects on the CPD activities of ECEC personnel over the past five years. Smaller-scale studies have included the following topics:

- Implementation and use of ICT in ECEC settings;
- CPD for foreign languages in ECEC centres;
- Quality teaching in ECEC for improving school integration preventing early school leaving/failure.

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

In 2008, with the aim of improving educational care for the first cycle (0-3 years), the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport (MEPSyD) launched the **Educa3 Programme**. This was a programme to expand the provision of places for the under-threes and to improve quality through the continuing professional development of staff (MEPSyD 2009). This involved: expanding the vocational training for Senior Specialists in ECE, depending on the specific situation in the Autonomous Community; starting to recognise previous work experience and providing specific training modules offered through distance learning or based in an institution; promoting exchanges of experience between ECEC centres and supporting the improvement of educational quality, e.g. through the establishment of a website for professional training and a family education website including information about resources and didactic materials and providing a framework for exchange of experiences.

One outcome was the implementation of the Royal Decree on the recognition of professional competences acquired through work experience (Real Decreto 1224/2009).

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

Evaluation of CPD programmes

Source: Manzanares Moya, A., and M.J. Galván-Bovaira. 2012 (see *References* for further details).

Aims: In-service education for teachers is an essential requirement for professional teaching development. Along with other training providers, Teachers' Centres, variously named in the

different Autonomous Communities, have fulfilled their role of identifying and meeting teacher's training needs since their inception over twenty years ago. Using an evaluation model designed specifically for the purpose, the aim of this study, carried out between 2008 and 2012, was to analyse the relationship between training supply and demand.

Procedure: This evaluation research was structured in three stages: a) conducting a documentary analysis of the regulatory framework for ongoing teacher training and the characteristics of the training offered; b) carrying out a qualitative study using in-depth interviews with key reporting agencies and discussion groups with management teams and pre-school and primary school teachers; and c) on-site observations in four schools that provide training programmes in their centres. In order to perform each of these stages, different evaluation instruments were designed and both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were applied.

Findings: The study was a pioneer in its field. The findings emphasize the need for better alignment between the needs of teachers and the priority programme activities of the Education Authorities. The study notes that the training priorities set by the Education Authorities have a greater response among teachers if they are previously assessed as urgent needs for them and the Teacher Centres. Debates around the professionalisation of consultants, preferred consulting models, changes that must take place in the training culture of the Teacher Centres and the need to rethink training methods to meet new educational demands are the main topics with implications for policy makers.

Professional development for ICT use

Source: Fernández-Díaz, E. and A. Calvo Salvador. 2012 (see *References* for further details).

Aims: This research and development study aimed at consolidating a collaborative networking that promotes the use of ICT to bring about a change in the approach to teaching in schools.

Procedure: Through an action research project carried out from 2006-2010 in Pre-school and Primary Education settings, and in a blended-learning environment, researchers were able to set up collaborative projects such as digital child sponsoring. This involved teachers mentoring children in *Educación Infantil* in their use of digital technologies and facilitating tutoring among pupils; it also included different professional development strategies in terms of collegial learning and collaborative learning with researchers and building up a network for discussions about ICT use in pre-primary and primary settings.

Findings: The work enabled the researchers to develop innovation in education processes. The results highlighted the importance of creating communities of practice in which the meaning of digital technologies are reconsidered and discussed in a social learning environment.

Working with immigrant children: Teacher education, experience and attitudes

Source: Ocampo Gómez, C. I., and B. Cid Souto. 2012 (see *References* for further details).

Aims: The study was carried out at the Department of Teaching, School Organisation and Research Methods of the University of Vigo in 2009-2010. The aim was to find out how training and teaching experience of teachers influence or may influence the development of positive attitudes towards inclusive teaching practices with regard to immigrant children.

Procedure: The research question was to find out if a relationship can be found between the education/training of teachers, their age, their intercultural experiences and their professional attitude to working with immigrant children. A theoretical framework relating to attitudes, training and work experience is introduced, in which concepts are defined, and likely approaches and education models that form the basis of teachers' intercultural attitudes are discussed.

Findings: As a preliminary procedure to data analysis, the usefulness of the instrument was examined by carrying out a feasibility study following the method of homogeneity or internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The resulting Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 indi-

cated a high relationship between the scales' items and, given the extent of the test, a sufficient level of stability was displayed.

