

**N E W**  
**M O NITORING**  
GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE  
ECEC TEACHERS CURRICULA



# ECEC organization and Monitoring systems



Co-funded by the  
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# 02



## ECEC organization and Monitoring systems

### Introduction

Monitoring is part of the overall qualitative work in preschool and involves all domains of the service that directly or indirectly affect children's education and wellbeing (European Commission 2014, 2018). Overall structure impacts the organization and practice of qualitative work at the ECEC providers and thus also on children's wellbeing. Generally, ECEC can be divided into three phases; Early age, Age 3, and Last year of ECEC (Eurydice 2019).

# 1. Monitoring systems



It has been argued (Eurydice 2019) that ECEC systems that are organized within a single ministry, or top-level authority, across all phases of ECEC (0-6) can lead to better integration of education and care than systems that fall under different authorities depending on the child's age. The split of authorities is often so that social service authorities manage the younger ages and an educational authority manages the ECEC provision for the elder children (usually 3-6).

In addition, a unitary system (single authority system) is expected to provide better conditions for continuity from the point of view of children's experiences and education. Children at risk of ASD, or other developmental and neurocognitive conditions that risk complicating a child's prophecy of wellbeing, are the focus of the Nemo project. Research and well-documented practice have shown that possible indicators of such compromises can often be perceived early in child development (Barger et al., 2021).

In addition, research and practice also indicate that early interventions have an impact on children's wellbeing and possibly also development (cf. Sandbank et al., 2020). Therefore, the role of ECEC services as early actors in children's lives should be critical.

# 1. Monitoring systems

In this report, three contributing circumstances in the organization of ECEC are pointed out as crucial for the routines and practice of monitoring in ECEC and possibly specifically for children with special needs in education. These circumstances, on the level of an allover organization, are: if the organization applies to a unite or split system as mentioned above, if the organization is authorized within a highly centralized organization or by a highly decentralized organization, and finally, the report shows that the links between the provisions of education and Child Health Care services impact on the development of monitoring in ECEC. Given that those factors vary in different countries, the following points are enhanced as critical:



a

**Regularity for monitoring at some point of the early years in ECEC**

b

**The involvement of core staff in monitoring**

c

**Core staff with high qualifications throughout all the ECEC phases (0-6)**

d

**Access to support systems for ECEC**

# 1. Monitoring systems

In countries that practice the unit model, commented above, the responsibility for all ECEC phases is under the same ministry, i.e. the ministry responsible for education. In a split system, however, the organization of ECEC is divided into two consecutive phases with separate top authorities; authority for social welfare for the early ages, and the ministry of education for the latter. (See Table 1:1-5, and also comparative report from IO4.)

On the other hand, highly centralized education systems are characterized by giving more detailed planning and implementation directives for ECEC practices; moreover, the information flow from practice to authority is more detailed and frequent. In a highly decentralized education system, the regulations from top-level authorities are less detailed, and decisions that are key for the implementations are made on the local levels to which they apply (regional or municipal).

Among the representatives in this report, Slovenia is an example of a country that has a highly centralized education system and practices a unit ECEC system. Cyprus also complies with a highly centralized education system but practices a split ECEC system. Italy and Sweden are countries that on different levels and degrees practice what is here defined as more decentralized education organizations. In Spain, regional authorities have extensive authority to decide on the organization of responsibility in ECEC. Castile and León practices a split system ECEC system. Many regions in Italy maintain practicing a split system although Italy is currently in a period of policy transitions from having a clear split system to the promotion of an integrated educational system across ECEC from 0-6.



This has been promoted in recent years by two national laws (Law 107/2015 and its implementation decree Law Decree 65/2017). Sweden is a country that practices a decentralized and unit system with one governing authority for all the ECEC phases while simultaneously having far-reaching autonomy for local authorities in the implementation of services.



# 1. Monitoring systems



Further, concerning the relations between ECEC and CHC, the Swedish system can be characterized as parallel and asymmetric. In Sweden, the CHC services are clearly separated from ECEC. Regarding individual children, initiatives for cooperation between the services are primarily taken by HCH and always with the parent's consent.

Finally, with respect to designating and evaluating monitoring systems, the organization of inspection also becomes relevant. Inspections aim to control and support quality work at ECEC and can involve different competencies in different types of authorities. Table 2 aims to give an overview of the organizations of inspections in the countries to which this report applies.

Any division of this kind has its difficulties. Different countries have different urges for regulations of ECEC for different purposes with respect to the society in a larger context. Moreover, and in connection to this, the organizations are constantly in change adjusting laws and policies from the point of view of the current situation and to its legal starting points that apply.

## 2. Aims and method



The aim of the report is a comparative analysis of monitoring systems in different ECEC organizations in European countries with a particular interest in distinguishing factors that affect education for students associated with having special educational needs (henceforth SEN). In this respect, the main differences between the five countries of the NEMO partnership (i.e. Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) are pointed out. The analysis of relationships in ECEC organizations and the monitoring systems in these organizations are expected to enhance informed decisions and actions in the ongoing development of ECEC quality in European ECEC services.

Information on ECEC was gathered from specialists in all the five countries represented by the Nemo partners. A questionnaire was developed for this study. It covered questions about the overall organization and structure of ECEC including educational guidelines, children's rights and access to ECEC, routines for inspection and monitoring, decision processes regarding special education needs, and finally, we asked for specific monitoring tools that are relevant for the Nemo project and is used by preschools or in connection therewith.

An assumption is that the countries that are represented in the Nemo project (i.e. Cyprus, Italy; Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) together cover a variety of structural organizations practiced in Europe.

# 3. Results with discussions

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The results are presented under the three following headings with subsections: Accessibility, ECEC's connections to health care services and pedagogical support, and Quality assurance and monitoring systems. The headings are chosen from the analysis of the questionnaire, but also with respect to the five points distinguished as essential for inclusive education pointed out by European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2014): access and timing of inclusive education in ECEC, policies of inclusion, qualifications of the staff, support systems, and finally, monitoring and reliable data. For the information on staff qualifications, we refer to the IO4 report.



# 3. Results with discussions

## 3.1 Accessibility

### Access to ECEC

Access to preschool at an early age is a factor that matters for early pedagogical interventions that may help children at risk. All five compared countries/regions offer ECEC services from parental leave until the start of compulsory school. Moreover, all have legally binding regulations to guarantee quality in publicly funded ECEC services. The legal rights of the child to access ECEC, however, vary. In Slovenia and Sweden, every child is entitled to a place in an ECEC provision from the age of 11 months (Slovenia) or 1 year (Sweden) until the start of compulsory school (default at the autumn semester the year the child turns 6).

In both countries, the national Ministry of Education is responsible for all stages of ECEC 1-6. Further, in both countries, the executive providers can be public or private. For a private provider to have public funding, the providers in both countries must comply with the national curriculum, policies and legal standards in education and care.



# 3. Results with discussions

## 3.1 Accessibility

### Access to ECEC

In Castile and León in Spain, the educational systems provide ECEC services for all children from the age of 3 until the start of compulsory school. In Spain, as a whole, the legal right for children's access to ECEC services differs between regions (autonomous communities). According to national Law, however, primary school starts for all children at the age of 6 (the year the child turns 6). In Cyprus, compulsory school begins with a pre-primary school (Last year ECEC, above) at the age of 4 (from 2022). For the younger children (under the age of 3 years old in Castile and León and 4 in Cyprus) no legislation guarantees children's rights to be enrolled to ECEC. In Castile and León, however, publicly funded Early Age ECEC services are provided, although the access to this service in the number of children is limited. Priority is given to children from families with lower income or more children. In Cyprus, only private services are available for Early Age ECEC.

In Italy, compulsory school begins with the primary school when the child turns 6, and no national Laws or policies guarantee the right to access ECEC services. However, the Law (104/1992, 12:1) ensures children with documented disabilities priority access to Early Age ECEC (Nidi d'Infanzia). Yet, the Italian ECEC system provides and regulates public and private services from 3 months up to compulsory school. Although the ECEC organization in Italy is undergoing a transition toward an integrated system of care and education promoted by the ministry for education (MIUR), in practice, there is still mostly a split system in having different governance authorities on the local levels for children 0-3 (Nidi d'Infanzia) and children 3-6 (Scuole dell'infanzia).

1] In Castile and León; Education Ordinance/371/2018, of April 2, amending the ordinance. EDU/1152/2010, of August 3, which regulates the educational response to students with specific educational support needs enrolled in the second cycle of pre-school education, compulsory secondary education, maturity and upper secondary school, baccalaureate and special education, in the educational centers of the Community of Castilla and León.  
BOCYL. 12 April 2018, no. 71. Pp. 14630-14632

[2] In Cyprus according to the 1999 Education Act for the education of children with Special Needs.

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.1 Accessibility

### Access to ECEC

Costs for ECEC services compromise accessibility (Barillà, Martinelli and Sarlo 2020; Eurydice 2014, 2019). In general, ECEC involves some costs to families. ECEC services that are not part of compulsory education are not entirely free in Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden. Castile and León public schools 0-6 have no fee to be paid by the family. As noted above, however, the range of places in the number of children is few for these age groups, thus many families are directed to private options. In Sweden, from the age of 3, every child is entitled to free preschool teaching for 525 h/year (Allmän förskola), although compulsory education starts the year the child turns 6. Sweden and Cyprus both practice different versions of compulsory Last Year ECEC, which also are free. In general, the costs and the cost systems vary between countries, and in some countries, the cost system for public ECEC also varies within the same country (i.e. in Italy, Spain and to some respect in Sweden).



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.2 Access to educational support

The provision and implementation of education for children with SEN are regulated by law in all the countries compared. Inclusion in education and inclusive education is, however, not the same thing. Inclusion to education entitles access to education that meets the students' abilities. Inclusive education is here defined as "education that meets once abilities within the mainstream educational environment". Together, policies for inclusion in mainstream ECEC are stated in all countries compared in this report. These policies, however, are practiced differently across the countries.

In Italy, all children have entitled the right to inclusive education. There are by Law no Special schools. In Cyprus, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, there are Special schools, but in extremely rare cases these services involve ECEC children. The more common way in all countries is to integrate children with special needs within the mainstream ECEC services. In Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden, inclusive policies in ECEC are explicit in the national Law, in Castile and León a regional ordinance provides for the guarantee. In Italy, Slovenia and Sweden children are entitled the rights to inclusive education at all ECEC ages. In Italy where children under the age of 3 are not generally entitled the right to ECEC, the implementation of the Law (104/1992:12) nevertheless states that children with disabilities from age 0–3 are guaranteed integrated daycare centers. In connection to this requirement, municipals can optionally recruit educators specialized in special needs offer daycare education centers (Nidi d'infanzia) that provide teachers and/or educator specialized in children with disabilities in these age ranges (104/1992:13).



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.2 Access to educational support

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In Castile and León in Spain, children's legal rights for inclusive education are explicit for children at the age of 3, when second circle ECEC starts and the responsibilities for children's education lay under the national or regional ministry of education (see Table1).[1] In Cyprus, the rights of special education support in mainstream ECEC services are covered for children attending to public/community settings only.[2]

In practice, there is no public education for children under the age of 4. In private ECEC children are entitled to assessment and counseling but not support by the public education system. Children with disabilities 3+ are entitled to assessment under the existing Law for the education of children with disabilities but not for public education. In Spain, the priority access of public ECEC for children with disabilities is guaranteed by national Law (Organic Law 2/2006:84) and in Castillo and Leon this service is free of charge. Although the national Law guarantees priority, not access, almost all children with disabilities aged 0-3 years are integrated into Spain's early childhood education system according to a recent national investigation (Unicef 2021:3). According to the same investigation there is, however, a shortage of specialized teachers or educators who can support these children. Children younger than 3 enrolled at public ECEC (first circle and second circle) in Castile and León, are entitled follow up from health care pediatricians and further support from an early intervention team from the Assessment unit (Social welfare). Referral from pediatrician is required. In Castile and León, the children 0-6 enrolled at private ECEC providers, all services are paid privately or by social services.