Four conclusions led to a proposal of improvement of current teaching processes and guidance in Spanish schools:

- Teachers with fewer years of work experience demonstrate more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of immigrant pupils in mainstream classes (expressing less conformity with the statement "Integration makes the teaching-learning process in the classroom more difficult").
- Teachers who participate more often in CPD activities mostly state that the integration of immigrant children implies a difficulty for the correct development of teaching-learning processes, thus reinforcing the foregoing conclusion.
- The majority of teachers express a favourable attitude to the following assumptions: consideration should be given to the culture of other countries; the integration of non-Spanish children into mainstream classes is a source of learning for all students which promotes knowledge and mutual respect; it must be guaranteed that these children are able to maintain their respective customs in the host country.
- The model of multicultural education that underpins the responses given by the teachers of the sample is significantly eclectic, partly based on a hegemonic assumption regarding the Spanish (and Galician) culture, implying an assimilationist approach, and partly recognising the plurality of cultures in the school environment, including some elements of a "cultural pluralism" model.
- In view of the responses within the framework of this study, there do not appear to be any visions of a model of multicultural education based on an inter-cultural approach underpinned by an understanding of cultural symmetry, or of moving towards a fairer and more equitable society in terms of actively advocating against cultural, social and political injustices.

8. General workforce issues

Conditions of service for **Early Childhood Education Teachers** vary depending on the education level and the ownership of the educational institution. The Education Authorities, both the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MECS) and the Regional Ministry or Department of Education of each Autonomous Community, are responsible for regulating these conditions. The 2013 Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education establishes that the Education Authorities must ensure that teaching staff receive consideration, treatment and respect which reflect the social importance of their task. This has led to new measures aimed at the social recognition and support of teachers and the improvement of their working conditions.

The **Senior Specialists in ECE** have been campaigning for improvements in their working conditions over the past decade, including being placed in a higher level category within public administration. The Senior Specialists in ECE belong to the so called 'technical category' for which only a baccalaureate or vocational training is required and as a professional group they are thus categorised at a lower level than Early Childhood Education Teachers. However, they argue that the majority of them have higher degrees, usually university degree, but the differences in the qualifications required in the first and second cycle keeps them in a lower professional category (Cadena Ser 2017), since there is still no equity between the conditions of work with under-three-year olds and over-three-year olds. According to a survey of Sánchez Muliterno (2009) this is more of an economically based justification than a professional one since it is commonly accepted that the younger the children, the less qualified the staff need to be. In fact, Senior Specialists in ECE work in regular and specialised services and perform a wide

range of duties. That is the reason for claiming more recognition of the job category itself and for wishing to clarify schedules, duties and other working conditions.

One issue to reconsider is the fact that, both in the IPS and CPD of ECE Teachers, there is insufficient focus on topics which are central to the quality of ECEC, e.g. the role of families in their children's education; improving learning processes; or optimising methodologies (Lebrero Baena and Fernández Pérez, 2009, 213). This is not a trivial issue, since studies that included the views of parents came to similar conclusions about the gaps in initial professional studies regarding the role and perspectives of families, and about the conditions which undermine the quality of ECE, such as the high teacher-child ratios in the groups, the constantly changing national ECE policies, or the lack of resources (Sánchez Muliterno 2009, 59). Therefore, further analysis should focus on the causes of these social and professional understandings, which can be related to the current working conditions and social status of ECE teachers.

8.1 Remuneration

In Spain, ECE Teachers' salaries can vary depending on the ownership of the educational institution. They are paid the same as primary school teachers. With this salary it is possible to live without additional support, even as a single parent in a major city.

Career civil servant teachers in public educational institutions, including ECEC centres, can receive the following (see Eurydice 2016):

a) **Basic rewards:** Paid according to the secondment of their body or category and to their seniority. They are:

- *Basic salary:* Standard amount set at national level for all civil servants belonging to the same Subgroup or Professional classification group.
- *Bonus* for every three-year period in service: Amount established at national level for every Group or Professional classification subgroup.
- *Additional rewards:* Paid according to the characteristics of the jobs, the professional career or the development, performance or results achieved by the civil servant.

b) **Additional bonuses:** Additional bonuses paid alongside the regular ones received in the summer and at Christmas. These bonuses are computed taking into account the regular monthly pay and the bonus received every three years. The teachers' salaries set out below refer to the minimum salaries established across the country.