[1] In Castile and León; Education Ordinance/371/2018, de 2 de abril, por la que se modifica la Orden EDU/1152/2010, de 3 de agosto, por la que se regula la respuesta educativa al alumnado con necesidad específica de apoyo educativo escolarizado en el segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil, Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato y Enseñanzas de Educación Especial, en los centros docentes de la Comunidad de Castilla y León. BOCYL. 12 de abril de 2018, núm. 71. Pp. 14630- 14632

[2] In Cyprus according to the 1999 Education Act for the education of children with Special Needs.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.2 Access to educational support

In Slovenia and Sweden, children are entitled the right to inclusive education from the start of ECEC. In both countries this applies to both public and public funded private schools. Nevertheless, there are differences between the countries. In Slovenia, officially two types of programs are offered for children with special needs: one that is provided by modified provisions including additional expertise to assist children achieving the goals, or another by a modified programme. The access to a program is decided by a national authority (The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia).



In Sweden, the approach is different. According to the Education act (2010:800, 8:9) every child is entitled the educational support it needs to learn and develop according to the mainstream educational goals. The rights are entitled every child and no authorization is needed for special programmes - neither are there specialized programmes associated to SEN offered on a national level (except for exceptional cases when special school's program is applied). The challenge and responsibility are on every preschool center head (and municipal authority) to provide for an educational environment that support every child to achieve the common goals according to the national curricula.

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.3 Connections to Health Care Services and pedagogical support

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Access to health care early in life is a vital factor for life quality and wellbeing. The connections between health care services and school education can have great impact on children's education, perhaps especially for those children with special needs experiences. Public Child Health Care (henceforth CHC) is provided for in all five countries/representative.

A detailed comparison of their organization and implementation is, however, out of this report's scope. The focus here is primarily on the cooperative and administrative links between the services on a structural level. Cooperation and interfaces between health care services for infants and ECEC differ across the representatives.

Sweden is the representative that has the least fixed connection between infant health care and ECEC in the current report. It must be noted early here, that in all five compared countries/region the public service of CHC is well developed and runs parallel with ECEC already from the birth of the child.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.3 Connections to Health Care Services and pedagogical support

In Cyprus, Italy, and Spain the priority for the enrollment in public ECEC requires documentation from health service which certifies the individual child's need for special education. In Slovenia, access to the special programmes requires authorization from The National Education Institute. A consequence of these requirements, is that investigating measurements, related to ECEC, are taken at an early stage for those children where someone (legal guardian or professional) has perceived risk factors.

However, the time and reason for the initiative to seek a professionally documented need certificate, linked to ECEC, differs between countries. For instance, in Italy and Castile and León the incitements are high already from the age of 3 months; in Italy the certificate paves the way for the inclusive enrollment in daycare, and in Castile and León it entitles prioritized access to free public ECEC (first circle). Moreover, according to Italian Law, a diagnostic and descriptive document on the child's functional and psycho-social abilities (Diagnosi Funzionale) must be presented at the time of enrollment to preschool 3-6.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.3 Connections to Health Care Services and pedagogical support

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The incitement to investigate a child's educational needs in Slovenia, is not to have access to ECEC in the first place; access to ECEC is guaranteed every child from the age of 11 months. The incitements are rather for allocating the best pedagogical programme for the individual child. In Cyprus, children with documented disabilities are legally entitled the right to a special educator or Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) when needed while they attend the mainstream public schools.

Assessment procedures may also recommend attendance in a special school where children with disabilities receive support from a variety of special education and rehabilitation professionals, or a special unit, which is small class with children with disabilities within the mainstream school, where the main teacher is a special education teacher. Consequently, the Law calls for professional assessment when children at risk are enrolled to ECEC, after referral by any interested party. The assessment is made by specialists appointed by a committee (i.e., the District Committees of Special Education).

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.3 Connections to Health Care Services and pedagogical support

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As noted above, in Sweden there are no requirements for test results or diagnosis to justify the need and rights for the support to meet educational needs. All contacts between ECEC and CHC regarding an individual child must be approved by the legal guardians. A Swedish law on parenthood (Föräldrabalken, FB 6:11) entitles the legal guardian the right to decide on matters that severely effect children's life and wellbeing. Any involvement of pediatricians, psychologist, speech therapist or any other special treatment that can have lasting impact on the child's wellbeing requires the legal guardians' consent. This also counts for any assessments in connection with investigations.

Moreover, parents' right to influence children's ECEC education is confirmed in the education act (2010:800, 4). The child's guardian must be given the opportunity to participate in the design of the special support measures. Taken together (i.e., children's right to inclusive education provided by ECEC, and parent's right and responsibility to decide for the care of the child's wellbeing) it can be the case that the guardian(s) chose to keep measurements from CHC separate from ECEC while the child remain having the rights for an inclusive education.

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.3 Connections to Health Care Services and pedagogical support

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Besides the access to ECEC and to special education programmes, other incentives to establish collaboration between CHC and ECEC can be from point of view of the resources at the specific childcare center involved. Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Slovenia all have some formal regulations for the constellations of child groups when a child is entitled with SEN in the group. These regulations can be by clear directives on the maximum number of children in a group that includes children with extra pedagogical support (e.g., Italy), or through more general formulations in terms of advocating a reduction in the number of children (e.g., Cyprus).

In Slovenia there are national rules that limit the number of children entitled SEN to a maximum of two per group of children. In Italy, Cyprus and Spain the inclusion of a child with certificate for SEN also requires assignments with specialized professionals at or in connection to the ECEC center. In Slovenia, professional specialists are assigned by the special program the child is entitled to. In Sweden, there are no such general regulations concerning the enrollment of children with SEN specifically. Any adaptations in the educational environment to fulfill children's rights to education are commitments that always are required at the local and micro level in the preschool organization (i.e., municipality and preschool director together); the law does not regulate how this is managed.[3]

[3] In Sweden, access to personal assistance is regulated by the social welfare system while ECEC rules under the national system for education. In the Swedish organization, this means that the personal assistants "follow the child" not the organizations or services the child engages (e.g., ECEC). The rights to personal assistance are regulated by the Support and Service Act (LSS). LSS involves closer connections to health care system. Autism alone do not qualify for personal assistance.

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### *a) Inspection and monitoring*

Inspection and monitoring are two key factors for sustainable quality work in ECEC (European Commission 2018). “Inspection” in ECEC is a careful examination by an external official (or requested by such) to ensure that quality requirements are met at the services and rules are obeyed. In general, inspection has two overall aims: to ensure that quality requirements are met and to contribute to the ongoing processes for improvements of ECEC practices and structure. Inspection often involves data and documentation from the ECEC service’s self-monitoring. Thus, understood as regularly occurring quality observations in accordance with binding standards (Faas & Dahlheimer, 2021: 166), monitoring is linked to inspection. In short, monitoring is the collection and evaluation of information and data within a specified area and for a defined purpose (see also IO2 A1-A6 report). Inspection often involves the ECEC service’s self-monitoring and subsequent reflections that come from those processes. In addition, ECEC monitoring is a key part of the continuous quality work, even besides inspections.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### *a) Inspection and monitoring*

The reports from Nemo partners show that a main division is if monitoring aims to assess and evaluate the quality of the pedagogical environment or is aimed to assess and inform about individual children's signs of progress in learning or development. Further divisions are if the implementations of monitoring are by standardized or non-standardized tools, and if their methods are structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Moreover, the origin of a monitoring tool is also of relevance. Monitoring tools can either be developed and designed at local levels or be afforded as premade supplies ready to be implemented for a defined reason at different ECEC centers. The origin of premade supplies, in turn, can refer to educational programs and policies (e.g., BRUK in Sweden, Step by Step programs in Slovenia, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales ECERS-3) or be more closely linked to theoretical approaches in research (SVALS reported from Italy, also the UNIBO-model developed in the Nemo-project). A third relevant origin for the Nemo project is tools with reference to diagnostic processes (e.g. EDUTEA in Spain and partly also the Unibo-model in the Nemo project).



On a methodological level, monitoring either approaches information about ECEC quality by collecting quantitative or qualitative data, or collecting the mixtures of both forms. Finally, monitoring in ECEC encompasses a range of different methods of which observations and questionnaires are the most common according to participants of this report.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### **b) Monitoring pedagogical environment**

The pedagogical environment concerns teaching qualities and strategies in practice, but it also includes the social and physical factors in the ECEC environment (SPSM 2018). As indicated in the section above, structured and unstructured observations are reported as the most frequently used methods for monitoring. Other methods reported to assess the pedagogical environment are self-evaluating reflections in collegial groups, parents' and children's evaluations with or without standardized protocols, questionnaires or by standardized rating scales. Narratives such as diaries or logbooks with pictures, props and written notes or other semi structured methods for documentation are reported[4].

Domains that were reported to be subjects for monitoring for the pedagogical environment at ECEC are compliance with curriculum and educational goals, staff qualifications, material resources and facilities, teaching planning and documentation, inclusive and social approach in response to children, parents and colleagues, and management of ECEC setting. Monitoring of gender-related issues and equality work is reported from Sweden.

[4] The practice of Pedagogical documentation is reported from most partners. Pedagogical documentation originates from Reggio Emilia pedagogy and aims for monitoring what is going on among the children at an ECEC center. It is an assessment of the pedagogical environment without having a predetermined framework of expectations or norms. The documentations consist of what is happening among children in indoor and outdoor activities. The documentation materials are photographs, videos, notes, narratives etc.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### ***c) Monitoring of individual children***

Educational content and goals in ECEC curricula differ in terms of the specification of subject matters between the countries represented in this report (with Slovenia reporting the most detailed list of learning goals). Together, ECEC curricula can be specified in terms of developing children's sense of self-awareness, communicative skills, understanding of hygienic care, social skills, basic values in school and culture, and sometimes mathematical thinking and esthetic practice. Monitoring, however, rarely concerns measurements of individual children's learning outcomes in ECEC schooling. Exceptions from this tendency, however, are the tests that apply to the compulsory Last Year ECEC in Sweden[5] and the tests for transference to primary school in Cyprus.



[5] The tests "Hitta språket" (find language) and "Hitta matematiken" (find mathematics) are mandatory for "Förskoleklassen" and are characterized as national overview material - not individual tests - however individual children are tested. The tests were approved by the national school inspectorate in 2019.

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### ***c) Monitoring of individual children***

Another exception from the overall hesitation of monitoring individual children in ECEC applies specifically to children with documented disabilities and special educational support. This exception is reported in Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain. Both Cyprus and Italy have legal binding documentation procedures in ECEC for preschool children (3-6) with documented educational needs. In Cyprus, multidisciplinary teams are appointed by the Special Education District Committees and required by Law. In Italy, the establishment of Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) is required and regulated by Law. In Slovenia, the monitoring of individual children applies to the special program to which the children with SEN are entitled within the framework of ECEC.



In Castile and León, children with documented SEN (e.g., ASD) have, within the framework of ECEC services, access to a range of external specialists, psychologists, and educational psychologists through the arrangements of early intervention teams monitoring and training the accredited children within professional programs. No partner report on routines in ECEC to make the corresponding assessments on every child (i.e. screening for detection of individual needs).

# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### ***c) Monitoring of individual children***

In Sweden, there are no legally binding routines in ECEC for assessing children encountering SEN specifically or assessing children's individual educational needs in general. The decentralized system in the Swedish ECEC organization opens for different organizations and practices at local (municipal) levels. Within the municipal freedom and responsibility to organize ECEC, some municipalities have established specialist teams with qualified special education teachers (ICSED 7) in collaboration with the municipal social care and the regional health care (similar to the specialist teams in Castile and León). Larger municipalities provide specialized preschools for children with, for instance, documented ASD and intellectual disabilities as a service within the framework of regular preschool activities. Further, other municipalities have drawn up agreements with adjacent municipalities to ensure children have access to such services. As commented in the section on the links to public health care services, however, the cooperation between ECEC and health care services is not on the terms of ECEC in Sweden but always on the terms of parents' (legal guardians) approvals on involving health care services and professionals.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

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### *d) The monitoring strategies and support systems*

Monitoring is a component in diagnostic processes, treatment, and training for the individual's everyday life. These processes are managed by specialists trained for the purpose (e.g., special educators, psychologists, paediatricians, or psychiatrists). Hence, to operate on these methods and tools, a specialized competence is required and often also a certificate for the specific method and monitoring tool in use.

However, ECEC staffs' encountering children (and their parents) on an everyday basis may provide continuity and contextual richness that can be beneficial for perceiving and evaluating individual educational needs and making the best adaptations in the pedagogical environment (Hansén-Larson et al., 2021; Westman Andersson et al., 2013). For this reason, the availability of monitoring tools that can be used by ECEC teachers themselves would be preferable.

EDUTEA, mentioned above, is a screening questionnaire designed for teachers to perceive indications of ASD and social pragmatic communication disorder that may compromise children's education (Morales-Hidalgo et al., 2017). Notable, EDUTEA is based on the DSM-5 protocol. Thus, teachers' familiarity with diagnostic indications can affect reliability.



# 3. Results and discussions

## 3.4 Quality assurance and monitoring systems

### *d) The monitoring strategies and support systems*

The methods and tools used by certified specialists are thoroughly controlled and developed according to research and the national standards for health care. (However, this does not mean there is a consensus about best practices for children with ASD or high-risk indicators). Therefore, the support system connecting ECEC to these structures and findings is essential.

As noted above, the cooperation with health care services differs between the countries represented by Nemo. Inspections of ECEC from health care authorities are carried out in Italy, Slovenia, and Spain. This organization is, however, not applicable to the Swedish system. To ensure sufficient competence for assisting students' educational needs in the Swedish preschools, the Special Education School Authority (SPSM 2021) is tasked on a national level with counselling, guidance and providing schools with further training in special education.



Continuous collaboration with preschool teacher training programs and universities is together a third important resource to support quality development in ECEC and participate in policy issues.

# 4. Recommendations

The starting point of this report is that monitoring is a central part of the preschool's continuous quality work and, by extension, the conditions for an equivalent preschool. In this respect, the comparative analysis highlights similarities and differences in the partnership countries' organization and practice of the preschool's activities. The recommendations in this section are aimed for policymakers in preschool organization at the national level, but also at the practitioners at the local level.

## National policymakers

a) **Promote continuity in ECEC phases 0-6.** Like no other time in life, children undergo development from the ages of 0-6. These years are also the years when indications for lifelong conditions, such as Autism, can be traced. The unitary system (0-6) includes Early Age Children to be part of the same educational and care quality framework as children Age 3, and Last year of ECEC. The comparison above show that in split systems the requirements for quality work in ECEC is less developed for the group Early Age Children.



# 4. Recommendations

b) **Establish nationally regulated and guided inspections 0–6.** Inspection by external experts is one of the quality criteria discussed. Inspection must guarantee that rules and laws are followed but must also act as a guide to improve the continuous development of the ECEC services. A nationally controlled inspection 0–6 should also work to ensure that the preschools receive the resources needed to carry out quality work according to the national criteria for all children.

c) **Design/promote tools and programmes for preschool teachers to develop their teaching and care for all children.** Preschool teachers and other core staff meet children in a variety of actions on everyday basis at preschool. Nationally promoted monitoring tools and pedagogical programmes provide more equal conditions for the services to maintain good quality. The most decisive for this may be in areas where contact with research and incitements for preschool development is limited. Most urgent perhaps, for children in vulnerable situations.



d) **Promote development of professional collaborations with support functions for ECEC 0–6.** Develop or deepen collaboration with support functions in healthcare and special pedagogy for ECEC. Expertise is a quality factor that cannot be compromised. The expertise about children and children's learning environments in ECEC is a resource that should be met in collaborations with external expertise in different areas.



# 4. Recommendations

## Practitioners

a) **Plan for monitoring.** Planning is essential for the continuity and quality of the monitoring in practice. Monitoring is a competence that takes time to develop, moreover it directs attention to something specific, and therefore also may neglect other vital aspects for children's education and care. Depending on the purpose and subject for the monitoring, develop concrete routines for how, when, and why it should take place.

b) **Ensure opportunities for further education of core staff.** Monitoring requires competences in practice and theory. To have a robust development of the pedagogical environment plan for further education in collaborative groups, as well as for the opportunities of individual professional development (see also output 4).

c) **Collaborate with families.** The competence to implement monitoring models and to evaluate the information that is coming from those processes is essential but not enough. To ensure a holistic approach for children's and families wellbeing the competence to communicate with families is key. Develop strategies and competences for communications related to any use of monitoring and monitoring tools.

d) **Consult support functions and organizations.** Expertise knowledge is vital but also need to be appropriate, that is fitting and convenient for the purposes of ECEC. Take active part in the collaborations with support systems and organizations to enhance the credibility of those supports.



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**N E W**  
**M O NITORING**  
GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE  
ECEC TEACHERS CURRICULA



# NEMO Project

## Monitoring ECEC Systems Comparative Report and Recommendations

### IO2 – Activity 1-6

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# 1. Introduction Monitoring Systems and quality assurance in ECEC: Literature review

## 1.1. Monitoring and Monitoring Systems: definition and objectives

*Monitoring* in Early Childhood Education and Care (henceforth ECEC) refers to the methodic and continuous collection of quantitative and qualitative data and information that serve, assess and evaluate for quality improvement in ECEC (Ioannidou 2010, OECD 2014, Singer-Brodowski et al. 2019). Moreover, a critical component in monitoring is the requirement that the evaluation results in an institutional actions or sanctions (Plomp et al 1992; Richards 1988). *Monitoring system*, on the other hand, is here defined as a set of principles or procedures according to which a monitoring process is done.

Monitoring in ECEC is closely linked to continuous *quality work* (European commission 2014, 2018; Gravis & Lenz Taguchi, 2021) and refers to both assessment and evaluation practices in preschool (OECD 2014:8). Quality in ECEC is, however, a multidimensional and value-laden concept (Katz 1993; OECD 2020) that encompasses all the identified features of the environment that can have impact on children's well-being (OECD 2014). In terms of the evaluation of quality in education, monitoring is also further linked to the process of *inspection* managed at different levels of pedagogical responsibility (Plomp et al. 1992). However, while inspections are national or regional mandatory assessments controlled by external authorities, monitoring can be locally commissioned assessments and evaluations to make continuous informed decisions (eg. Snow & Hemel 2008).

Monitoring is always the monitoring of something. A quality requirement for monitoring is to have well-specified purposes and goals. *Monitoring content* is shaped according to the objectives for which it is designed (European Commission 2018). The results of monitoring are used in a variety of ways, for different purposes and are intended to inform different stakeholders (Richards 1988). As indicated above, in a general context, the



objectives of monitoring systems concern the improvement of educational quality and children's outcomes. It is argued (European Commission 2018; Pinata et al. 2016) that by evaluating the quality of education provided, incentives for improvement and strengthening of systems and programs can be served.

The role of monitoring quality standards in Education systems is mandatory or optional, and is determined by the national competent authority which is responsible for the educational system (Eurydice 2019). Monitoring of quality is performed both at structural and processing level of the system. Monitoring of structural level of quality concerns issues related to settings within, across and between them, staff development, and the content of the curriculum formed according to the educational guidelines. Whereas, quality process level includes issues related to the implementation of the curriculum, educational activities and programs and the interaction of the staff with each other, the interaction among the students and the cooperation with children's families and external bodies such as child health care related. All of the above, are evaluated in combination and not individually and always in relation to the objectives of the educational system.

Monitoring systems can be classified based on different parameters for typology or categorization. Methodologically, monitoring can be categorized as formal and informal; systematic or semi systematic. Monitoring systems include narrative assessment techniques and quantitative tools (OECD 2014). The most common methods/ tools are observations, self-evaluations, tests, family interviews and health care documentations.

Moreover, monitoring systems can be implemented at an organizational level, at a pedagogical practice level, or linked to individual children. Monitoring at the level of individual children can be based on norm or standard reference evaluation, criterion reference evaluation or self-reference evaluation. Across all levels, and for different objectives, the monitoring scope and approach can differ. For instance, the monitoring approach can be to apply a list of *standardized key indicators* (eg. European Commission 2018) or to assess for *risk*. The latter can of course also be in combination of the

former. Also, the incitements for monitoring individual children's performances and development in preschool vary across European countries and ECEC systems (see 4.2 this report).

The theoretical framework of monitoring agrees with holistic approaches on child development and deals with all the parameters that shape the educational framework (European Commission 2018). Child development involves a complex of diverse skills and capabilities that fall into a range of factors. These factors are related to each of the individual areas of development (cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, motor development, physical well-being) (Snow 2006). At the same time, child is perceived not only as an autonomous and independent entity, but also as an active member of a broader system in which it interacts and evolves (Bronfenbrenner 1997). This system has social, political, economic and cultural dimensions and is also evolving over time. Therefore, development is shaped both by the peculiar characteristics of the child's individual entity and by the influence of the dynamic context in which the child interacts directly and indirectly. Child's immediate social context is family, school, beyond school activities, friends and those with whom child interacts directly. However, child's development is influenced by broader cultural, political and economic factors of the social context in which he/she belongs.

A thorough study of the monitoring ECEC systems of European countries, shows that the nature and the content of monitoring systems vary between countries (Eurydice 2019). This is, according to the report, due to different types of systems (integrated/split, mixed), under which ECEC is structured in European countries, as well as the type and the nature of the governance even within the same country. Moreover, from a critical viewpoint, an increasing call for Educational Monitoring (Ioannidou 2010) have been traced to the combination of both converging and diverging trends in education policies, ie., an internationally growing trend of indicator- and evidence-based educational governance, and at the same time, the co-occurring movements for the autonomy of educational institutions (Singer-Brodowska et al. 2019).

## 1.2. Quality Assurance in ECEC

The importance of quality of ECEC on children's development has become an increasingly research interest over the last two decades (European Commission 2018). Different conceptualizations of quality, define differently the content of quality in ECEC. According to OECD (2014), quality is a cultural-based concept, which means that quality cannot have a static meaning, and may also differ between European countries. Therefore, the definition of quality might need, at some point, a re-adjustment and review, as it is something to change overtime as ECEC systems and society evolve or change.

There are two main levels of quality management in ECEC, *structural* and *process quality* (Eurydice 2019). Structural quality can be influenced by policies, mechanisms and practices that shape the structure of the ECEC educational system and which are established by the local or national authority/es. More specifically, among other aspects, structural quality refers to the evaluation of the cohesion between the pedagogical plan and the standards of educational guidelines, framework conditions of ECEC, qualifications and training of staff, groups size, provided materials and available space per child.