ECE Teachers in public pre-primary settings are placed in Group B/Subgroup A2, level 21 on the salary table of career civil servant teachers. With three years' working experience they earn a gross basic salary of at least 1,988.39€ per month. With additional bonuses they can earn 27,129.72€ per year, or 2,260.81€ per month. For a detailed salary table, see Eurydice 2016.

The payment system for teachers in **private schools** is regulated by the various labour conventions and agreements. In **publicly-funded private schools**, the minimum salary for the staff in the jurisdiction of these agreements is set in their salary tables, and it comprises: basic salary, additional rewards, bonus for every three-year period in service and two extraordinary payments. These awards vary according to the Autonomous Community and they are paid by the corresponding Education Authority as delegated payment and on behalf of the owner of the institution. The awards of the staff in the 9th collective agreement on private education without grant-aided or subsidised levels (publicly-funded private schools) comprise: basic salary, a productivity bonus, a supplement for professional development (received by training and knowledge acquired, being necessary the verification of 100 hours as a minimum every five-year period) and extra salary transport bonus.

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

Both working time and holidays vary between the Autonomous Communities and whether the early childhood centres are publicly or privately owned. In general, a full working week in pub-

lic educational institutions is 37.5 hours. All ECE Teachers in the public sector work full time. It may be different in the private sector, but there are no disaggregated national statistics in this respect.

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

In public educational institutions there are several general supporting measures, targeted at all the teachers, amongst them trainee teachers. Education Authorities are also responsible, for example, for promoting the development of paid leave for the purpose of promoting activities for training and education research and innovation and for reducing the amount of teaching time for teachers over 55 years of age if they so wish or partially substituting their teaching load with other activities (Real Decreto 1594/2011).

Organised induction measures for newly qualified staff

During their first year of teaching, candidates who have passed both phases of the selection process to access the teaching profession must complete a final 'on-the-job' qualifying phase before they are appointed as civil servants. During this phase, and as a support measure for newly appointed teachers, they are monitored by experienced teachers, so that responsibility for the trainee teacher's teaching plan is shared. This induction phase, including professional development activities, ranges from a minimum length of three months to a maximum of one school year. Education Authorities are responsible for the regulation and organisation of the final 'on-the-job' qualifying phase. The trainee teacher's mentor is appointed by the appraising board, and must belong to the same teaching body and specialisation which the probationer intends to join. This mentor monitors and assesses the candidate's work during the probation period. Similarly, trainee teachers must submit a final report on the difficulties encountered and the support provided. At the end of the probationary period, the candidate's teaching ability is assessed and he/she is declared eligible/not eligible. If a candidate is considered not eligible, Education Authorities may allow the candidate to retake this final phase. Those who do not take up their post or are declared not eligible for a second time lose their right to be appointed career civil servants.

8.4 Non-contact time

The working time of teaching staff in the **civil service** varies according to the Education Authority they are ascribed to. In general, the working day for teachers in *Educación Infantil* is similar in all Autonomous Communities and is currently around 37.5 hours per week, with approximately an hour of each 5 hours dedicated to the work without children (see *Table 8*).

The minimum number of hours which must be spent at the institution ranges from 25 to 30 hours depending on the Autonomous Community. Teachers devote most of their time to teaching and the rest is devoted to complementary activities. These hours are used for meetings, talks with parents, assessment sessions, and so on. Seven and a half hours of the working time can be used at discretion and do not take place at school. They are used for continuing professional development, class preparation, meetings, evaluations or extracurricular activities with pupils.

Table 8

Spain: Working time of full-time staff in public centre-based ECEC settings

	Minimum hours/week	Minimum hours/year
Teaching hours*	25	875
Hours to be spent at school **	up to 30	up to 1,140
Global working day **	37.5	1,425

Source: Eurydice 2016.

*The calculation of teaching hours is made up of the minimum number of school days in the Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education, 175 school days, although in the calendars established by the Education Authorities this number is increased with light differences depending on the Autonomous Community.

** The hours to be spent at school and the global working day are calculated taking into account the 190 days between September 2st and June 30th, without including Christmas and Holy week and bank holidays (Eurydice 2016).

The working time of the teaching staff in **publicly-funded private schools** also includes a specific amount of hours devoted to teaching and non-teaching activities. The annual working time of teaching staff in the second cycle of pre-primary education amounts to 1,180 hours (1,140 in public settings). 850 hours are devoted to teaching (a maximum of 25 hours per week) and 330 to non-teaching activities (distributed over the school year). The annual working time of the teaching staff in the first cycle of pre-primary education (0-3 years of age) amounts to 1,362 hours for Early Childhood Education Teachers (a maximum of 32 hours per week) and 1,620 hours for Senior Specialists in ECE (a maximum of 38 hours per week).

875 hours are devoted to teaching (a maximum of 25 hours per week) and 330 to non-teaching activities (distributed over the school year). The annual working time of the teaching staff of the first cycle of pre-primary education (0-3 years of age) is 1,362 hours for school teachers (a maximum of 32 hours per week) and 1,620 hours for educators (a maximum of 38 hours per week).

The workload of teachers in **private-sector** schools depends on the Collective Agreement which covers them. The Agreement for pre-primary education establishes 32 hours of availability at school per week. At the remaining education levels, the Agreement establishes a workload of 27 hours a week plus 237 additional hours to be distributed over the school year, provided the overall working time does not exceed 8 hours per day. Besides, 50 more annual hours may be devoted to training, retraining and refresher activities.

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

In Spain, there are currently more ECE Teachers than needed. Many of them now follow an additional qualification to become a Senior Specialist in ECE, since there are more jobs available in the private sector settings for children aged 0-3 years. However, this means that they are placed in a lower salary category and experience less favourable working conditions than they would in a public sector *Educación Infantil* setting.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

One of the current workforce challenges in the teaching profession in general is achieving a balance between the teaching and administrative duties of core practitioners. A views survey focusing specifically on ECEC services in Spain (Sandstrom 2012) noted that an excessive bureaucratic workload has a negative impact on the practitioners' practice, reducing the time available for reflection, meetings, planning or participation in CPD. The study also showed that the over-enrolment of children led to teachers relying more on lesson books and worksheet activities as a way to control a large class.

In this respect, the new Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education (Spanish Official Gazette of 10/12/2013), with implementation beginning in 2014/15, stipulates that the Government is responsible for establishing, for the second cycle of pre-primary education:

- the objectives, skills and evaluation criteria of the core curriculum, which will represent 55% of the school timetable in the Autonomous Communities with a co-official language and 65% in the rest;

- the foundations for multilingual education.

Whether the implementation of this Act is achieving the desired balance is a question that remains without a clear response, due to a lack of relevant policy measures or research.

Thus, a second challenge that needs to be addressed by the authorities is the identification and recognition of these conditions and the funding of research to help improve them. Improving the availability and accessibility of information is essential. Available official statistics do not show, for example, the proportions of professionals in ECEC by type or level of qualification. This is also the case for vulnerable groups related to lower professional positions, such as the number of assistants that are from ethnic cultural minority groups. One thing is for sure, the requirements to access the private sector (the predominant sector for 0-3 provision) are becoming higher and higher (such as having a higher education degree/training in English language or other languages, etc.), even for posts as Assistants. This situation, added to the more general financial crisis we are experiencing in Spain, has made it even more difficult for minority groups to gain access to high levels of education or even to finish their compulsory education, meaning that the chances to access this kind of employment are very limited. However, it is not right to assume that in most cases people coming from ethnic minority groups are Assistants in ECEC services, this is more the case for caregivers in family day care, as “the changes in demographic, economic, socio-cultural and health foster the emergence of a new set of caregivers: the hired caregiver, covered generally by immigrant women” (Ruiz López and Moreno Preciado 2013, 86).

Finally, as already outlined in *Section 8*, there is a need to reconsider the fact that both the initial professional studies and continuing professional development of ECE Teachers focus insufficiently on quality issues in ECE compared with other areas. This is a key issue for research – to explain a societal and professional perspective that fails to value the professional status of early childhood education and thus hinders the development of the profession and effective CPD policymaking. Further analysis needs to examine the causes for this. In line with the Decent Work Agenda (ILO 2013) this is a responsibility shared among social and economic agents, including social scientists and practitioners. Hence, a new space for debate, study and reflection around the (self-image) status of the ECE professionals in Spain and its consequences for the improvement of the profession should be promoted from the highest authorities of education to the professionals that work and dedicate their daily attention to the youngest and most precious lives of our societies, in order to recognise and value their education as it really is: a human right.

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