Process quality refers to the evaluation of setting's support to the learning process, which means the implemented practices of the curriculum and the nature of interactions between staff and children among peers and between peers – how well staff support children's development and how well children interact with each other (OECD 2014).

Process quality is more directly related to child outcome, whereas structural quality is indirectly related to child outcomes through their impact on process quality. In (European Commission 2018), an additional parameter is affected about the influence of staff's educational perceptions and orientations directly on process quality and indirectly on children's outcomes.

Being a pioneer on the holistic approach to understand quality in ECEC Katz (1993) suggests a multiple perspective approach to quality assessment

of ECEC programs. Moreover, in several points Katz (1993) involves the value of the child's voice and experience as part of ECEC quality. Katz (1993) suggests five perspectives on quality in ECEC. The *top-down perspective* is comparable to the level of structural quality in the two-part division of structural and process qualities mentioned above. The top-down perspective considers such features as ratio of staff and children, qualification and stability of staff, staffs working conditions, equipment and materials, space per child, safety, but also the characteristics of adult-child relationships. The *bottom-up perspective* encompasses the child's subjective experience of a program and requires reflections on the meaningfulness of the program from the point of view of the child. A central question for evaluating the bottom-up perspective is "What does it feel like to be a child in this environment?". In the *outside-inside perspective* the parent-teacher relationships (in that direction) are in focus. From an *outside and inside perspective*, ECEC quality is measured in terms of the parents' perception of the staff as welcoming, respectful towards both parents and children and considerate of the child's values. The *inside perspective* on quality, on the other hand, advocates the relationships within the organization; are collegial relationships supportive or contentious, cooperative or competitive, acceptive, trusting and respectful? Finally, Katz (1993) draws attention to the fact that the surrounding community and society at large have a stake on what defines quality in ECEC. The *outside perspective* turns to stakeholder's perception resource usage and outcome and expectations of long terms goals.

Notably, Katz's suggestion of multiple perspectives on assessing ECEC quality originates from a US context in the early 1990s. The evaluation of quality in ECEC is still (2022) of increased interest to enhancing quality as well as child's developmental benefits by developing a range of methods and assessments (OECD 2014). However, the quality of ECEC, in practice, is perhaps an even more complex process in all European countries, as there is a large variation in the services offered and the educational structures that exist both internally and externally of the system (CARE 2016). The quality of ECEC varies because of different types of ECEC providers and services (Eurydice 2019). Complex systems with differing structure, educational

objectives, levels of qualifications, content of curriculum, types of providers influence process quality as a whole.

The ultimate goal of ECEC quality evaluation is the promotion of child development, to the maximum possible. Modern fundamental assumption of ECEC is to provide quality education to all children, by being able to support every child, its peculiar characteristics and the corresponding educational needs (European Commission 2018). In many cases, that might mean personalization of the educational services and programs provided as well as further supporting educational bodies/providers. ECEC quality includes all children's characteristics, experiences and environments which shape their well-being (CARE 2014).

## **2. Overview of ECEC settings: Types and standards for comparison**

### **2.1. Definitions of ECEC**

“Early Childhood Education and Care” is an upbringing and educational provision for children either from birth or later through the compulsory primary Education, and it has been structured and formed within a national administrative framework (Eurydice 2019). It includes public, private and voluntary sectors which should meet or exceed the minimum standards of a set of rules and the accreditation procedures according to the supreme competent body of each country.

ECEC operates within central and home-based provisions, which focus on two main educational contexts, regarding a childcare and early childhood education approach. Historically, childcare services were mainly offering an insurance for younger children’s safety and care, enabling parents to work, and early childhood education services had an intentional educational component to support children’s educational development and prepare them for compulsory school (primary education) (Eurydice 2019). Lately, an integrated early childhood education and care, due to a holistic approach is becoming more common, specifically in European Countries (OECD 2017).

Access to ECEC, which differs across European Countries, refers to two main aspects. Firstly, attendance to an ECEC provision can be either a legal entitlement, which means that a child has a right to ECEC, or it can be a compulsory attendance (Eurydice 2019). In the first case, national authorities must guarantee a place for any child whose parents request attendance. In the second case instead, in countries where ECEC attendance is compulsory, national authorities must guarantee the adequate number of places for all children in the age range set by law.

In Europe, there are fundamental differences in the children’s age range in which ECEC attendance is either legal entitlement or/and compulsory. According to European Commission (Eurydice 2019), few European educational systems guarantee a place in ECEC from the early age 6 to 18

months, and around the ¼ of European Countries provide guaranteed place from age 4, usually compulsory and explicitly directed for preparation to primary education.

Moreover, there is also one more parameter that affects the access to ECEC provisions. For the age range that ECEC attendance is not compulsory, families pay fees especially for children that are younger than 4 years old (European Commission 2018). The provision of free of charge ECEC has to be accompanied by a guaranteed place and it is totally related to the supporting legal framework. Without any supporting legal framework that enforces the legal entitlement to ECEC, free of charge provision may be limited and complex priority rules might be necessary.

There is also a different range of the weekly duration of ECEC offers, which is between 20 to 29 hours per week for most European Countries. Weekly ECEC hours are usually aligned to primary school's time duration, and that reflects the educational ECEC focus of the provision (Eurydice 2019).

Hence types of ECEC provisions may vary according to a number of variables and criteria, which are presented in the next section.

## 2.2. Types of ECEC

A number of different forms of ECEC provisions are identified in various educational and social care systems in Europe. The main types of ECEC are categorized in institutional/centre based and home-based, summarized below:

**Centre-based:** Centre-based can either be located in an autonomous center or in a branch of a primary school and concerns classrooms, a reception area and nursery classes (CARE 2016).

**Home-based:** Alongside centre based ECEC provision, home-based provision is oriented on a more childcare approach than education. Typically, this type of ECEC provision enables parents to work, while the child's care and safety is insured (CARE 2016). Childminders undertake, usually at their own home and less often in children's homes, children's care that are under

age 3 or even younger. Home-based provision form an official part of ECEC in few European Countries and it usually falls under public authorities, social services or social welfare work. According to European Commission (Eurydice 2019), in France more children attend on home-based than in centre-based provision. In countries where ECEC is a legal entitlement only from almost the age of 3 years, and therefore there is no place provided for every child, it seems that home-based ECEC applies as a necessary provision to parents (OECD 2015).

In addition, European Educational systems can be placed on a continuance from split to unitary systems regarding to four criteria related to the settings (unitary or split), single or dual authorities, staff qualifications requirements and education guidelines that apply either to all settings or not.

#### **Criterion 1: Setting:** Separate vs Unitary

ECEC systems in Europe are organised in two main types of settings: separate and unitary.

**Separate settings**, refer to systems that hold two separate educational and care settings for (a) younger (often 0-3 years) and (b) older children up to six years old (often 3-6 years) with a transition from one to the other usually at the age of three. Provisions for the under-3s has mostly a childcare orientation, while pre-primary schools for older children have an educational orientation. Also, the transition from one type of setting to another often means a change in new rules, different types of activities, different staff and group size.

**Unitary settings**, concern educational structure for the whole age range (0-6) until the start of primary education (often at 6 years old).

#### **Criterion 2: Governance:** Single or dual authority model

The structure of a national ECEC system and the rules that apply, largely rely on the nature of its governance (Eurydice 2019). It is claimed that a single authority model across ECEC system provides better coordination of the distinctive educational levels both among themselves and, also internally (CARE 2016). An integrated authority model tends to be adopted in, not only



the countries that have unitary settings, but also in countries with a mixed integrated/split system. Usually, the ministry of education or another top-level educational authority is responsible for both settings. However, in countries with a separate age-dependent settings, the dual authority model mostly prevails (Eurydice 2019). Two different ministries or top-level educational authorities are responsible for each setting on ECEC. Specifically, there is often a ministry of education or a top-level educational authority for the preschool setting for children aged 3 or 4 and over, and another ministry or public authority, such as social welfare services, for the childcare-type provision for children under age 3.

### **Criterion 3: Staff qualifications**

ECEC staff are only professionals who have daily, direct contact with children whose duties include education and/or care. ECEC staff are only professionals who have daily, direct contact. They have the main responsibility for groups of children in an ECEC environment.

Staff on ECEC mainly consists of the core practitioners and the assistants (Eurydice 2019). Core practitioners are the leaders in the educational process, whereas the assistants are the individuals that supports core practitioners in practice. Assistants are considered to be essential staff members, as they are employed to provide extra support especially for those groups that have children with special needs. In half of the European ECEC systems, staff are not required to have an initial educational qualification (Eurydice 2019).

ECEC staff, in general, supports children's development, ensure their well-being and are responsible for children's daily educational experiences. The kind of experiences children acquire from school, depends largely on the people with whom they interact and the quality of interaction they have with them. Moreover, on the responsibilities of ECEC staff, is to communicate and collaborate with the parents/primary caregivers for the child's benefit.

Staff's training level required, differs across European countries and it is determined by the national ECEC competent authority (Eurydice 2019). In

unitary ECEC systems staff are highly qualified, which means they own a bachelor's degree (ISCED 6) or a master's degree (ISCED 7). In 1/3 of the European countries, high qualification level is required during the setting of ECEC (pre- primary education) that is oriented to children's preparation for primary education, but not during the childcare ECEC setting. Highly qualified staff (ISCED 6 or ISCED 7) are more likely to use appropriate pedagogical approaches, create encouraging learning environments and provide care and support. The high minimum entry requirement for ECEC staff has an important role in professional development and remuneration.

The initial staff's qualification requirements are the primary premise which provides quality in education. Continuing professional development is an additional criterion which is also crucial for staff to extend and upgrade their knowledge and skills throughout their career (Peeters, Sharmahd & Buginaite 2018). Continuing professional development is rarely mandatory for practitioners and assistants in European Educational systems (Eurydice 2019).

#### **Criterion 4: Education guidelines**

Content of educational guidelines vary across countries, but, generally, it refers to specific educational and developmental objectives and appropriate activities configured according to children's age (CARE 2016). Sometimes, guidelines constitute the form of an official curriculum specified by national authorities, along with the implemented curriculum that it is formed on the educational field by staff to abet children's development. Educational guidelines are largely determined by the national ECEC type of governance, in order to ensure the coherence of the education provided and, consequently, to improve ECEC quality (CARE 2014). In almost all countries with a unitary ECEC system, educational guidelines apply to all setting. In contrast, in countries with a somewhat split or split systems, educational guidelines either applies mostly from the age of 3 and over, or they are separate documents according to the settings and issued by different authorities.

According to CARE (2014), the theoretical framework of the educational guidelines of the ECEC across Europe focuses on the holistic pedagogical philosophy, on the child centeredness approach, on the “child as a unique human being” theory, on principles of inclusion and equity. Educational guidelines provide specific recommendations on pedagogical approaches and assessment methods according to the theoretical framework, emphasizing the role of play in learning in ECEC, the interaction between both child and peers, and child-adult, and personalized educational support or relevant to children’s educational needs. Where educational guidelines do exist, they define children’s developmental areas that should be the focus of the educational program, in centre-based ECEC provisions. The most common learning areas cited in the educational guidelines of European centre-based ECEC settings, regardless of the age are the following: Emotional, personal and social development, physical development, language and communication skills, artistic skills, understanding of the world, operation skills, and health and well-being education. Other learning areas, less frequent though, related to setting for older children, are early foreign language learning and digital education (Eurydice 2019).

However, these guidelines and their practical implementation differ within countries not only for the theoretical framework but also because of different qualification levels and training of professionals, internal structural variations and monitoring practices (CARE 2016). A research question that concerns the scientific community of ECEC and the ECEC policy makers in Europe, is whether it could be a unitary educational guideline across Europe, but the answer seems to be much more complicated. Although there is a widespread agreement about a common curriculum, there are differences related to cultural, political and historical traditions. Moreover, primary and secondary educational guidelines differ across European countries, and this obviously affects ECEC (CARE 2014).

Based on the above four criteria and according to European Commission (Eurydice 2019), ECEC systems are put on a continuum forming the following four main categories:

- **Integrated or Unitary:** as a single entity throughout the entire ECEC phase, in which a single authority (Government/Ministry of Education) is superior. Curriculum and the educational program are available to all settings. Staff must be highly qualified across the entire ECEC phase.
- **Somewhat integrated/unitary:** A single authority (The Ministry of Education) is liable for the entire ECEC phase. However, there can be two types of settings. A single setting (0-6) where staff must be highly qualified over the whole ECEC phase and a second setting in which there are no top-level requirements for staff qualifications. The educational guidelines apply to all settings.
- **Somewhat split:** Only one of the standards (Setting, authorities, staff requirements, educational guidelines) applies over the entire ECEC. In countries with somewhat split system, children usually have to make a transition (around the age of 3) from a childcare setting to a pre-primary setting.
- **Split:** separate educational system between childcare and early education in all criteria (setting, authority, staff requirements, guidelines): Dual authorities for separate settings, higher qualification requirements for staff in early education than in childcare-type setting for younger children, or low requirements in both settings. No educational guidelines are available for childcare type setting.

Making an overview on European ECEC systems' characteristics, it is necessary to be said that centre-based ECEC is mostly provided in two separated setting types according to children's age (Eurydice, 2019). More specifically, some countries in the Nordic Baltic and Balkan regions provide a somewhat or fully unitary ECEC system, where an integrated setting falls under a single authority (ministry), with educational guidelines that apply to the entire settings and where staff must be highly qualified. Therefore, children, around Europe, attend quite different educational environments, which leads to different learning experiences.

Transition between a childcare setting to a preschool education structure across ECEC phase, even for unitary or split systems, means different educational objectives, activities, educational schedules, staff, and new rules (OECD 2014). Therefore, a period of adaptation is necessary for children to move across different educational levels, and moreover schools' readiness to support this transition (OECD 2017).

### **2.3. NeMo Partner Countries' ECEC Settings**

Five European countries are represented through the partnerships in the NeMo project. The five countries are Italy, Cyprus, Spain (by the region Castile and Leon), Slovenia and Sweden. Together, they illustrate with not exhaustive representation the variation in ECEC organization between countries in Europe. In countries that practice the unitary and integrated model (see 2.2) the responsibility for all ECEC phases is under the same ministry, i.e. the ministry responsible for education. In a split system, however, the organization of ECEC is divided into two consecutive phases with separate top authorities: authority for social welfare for the early ages (often 0-3), and the ministry of education for the latter (often for the ages 3-6). According to this classification, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden correspond to a unitary system with an integrated ECEC organizational model 0-6, Cyprus corresponds to a split system, and Spain corresponds to a system with mixed integrated and split systems over the Spanish autonomous regions, where Castile and Leon exemplify a region which has a split system. (See Table 1.1 - 1.5)

When looking closer to the systems and practices of ECEC in the five countries the classification in some becomes compromised. National regulations and policies in education do not always comply with other national regulations, policies, and traditions. In Italy, there is a national regulation for an integrated ECEC organization since some years back. Many regions in Italy, however, maintain practicing a split system although Italy is currently in a period of policy transitions from having a clear split system to the promotion of an integrated educational system across ECEC from 0-6. This transition has been promoted in recent years by two national laws (Law 107/2015 and

its implementation decree Law Decree 65/2017). In respect to differences in regional governance, however, rather a mixed integrated and split system characterize the organization of ECEC in Italy today (Table 1.2).

Moreover, in relation to the four criteria listed in 2.2 Sweden can be discussed as exemplifying a *somewhat integrated system*. This, we suggest, is due to the publicly sanctioned system with *Educational care* (pedagogisk omsorg) that is often (but not necessarily) offered as a home based provision. Pedagogisk omsorg is not part of the Swedish school system however is regulated as an alternative to the non-compulsory preschool and School-age Educare (0-13). Pedagogisk Omsorg is regulated in the Swedish education act and have public fundings. According to the education act, the municipality is obliged to offer every child over the age of one year a place at a preschool center. The same requirement does not count for Pedagogisk omsorg. However, if a child's guardian wants the child to receive educational care instead of preschool or School-age Educare, the municipality must strive to offer it. Pedagogisk omsorg is not required to meet the same criteria for ECEC quality as corresponding ECEC centers and School-age Educare. For instance, there is no top-level requirements for staff qualifications and there is only a recommendation to fulfill the standards of the national curricula for preschool and School-age Educare respectively. The municipal is nevertheless obliged to control the quality of the educational care provisions if those are offered. (See Table 1.5)

Table 1.1: Types of ECEC settings, providers, responsible authority, and status of curricula in Cyprus  
*Cyprus has a split organization of ECEC with separate top authorities for different settings across ECEC phases*

Type of ECEC settings and providers	Age of child	Type and level of responsible authority: Social welfare (S. W.) Educational auth (Edu) Ntl./Reg./Mun.	National Curriculum		
			Exists, is mandatory	Exists, is optional	Does not exist
Home Based Care Education	0-3	Approved by central Ntl., S.W.			x
Preschool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public State Funded Preschool <i>Δημόσιο/Dimósio</i></li> <li>Common preschool <i>Κοινοτικό/Κοινοτικό</i> (Municipal and parents driven coop.)</li> </ul>	3-5	Ntl. Edu.	x		
Private nursery and preschool	0-6	Approved by auth. applying to age		x (3-6)	
Public pre-primary class	5-6	Ntl. Edu.	x		

Table 1.2: Types of ECEC settings, providers, responsible authority, and status of curricula in Italy  
*Italy has a split organization of ECEC with separate top authorities for different settings across ECEC phases*

Type of ECEC settings and providers	Age of child	Type and level of responsible authority: Social welfare (S. W.) Educational auth (Edu) Ntl./Reg./Mun	National Curriculum		
			Exists, is mandatory	Exists, is optional	Does not exist
Infant-toddler care and education center <i>Nidi d'infanzia</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public, private, family cooperation</li> </ul> <i>Servizi Integrativi</i> - involve parents' participation  Public, private, family cooperation	0-3	Ntl. Edu. de-centralized to local or regional S.W. or Edu.	X*		
<i>Sezioni Primavera</i>  Public, private, family cooperation	2-3	Ntl. Edu. de-centralized to local or regional S.W. or Edu.  Or  Centralized to Ntl. Level Edu**	X*		
Preschool <i>Scuola dell'Infanzia</i> *** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public; municipal</li> <li>private</li> </ul>	3-5	Ntl. Level Edu.**	X**		

\*National educational guidelines for 0-3 \*\* National indications for ECEC curricula 3-6 \*\*\* To increase the receptiveness of the educative services and to support continuity between 0-3 and 3-6 services the implementation of Poli per l'Infanzia is under establishment. Poli are the unification of plexuses (0-3 and 3-6) in neighboring buildings or in a single complex. Poli do not have school autonomy and therefore should not be considered as new bodies.



Table 1.3: Types of ECEC settings, providers, responsible authority, and status of curricula in Slovenia  
*Slovenian system applies to a unit organization of ECEC with one top authority across all ECEC phases*

Type of ECEC settings and providers	Age of child	Type and level of responsible authority: Social welfare (S. W.) Educational auth. (Edu) Ntl./Reg./Mun.	National Curriculum		
			Exists, is mandatory	Exists, is optional	Does not exist
Preschool <i>Vrtec</i> • Public and private provider	1-6	Ntl. Edu	x		

Table 1.4: Types of ECEC settings, providers, responsible authority, and status of curricula in Castilla y León, Spain

*Castilla y León has a split organization of ECEC with separate top authorities for different settings across ECEC phases*

Type of ECEC settings and providers	Age of child	Type and level of responsible authority: Social welfare (S. W.) Educational auth. (Edu) Ntl./Reg./Mun.	National Curriculum		
			Exists, is mandatory	Exists, is optional	Does not exist
First Cycle Preschool • Public and private provider	0-3	Reg. S.W*.	x		
Second Circle Preschool • Public and private provider	3-6	Reg. Edu*	x		

\*Regional level (Comunidades autónomas).

Table 1.5: Types of ECEC settings, providers, responsible authority, and status of curricula in Sweden  
*The Swedish school system* applies to a unit organization of ECEC with one top authority across all ECEC phases. Provisions of pedagogical care (1-5) which rules under municipal educational authority is apart.

Type of ECEC settings and providers	Age of child	Type and level of responsible authority: Social welfare (S. W.) Educational auth. (Edu) Ntl./Reg./Mun.	National Curriculum		
			Exists, is mandatory	Exists, is optional	Does not exist
Preschool <i>Förskola</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public, co-operative, and private providers*</li></ul>	1-5	Ntl. Edu.	x		
Pre-primary school <i>Förskoleklass</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public, co-operative, and private providers</li></ul>	5-6	Ntl. Edu	x		
Pedagogical Care* <i>Pedagogisk omsorg</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public</li></ul>	1-5	Edu. municipal authority*		x	

\*Pedagogic care is not part of the Swedish school system, is partly regulated in the national education act, and is offered by municipals *as an alternative* to preschool.

In terms of understanding the differences in the ECEC organization in the five different countries, it is also relevant to notice differences on axes of centralization. *Highly centralized education systems* are characterized by giving more detailed planning and implementation directives for ECEC practices; moreover, the information flow from practice to authority is more detailed and frequent. In a *highly decentralized education system*, the regulations from top-level authorities are less detailed, and decisions that are key for the implementations are made on the local levels to which they apply (regional or municipal). Among the representatives in this report, Slovenia is an example of a country that has a highly centralized education system and practices a unit ECEC system. Cyprus also complies with a highly centralized education system but practices a split ECEC system. Italy and Sweden are countries that on different levels and degrees practice what is here defined as

more decentralized education organizations. In Spain, regional authorities have extensive authority to decide on the organization of responsibility in ECEC.

### **3. ECEC for children with disabilities and special educational needs**

#### **3.1. Three systems for inclusive education in ECEC**

The last decades, education acquires a more inclusive approach. This means that education must be *accessible to all* children and students, and that the curriculum and the educational program must be flexible and tailored to the need and capabilities of all the students (OECD 2014). In addition, the educational system occupies trained staff to provide personalized support to children in cases needed. At the same time, legal framework of inclusive education stipulates that, children with disabilities benefit mandating educational services from birth (Spiker, Hebbeler & Barton 2011). The purpose of inclusive education, from this point of view, is the access and participation of all children with and without difficulties, while reducing the educational gap between them. In the very last few years, the discourse on inclusion in education has highlighted the value of *diversity* in education and culture (Unesco 2021). The argument is, that rather than just removing barriers to inclusion, policies must support a cultural shift towards diversity (Unesco 2021:26).

Inclusion in education and inclusive education is, however, not necessarily the same thing. Inclusive education entitles access to education that meets all students' abilities. Inclusive education is here defined as per UNICEF (2015) perspective to ensure every child receives a quality education. Inclusive education as defined in the Salamanca Statement (1994, p, iii) promotes the "...recognition of the need to work towards 'schools for all' – institutions which include everybody, celebrate differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs". Inclusive education is a process that values the well-being of all pupils and is not an end in itself. (UNICEF 2015:6). In terms of the value of diversity, the mainstream environment should then be the quality to contain and represent this diversity (in cultural heritage and

language as well as in individual physical and cognitive preconditions). Together, policies for inclusion in mainstream ECEC are stated in all countries compared in this report. These policies, however, are practiced differently across the compared countries.

In general, children in difficulties related to physical or cognitive factors are educationally supported by two types of systems (Spiker, Hebbeler & Barton 2011). The first system, which is the main in European countries, includes an array of family and centre-based ECEC programs. The second system concerns special and personalized educational programs provided either by public or private bodies, within the educational system or as part of the child health care system. In any case, however, they are publicly funded.

In particular, these two types of systems do not work independently in terms of educating children with disabilities (Spiker, Hebbeler & Barton 2011). On the contrary, the communication between the school-based system and external specialized educational or treatment bodies is important for the child's benefit. It is also necessary to be noted that children attending both systems receive tailored services according to their needs.

In the NeMo project, however, the possibility for proposing a third system is also relevant to discuss. The third system should then be the *inclusive proper* which presupposes an educational environment on everyday basis that is fundamentally accessible to everyone (cf. UNESCO 2021). For this to be realized, the core staff's professional knowledge of what is required to make the learning environment accessible key (UNESCO 2021). In cases needed, however, the third system does not exclude the specialists input as well. The point is to meet and understand diversity within the framework of ordinary ECEC 0-6 on everyday basis in the first place.

### **3.2. NeMo Partner Countries ECEC Settings for the education of Children with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs**

The provision and implementation of education for children who have special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities are regulated by law in all the countries compared in the NeMo project. As a consequence, this also means

that children in need of special support have the right to specialist provision (second system above). It differs, however, between the represented countries and region at what ages these rights apply, what criteria are required to qualify for the support, and how the support is realized.

In Italy, all children have entitled the right to inclusive education. There are by Law no Special schools. In Cyprus, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, there are Special schools, but in extremely rare cases these services involve ECEC children. The more common way in all countries is to integrate children with special needs within the mainstream ECEC services. In Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden, inclusive policies in ECEC are explicit in the national Law, in Castile and León a regional ordinance provides for the guarantee. In Italy, Slovenia and Sweden children are entitled the rights to inclusive education at all ECEC ages. In Italy where children under the age of 3 are not generally entitled the right to ECEC, the implementation of the Law (104/1992:12) nevertheless states that children with disabilities from age 0-3 are guaranteed integrated daycare centers. In connection to this requirement, municipals can optionally recruit educators specialized in special needs offer daycare education centers (Nidi d'infanzia) that provide teachers and/or educator specialized in children with disabilities in these age ranges (104/1992:13).

In Castile and León in Spain, children's legal rights for inclusive education are explicit for children at the age of 3, when second circle ECEC starts and the responsibilities for children's education lay under the national or regional ministry of education (see Table1). In Cyprus, the rights of special education support in mainstream ECEC services are covered for children attending to public/community settings only. In practice, there is no public education for children under the age of 4. In private ECEC children are entitled to assessment and counseling but not support by the public education system. Children with disabilities 3+ are entitled to assessment under the existing Law for the education of children with disabilities but support is provided only in public education. In Spain, the priority access of public ECEC for children with disabilities is guaranteed by national Law (Organic Law 2/2006:84) and in Castillo and Leon this service is free of charge. Although the national Law

guarantees priority, not access, almost all children with disabilities aged 0-3 years are integrated into Spain's early childhood education system according to a recent national investigation (UNICEF 2021:3). According to the same investigation there is, however, a shortage of specialized teachers or educators who can support these children. Children younger than 3 enrolled at public ECEC (first circle and second circle) in Castile and León, are entitled follow up from health care pediatricians and further support from an early intervention team from the Assessment unit (Social welfare). Referral from pediatrician is required. In Castile and León, the children 0-6 enrolled at private ECEC providers, all services are paid privately or by social services.

In Slovenia and Sweden, children are entitled the right to inclusive education from the start of ECEC (from the age of 11 month in Slovenia and from the age of one year in Sweden). In both countries this applies to both public and publicly funded private schools. Nevertheless, there are differences between the countries. In Slovenia, officially two types of programs are offered for children with special needs: one that is provided by modified provisions including additional expertise to assist children achieving the goals, or another by a modified programme. The access to a program is decided by a national authority (The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia).

In Sweden, the approach is different. There are no legally binding routines in ECEC for assessing children encountering SEN specifically or assessing individual children's educational needs in general. According to the Education act (2010:800, 8:9) every child is entitled the educational support it needs to learn and develop according to the mainstream educational goals. The rights are entitled every child and no authorization is needed for special programmes - neither are there specialized programmes associated to SEN offered on a national level (except for exceptional cases when special school's program is applied). The challenge and responsibility are on every preschool center head (and municipal authority) to provide for an educational environment that support every child to achieve the common goals according to the national curricula.

The decentralized system in the Swedish ECEC organization opens for different organizational practices at the local (municipal) levels. Within the municipal freedom and responsibility to organize ECEC, some municipalities have established specialist teams with qualified special education teachers (ICSED 7) in collaboration with the municipal social care and the regional health care (similar to the specialist teams in Castile and León). Larger municipalities provide specialized preschools for children with, for instance, documented ASD and intellectual disabilities as a service within the framework of regular preschool activities. Further, other municipalities have drawn up agreements with adjacent municipalities to ensure children have access to such services.



## 4. Monitoring Systems in Practice

### 4.1. Objectives, Terms and Roles of Monitoring Systems

Together, monitoring and evaluation are recognized as one out of five key dimensions in the quality framework for ECEC (European Commission 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The other four dimensions are: governance and funding, curriculum, access, and workforce (ibid). In this context, *Monitoring systems* in ECEC are specified as organized models and tools strongly linked to the continuous and systematic quality work close to the practice at preschools (see definition of monitoring system in 1.1.). Moreover, monitoring in ECEC is outcome-oriented thus a critical component is the requirement that it results in an institutional action (Plomp et al. 1992).

Monitoring in ECEC is here altogether classified as educational monitoring. It should have directivity both for the focus of observation/ data collection and for the projection of the measures taken for the quality of education. Thus as noted above; monitoring is always the monitoring of something for a defined purpose. From point of view of policymakers' interests monitoring can be classified in three major types according to what motivates educational improvement and then by the objective of the monitoring (Richards 1988: 496):

*Compliance monitoring* is a continuous process to ensure that an organization fulfills and makes the best of required policies and procedures. This can be attained on different levels of the organization related to what level has the responsibility in the system for what.

*School performance and output monitoring* is the process of assessment and evaluation in comparison of educational outcomes between schools. This type of monitoring is performed on the level of schools and school districts. The premise for this type is that competition between schools will enhance educational quality in the fulfillment of educational goals.

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<sup>1</sup> The other four dimensions are: Governance and funding, curriculum, access, and workforce (European Commission 2014).

*Diagnostic monitoring* focuses on the individual learner and the goal is to collect data to make the best improvements for students' performance. This type of monitoring is of use for teachers and principals to enhance the learning environment for all children.

From the perspective of the NeMo project (2022), we can notice some critical points in the typology according to Richards (1988). In the first place, NeMo focuses on ECEC 0-6. The typology above has the compulsory school as starting point. Hence, with respect to the fact that not all preschool systems in Europe have a national ECEC curriculum that is binding for all ages 0-6 the preconditions for measuring educational outcomes vary across countries and regions. Secondly, the typology suggested by Richards (1988) has an underpinning stating that competition (between schools and school districts) is beneficial for promoting quality development. In this report we cannot find scientific support for this assumption to be true for ECEC 0-6. Nevertheless, on a general level the division in *compliance, performance and diagnostic monitoring* can be useful although not sufficient (Table 2).

Performance monitoring in ECEC, we suggest, is best undertaken in relation to the accomplishment of educational goals developed on a national authority level for education. To ensure such accomplishment, a binding curriculum 0-6 is the best reference point – not the achievements of the next or neighborhood schools. Diagnostic monitoring of individual children in preschool is often questioned and must be carefully motivated. If it is carried out in preschool, it is done at the local level and can cover language and literacy, socio-emotional skills, motor skills, numeracy, science, creative skills, health development and autonomy (OECD 2015). The reports from the NeMo countries indicate that the monitoring of individual children is not a standard procedure by default. However, the reports also reveal that at some points across the ECEC stages, and for some children, monitoring is nevertheless expected or even required in some of the countries (see 4.2 this report).

Compliance monitoring concerns the fulfillment of policies and stakeholders' expectations and is perhaps the most straightforward type to adopt into ECEC conditions. ECEC, however, is not part of the compulsory school and

therefore is not regulated by the same laws, moreover the requirements on monitoring compliance may differ even within the same countries between ECEC providers with or without state fundings. Nevertheless, compliance monitoring in ECEC that is of special interest are the monitoring of *framework factors* and the *access of supplementary resources* such as specialists in health care and education.

Table 2. Revisiting Richards (1988) Monitoring types in ECEC taking best interest of the child into account.

Type of monitoring	Compliance		Performance/		Diagnostic/individual	
Monitoring focus	Policy	Resources	Program, curriculum	Teaching and caring	Development, Hygiene and health	Learning goals, Social patterns
Best interest of the child						

#### 4.2. NeMo partners' Report on Monitoring for Disability and Special Educational Needs in ECEC

The *monitoring for education of children with disabilities and special educational needs* can fall under either of the three types discussed in the section above depending on the aim of a specific monitoring activity. Moreover, among the countries reported in the NeMo project the incitements and circumstances for monitoring special needs specifically differ. Structural factors, it seems, may affect the incitements of monitoring individual children or monitoring the readiness in the pedagogical environment to include every child. Such factors as when extra resources are allocated to an individual child, or the unit the child belongs to, in connection with documented diagnoses, while the incitements to monitor the educational environment may be in focus when no such measurements are taken in respect to individual children.

In Cyprus, Italy, and Spain, where the resources for public ECEC are restrained for especially the youngest children (0-3) a priority for the enrollment in public ECEC requires documentation from health service which certifies the individual child's need for special education. In Slovenia, access to the special programmes requires authorization from *The National*

*Education Institute.* A consequence of these requirements, is that investigating measurements, related to ECEC, are taken at an early stage for those children where someone (legal guardian or professional) has perceived risk factors.

However, the time and reason for the initiative to seek a professionally documented certificate of pedagogical needs, linked to ECEC, differs between countries. For instance, in Italy and Castile and León the incitements are high already from the age of 3 months; in Italy the certificate paves the way for the inclusive enrollment in daycare, and in Castile and León it entitles prioritized access to free public ECEC (first circle). Moreover, according to Italian Law, a diagnostic and descriptive document on the child's functional and psycho-social abilities (Diagnosi Funzionale) must be presented at the time of enrollment to preschool 3-6.

The incitement to investigate a child's educational needs in Slovenia, is not linked to have access to ECEC in the first place; access to ECEC is guaranteed for every child from the age of 11 months. The incitements are rather for allocating the best pedagogical programme for the individual child. In Cyprus, children with documented disabilities are legally entitled the right to a special educator or Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) when needed while they attend the mainstream public schools. Assessment procedures may also recommend attendance in a special school where children with disabilities receive support from a variety of special education and rehabilitation professionals, or a special unit, which is small class with children with disabilities within the mainstream school, where the main teacher is a special education teacher. Consequently, the Law calls for professional assessment when children at risk are enrolled to ECEC, after referral by any interested party. The assessment is made by specialists appointed by a committee (i.e., the District Committees of Special Education).

Moreover, the incitements for monitoring individual children can also be linked to the allocation of resources to the local unit. Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Slovenia all have some formal regulations for the constellations of child groups when a child is entitled with SEN in the group. These regulations can

be by clear directives on the maximum number of children in a group that includes children with extra pedagogical support (e.g., Italy), or through more general formulations in terms of advocating a reduction in the number of children (e.g., Cyprus). In Slovenia there are national rules that limit the number of children entitled SEN to a maximum of two per group of children. In Italy, Cyprus and Spain the inclusion of a child with certificate for SEN also requires assignments with specialized professionals at or in connection to the ECEC center. In Slovenia, professional specialists are assigned by the special program the child is entitled to.

Similar to the rules in Slovenia, there are no general regulations concerning the enrollment of children with SEN in Sweden (at the age of one year every child is entitled the right to a place). In Sweden, though, the support or allocation of resources to meet educational needs are not linked to the results of individual children's testing. Any adaptations in the educational environment to fulfill children's rights to education are commitments that always are required at the local and micro level in the preschool organization (i.e., municipality and preschool director together); the Law does not regulate how this is managed.

#### **4.2.1 Implications on the relations to Child Health Care**

Access to health care early in life is a vital factor for life quality and wellbeing. The connections between health care services and school education can have great impact on children's education, perhaps especially for those children with special needs experiences. Public Child Health Care (henceforth CHC) is provided for in all five countries/representative. A detailed comparison of their organization and implementation is, however, out of this report's scope. The focus here is primarily on the cooperative and administrative links between the services on a structural level. Cooperation and interfaces between health care services for infants and ECEC differ across the representatives. Sweden is the representative that has the least fixed connection between infant health care and ECEC in the current report. It must be noted early here, that in all five compared countries/region the public

service of CHC is well developed and runs parallel with ECEC already from the birth of the child.

Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Slovenia, all have some point (or circumstance) in ECEC when the involvement of experts to assess individual children's special pedagogical need are called for. In the Swedish system, external experts can also be recruited however the link between education in ECEC to CHC is less formalized.

All contacts between ECEC and CHC regarding an individual child must be approved by the legal guardians. A Swedish law on parenthood (Föräldrabalken, FB 6:11) entitles the legal guardian the right to decide on matters that severely effect children's life and wellbeing. Any involvement of pediatricians, psychologist, speech therapist or any other special treatment that can have lasting impact on the child's wellbeing requires the legal guardians' consent. This also counts for any assessments in connection with investigations related to health care. Moreover, parents' right to influence children's ECEC education is confirmed in the education act (2010:800, 4). The child's guardian must be given the opportunity to participate in the design of the special support measures. Taken together (i.e., children's right to inclusive education provided by ECEC, and parent's right and responsibility to decide for the care of the child's wellbeing) it can be the case that the guardian(s) chose to keep measurements from CHC separate from ECEC while the child remain having the rights for an inclusive education.

### **4.3. Monitoring tools and methods used at ECEC**

The reports from NeMo partners show that a main division is if monitoring aims at assessing and evaluating the quality of the pedagogical environment or is aiming at assessing and informing about individual children's signs of progressions in learning and development. Further divisions are if the implementations of monitoring are by standardized or non-standardized tools, and if their methods are structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Moreover, the origin of a monitoring tool is also of relevance. Monitoring tools can either be developed and designed at local levels or be afforded as premade supplies ready to be implemented for a defined reason at different

evaluating ECEC centers. The origin of premade supplies, in turn, can refer to educational programs and policies (e.g., BRUK in Sweden, Step by Step programs in Slovenia, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales ECERS-3) or be more closely linked to theoretical approaches in research (SVALSI reported from Italy, also the UNIBO-model developed in the NeMo-project). A third basis for the development of a monitoring tool, relevant for the NeMo project, is tools with reference to diagnostic processes (e.g. EDUTEA in Spain and partly also the Unibo-model in the NeMo project).

On a methodological level, monitoring either approaches information about ECEC quality by collecting quantitative or qualitative data, or collecting the mixtures of both forms. Finally, monitoring in ECEC encompasses a range of different methods of which observations and questionnaires are the most common according to participants of this report.

#### *Monitoring pedagogical environment*

The pedagogical environment concerns teaching qualities and strategies in practice, but it also includes the social and physical factors in the ECEC environment (SPSM 2018). As indicated in the section above, structured and unstructured observations are reported as the most frequently used methods for monitoring. Other methods reported to assess the pedagogical environment are self-evaluating reflections in collegial groups, parents' and children's evaluations with or without standardized protocols, questionnaires or by standardized rating scales. Narratives such as diaries or logbooks with pictures, props and written notes or other semi structured methods for documentation are reported. Domains that were reported to be subjects for monitoring for the pedagogical environment at ECEC are in compliance with curriculum and educational goals, staff qualifications, material resources and facilities, teaching planning and documentation, inclusive and social approach in response to children, parents and colleagues, and management of ECEC setting. Monitoring of gender-related issues and equality work is reported from Sweden.

### *Monitoring of individual children*

Educational content and goals in ECEC curricula differ in terms of the specification of subject matters between the countries represented in this report (with Slovenia reporting the most detailed list of learning goals). Together, ECEC curricula can be specified in terms of developing children's sense of self-awareness, communicative skills, understanding of hygienic care, social skills, basic values in school and culture, and sometimes mathematical thinking and esthetic practice. Monitoring, however, rarely concerns measurements of individual children's learning outcomes in ECEC schooling. Exceptions from this tendency, however, are the tests that apply to the compulsory Last Year ECEC in Sweden and the tests for transference to primary school in Cyprus.

Another exception from the overall hesitation of monitoring individual children in ECEC applies specifically to children with documented disabilities and special educational support. This exception is reported in Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain (see 4.2 this report). Both Cyprus and Italy have legal binding documentation procedures in ECEC for preschool children (3-6) with documented educational needs. In Cyprus, multidisciplinary teams are appointed by the Special Education District Committees and required by Law. In Italy, the establishment of Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) is required and regulated by Law. The same applies for Cyprus after children are assessed and documented. In Slovenia, the monitoring of individual children applies to the special program to which the children with SEN are entitled within the framework of ECEC. In Castile and León, children with documented SEN (e.g., ASD) have, within the framework of ECEC services, access to a range of external specialists, psychologists, and educational psychologists through the arrangements of early intervention teams monitoring and training the accredited children within professional programs. No partner report on routines in ECEC to make the corresponding assessments on every child (i.e. screening for detection of individual needs).



In Sweden, there are no legally binding routines in ECEC for assessing children encountering SEN specifically or assessing children's individual educational needs in general. The decentralized system in the Swedish ECEC organization opens for different organizations and practices at local (municipal) levels. Within the municipal freedom and responsibility to organize ECEC, some municipalities have established specialist teams with qualified special education teachers (ICSED 7) in collaboration with the municipal social care and the regional health care (similar to the specialist teams in Castile and León). Larger municipalities provide specialized preschools for children with, for instance, documented ASD and intellectual disabilities as a service within the framework of regular preschool activities. Further, other municipalities have drawn up agreements with adjacent municipalities to ensure children have access to such services. As commented in the section on the links to public health care services, however, the cooperation between ECEC and health care services is not on the terms of ECEC in Sweden but always on the terms of parents' (legal guardians) approvals on involving health care services and professionals.

Table 3

<b>Most common approaches and methods for monitoring in ECEC reported in NeMo project</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• I.E.P.</li> <li>• Self-evaluation</li> <li>• Standardized test</li> <li>• Family interview</li> <li>• Child's voice</li> <li>• Healthcare documentation</li> <li>• Learning outcomes</li> </ul>

### *The monitoring strategies and support systems*

Monitoring is a component in diagnostic processes, treatment, and training for the individual's everyday life. These processes are managed by specialists trained for the purpose (e.g., special educators, psychologists, paediatricians, or psychiatrists). Hence, to operate on these methods and tools, a specialized competence is required and often also a certificate for the specific method and monitoring tool in use. However, ECEC staffs' encountering children (and

their parents) on an everyday basis may provide continuity and contextual richness that can be beneficial for perceiving and evaluating individual educational needs and making the best adaptations in the pedagogical environment (Hansén-Larson et al. 2021; Westman Andersson et al. 2013). For this reason, the availability of monitoring tools that can be used by ECEC teachers themselves would be preferable. EDUTEA, mentioned above, is a screening questionnaire designed for teachers to perceive indications of ASD and social pragmatic communication disorder that may compromise children's education (Morales-Hidalgo et al. 2017). Notable, EDUTEA is based on the DSM-5 protocol (see executive summary IO1 section 3 for a brief presentation of DSM-5). Thus, teachers' familiarity with diagnostic indications can affect reliability.

The methods and tools used by certified specialists are thoroughly controlled and developed according to research and the national standards for health care. However, this does not mean there is a consensus about best practices for children with ASD or high-risk indicators. Therefore, the support system connecting ECEC to these structures and findings is essential. As noted above, the cooperation with health care services differs between the countries represented by NeMo. Inspections of ECEC from health care authorities are carried out in Italy, Slovenia, and Spain (see 4.4 this report). This organization is, however, not applicable to the Swedish system. To ensure sufficient competence for assisting students' educational needs in the Swedish preschools, the Special Education School Authority (SPSM 2021) is tasked on a national level with counselling, guidance and providing schools with further training in special education. Continuous collaboration with preschool teacher training programs and universities is together a third important resource to support quality development in ECEC and participate in policy issues.

#### **4.4. Inspection, a key strategy for quality in ECEC**

The role of *monitoring quality standards* in Education systems is mandatory or optional, and is determined by the national competent authority which is responsible for the educational system (Eurydice 2019). Inspection and monitoring are two key factors for sustainable quality work in ECEC

(European Commission 2018). *Inspection* in ECEC is a careful examination by an external official (or requested by such) to ensure that quality requirements are met at the services and rules are obeyed. In general, inspection has two overall aims: to ensure that quality requirements are met and to contribute to the ongoing processes for improvements of ECEC practices and structure. Inspection often includes those data and documentations from the continuous ECEC qualitative work, such as service's self-monitoring and subsequent reflections that come from those processes. Thus, understood as regularly occurring quality observations in accordance with binding standards (Faas & Dahlheimer 2021: 166) monitoring is linked to inspection. Notably, monitoring is a key part of the continuous quality work at ECEC services, even besides inspections.

For this reason, we collected information about conditions and objectives for inspection among the NeMo countries. The information was collected in a separate communication with the experts from each represented country as the comparative report was analyzed. The information shows the tendency that inspection for younger children (0-3) is more instituted and includes more quality criteria in countries with uniform ECEC systems 0-6 (Table 4). Inspection for Compliance to inclusive education policies were specifically asked for and follows the same pattern. This is noteworthy given that research shows that conditions such as ASD and other developmentally related cognitive variations develop early in life (Ozonoff et al. 2008) and that early interventions can influence more positive development over time (Landa 2018; Sandbank et al., 2020; Zwaigenbaum et al. 2015). Also, noteworthy in this context, is to clarify that inspection for Compliance to inclusive education policies is not equivalent to the monitoring of individual children. Compliance to inclusive education policies also involves the qualitative work of developing the pedagogical environment for all children.

Table 4. Inspections of ECEC: authority, subjects of inspection and regularity at different ECEC settings. Inspection for compliance to regular Law are subject for monitoring at adequate authority in all sections below and is therefore disregarded in the table. *Mandatory inspection* is the binding inspection by an external authority.

Country /region	Who: The setting subject for inspection	Responsible authority (Type): Social welfare auth. (S.W.) Education auth. (Edu) Health care auth. (Hea)	What: Subjects for inspection •Framework factors (eg. facilities, material, location, parents' involvement)•Staff resources and qualifications •Pedagogical quality •Compliance to inclusive education policies	Optivity and frequency
Cyprus	0-3	S. W.: national level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Resources and qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Optional / frequency is not regulated
	3-5 public/com.	Local inspector designated by Edu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Mandatory / frequency is regulated*
	5-6 public	Local inspector designated by Edu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Mandatory /frequency is regulated*
	0-6 private		<input type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Optional / frequency is not regulated

Italy	0-3 Public Private	S.W.: municipal level Hea: National Health service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Edu/Sw may be optional or mandatory on regional bases and mostly frequency is not regulated  Hea Mandatory / frequency is regulated at regional level
	3-6	Edu: national/regional level <i>Uffici scolastici regionali</i> Hea: National Health service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Edu: Optional and frequency not regulated*** Hea: Mandatory / frequency is regulated at regional level
Castilla and Leon	0-3 public	Edu: regional level <i>Consejería de Educación Junta de Castilla y León</i> Hea: Meal service	<input type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality* <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies *Non intensively, they only review the educational project of the centre	Edu: Mandatory and frequency not regulated
	0-3 private	S.W.: municipal level Health: Meal service	<input type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Edu: Optional and frequency not regulated
	3-6 public	Edu: regional level <i>Consejería de Educación Junta de Castilla y León</i> Hea: Meal service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Mandatory / frequency regulated* Edu: Mandatory and frequency usually twice a year or even more when necessary
	3-6 private	Edu: regional level <i>Consejería de Educación Junta de Castilla y León</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors * <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies* *Less intensity than in public	Edu: Mandatory and frequency not regulated

<b>Slovenia</b>	1-5 Publicly funded	Edu: national level <i>Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport</i> Hea: national level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Mandatory / frequency is not regulated
	5-6 Publicly funded			
<b>Sweden</b>	1-5 public	Edu: national level <i>The Swedish Schools inspectorate</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Framework factors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff resources and qualifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pedagogical quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliance to inclusive education policies	Mandatory / frequency is not regulated****
	5-6 public			
	1-5 private (publicly funded)	Edu: national level authority decentralized to municipal level		
	5-6 private (public funded)			

\*Educational inspection annually \*\*Regional authority is in a phase of changing the rules to make inspection mandatory also for private schools. \*\*\* Progressively Scuola dell'Infanzia will be included to a national assessment system starting with a test project from 2022/2023. \*\*\*\*National policy requires adequate frequency of inspections to guarantee quality, however numbers are not given.

## **5. Concluding remarks and further recommendations for a unified monitoring ECEC system**

### **5.1 Concluding remarks from NeMo IO2**

Providing quality in ECEC education for all children, presupposes an understanding of children's heterogeneity, both in terms of functioning and at all levels of their development (cognitive, emotional, social, etc.) (European Commission 2018). For this purpose, strong relationships with the family content of each child allows the provision of a substantial education not only within the school environment, but also the connection between school and children's daily life and physical environment. Families differ strongly in how they participate and support children's pre-academic skills. Thus, one of the major goals of early childhood education is to strengthen parental involvement. That plays an important role in reducing the educational gap between children with typical development and those with disability (European Commission 2018).

A very important factor that affects process quality is curriculum (CARE 2016). The content of the educational guidelines defines that curriculum should be flexible enough and responsive to any complex educational context. The implementation of the curriculum primarily requires the necessary educational training of the staff and the corresponding workforce skills. Moreover, in Europe, curriculum in practice concerns diverse strategies and methods from a more holistic approach, where play holds a fundamental role in learning in ECEC (Eurydice 2019). Furthermore, the functional use of the Language acquires a key factor both on group's interaction (between peers and also between teachers with children) and on the development of pre-academic skills (Santos 2015).

Curriculum framework in Europe acquires more complex dimensions in split ECEC systems where there are either different educational guidelines across settings or there is only a curriculum for pre-school available. Towards a more

integrated educational system a single curriculum applies across ECEC phase. However, quality of the curriculum framework and its implementation should not only be evaluated within the ECEC system, but also regarding children's smooth transition across educational levels (CARE 2016). The curriculum in preschool education is more oriented towards preparing children for their transition to primary school and their school readiness (OECD 2017).

Taking into account the fact that children in their daily life transit among their home, school and external and informal educational bodies, curriculum implementation and its evaluation seems to be a much more complex (Johansson 2006). Different providers approach education in a variety of ways and thus, children's educational experiences vary accordingly.

Above all, examining the quality of ECEC education is a process that involves all related to education both directly and indirectly. The ultimate goal of exploring the parameters that affect the quality of education is the proper development of each child with or without difficulties and the provision of equal educational opportunities (European Commission 2018).

Monitoring in ECEC refers to the methodic and continuous collection of quantitative and qualitative data that serve, assess, and evaluate the quality of the education provided, for the purpose of quality improvement in ECEC. Monitoring systems have directionality, that means they are designed and implemented to have a focus and purpose. The implementation of monitoring ECEC systems can be undertaken either by the core staff at local services or by external experts. Monitoring processes that are undertaken by, or involve, the core staff at ECEC can, if the conditions are right, improve the quality of the data that the continuous quality work at ECEC needs; The preschool staff meet the children every day, at all times during the preschool day, and meet parents regularly. Familiarity of the everyday context may be even more important for those children that are perceived as at risk for developing conditions that may affect their well-being, such as ASD.

ECEC monitoring should be designed according to the heterogeneity of children's characteristics, learning opportunities and educational experiences (European Commission 2018). In light of inclusive education, all children have



equal opportunities to access and participate in education, as well as to receive appropriate educational provisions that meets to their needs.

To sum up, monitoring has a complex content and requires a design for which many factors should be taken into account at the same time. It is important to note that children with special needs receive educational support both within school and from external private institutions (O' Toole, Hayes & Mhathuna 2013). Therefore, in-depth study of the quality of education children receive, includes the intersection between child's transitions from home to school and external educational bodies (OECD 2017).

Taking together, the design and the existence of a monitoring system is a way to assess the quality of ECEC education provided. Evaluation in education is an integral part of the educational process, as it serves progress of staff's professional requirements and the methods they use (Peeters et al. 2018). Therefore, monitoring should not be seen as an optional imposition that is carried out within an educational program and assigned to an external body, but as a necessary parameter of education. As monitoring of quality focuses on child's life and experiences, it should be guided by a pedagogical approach and should be governed by ethical principles and values of equality, justice and respect for diversity (European Commission 2018).

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The starting point of this report is that monitoring is a central part of the preschool's continuous quality work and, by extension, the conditions for an equivalent preschool. In this respect, the comparative analysis highlights similarities and differences in the partnership countries' organization and practice of the preschool's activities. The recommendations in this section are aimed for policymakers in preschool organization at the national level, but also at the practitioners at the local level.

### *National policymakers*

- Promote continuity in ECEC phases 0-6. Like no other time in life, children undergo development from the ages of 0-6. These years are also the years when indications for lifelong conditions, such as Autism, can be traced.

The unitary system (0-6) includes Early Age Children to be part of the same educational and care quality framework as children Age 3, and Last year of ECEC. The comparison above show that in split systems the requirements for quality work in ECEC is less developed for the group Early Age Children.

- Establish nationally regulated and guided inspections 0-6. Inspection by external experts is one of the quality criteria discussed. Inspection must guarantee that rules and laws are followed but must also act as a guide to improve the continuous development of the ECEC services. A nationally controlled inspection 0-6 should also work to ensure that the preschools receive the resources needed to carry out quality work according to the national criteria for all children.
- Design/promote tools and programmes for preschool teachers to develop their teaching and care for all children. Preschool teachers and other core staff meet children in a variety of actions on everyday basis at preschool. Nationally promoted monitoring tools and pedagogical programmes provide more equal conditions for the services to maintain good quality. The most decisive for this may be in areas where contact with research and incitements for preschool development is limited. Most urgent perhaps, for children in vulnerable situations.
- Promote development of professional collaborations with support functions for ECEC 0-6. Develop or deepen collaboration with support functions in healthcare and special pedagogy for ECEC. Expertise is a quality factor that cannot be compromised. The expertise about children and children's learning environments in ECEC is a resource that should be met in collaborations with external expertise in different areas.

### *Practitioners*

- Plan for monitoring. Planning is essential for the continuity and quality of the monitoring in practice. Monitoring is a competence that takes time to develop, moreover it directs attention to something specific, and therefor also may neglect other vital aspects for children's education and care. Depending on the purpose and subject for the monitoring, develop concrete routines for how, when, and why it should take place.

- Ensure opportunities for further education of core staff. Monitoring requires competences in practice and theory. To have a robust development of the pedagogical environment plan for further education in collaborative groups, as well as for the opportunities of individual professional development (see also output 4).
- Collaborate with families. The competence to implement monitoring models and to evaluate the information that is coming from those processes is essential but not enough. To ensure a holistic approach for children's and families wellbeing the competence to communicate with families is key. Develop strategies and competences for communications related to any use of monitoring and monitoring tools.
- Consult support functions and organizations. Expertise knowledge is vital but also need to be appropriate, that is fitting and convenient for the purposes of ECEC. Take active part in the collaborations with support systems and organizations to enhance the credibility of those supports.

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**ANNEX 1: Partners' Case Studies: Questionnaires and  
Examples of Cases from Cyprus & Sweden**



Partner's report from \_\_\_\_\_

### About the form:

This form provides information for IO2. Please fill in the form and share relevant links and references. Sometimes you may find the questions redundant or not relevant for your country. Be creative and explain the conditions for ECEC monitoring systems and ECEC teacher's education. We will do our best to pick up the information from wherever you have put it.

Please, type with a different colour so it is easy to see where your answers start and end.

Thank you for your help,

Team 2

## 1. ECEC structure and head

**1.1 Types of ECEC settings and heads:** In this section, we ask you to tell us about the overall national structure (i.e. the general organization) of ECEC settings from birth until primary school, including pre-primary program. Tell us if your country has an ECEC system with split phases for the children **according to age**, or provides a unified educational system until primary school. Inform *on the age breaks* and if there is *one, or more than one central authority* for ECEC activities and what type of authorities they are (e.g. social welfare or national education) respectively.

**1.2 Levels of authorities in the national organization of ECEC:** Note: central authorities, regional authorities, local authorities (municipality), preschool administration (local head, micro-level). In split systems; inform about the levels of authorities in the different settings respectively.



**1.3 National regulation documents and laws:** please enter the main national regulation documents and laws that rule and guide ECEC activities and young children’s education. Note any differences between settings in split systems, or between integrated sections in unified systems. Mention also if the rights for special-needs education is statutory, and if this applies to ECEC. (Further development of this information is asked for below.)

**1.4 Educational guidelines:** Note specifically if there are educational guidelines for children’s education at ECEC, if they are binding, and for what groups of children they account to.

**1.5 Types of services, delivering sectors and environments**

Please inform about the different types of service environments (e.g. ECEC-centers, home-based provisions), what services are offered (daycare, education, evening and night care), and which sectors deliver the services (public, private and voluntary sectors). Note that, these divisions may be relevant to age or not. In split systems, inform about each setting individually. In a unitary system, describe if there are integrated sections that offer different kinds of services.



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**1.6 Pre-primary program:** inform on the availability and the status of a pre-primary program. Note at which ages the children attend to the service and at which level of educational organization the program is delivered (e.g. ECEC, primary school or else)

## 2. Access to ECEC and obligations

**2.1 Inform us of the rights to access and the actual access to ECEC-services (i.e. authorities' obligations):**

**2.2 Inform us on compulsory educational levels for the child (i.e. parents' obligations):**

**2.3 Procedures for deviations from the above rules.** Note especially for deviations (e.g. retention, earlier start) regarding children's transitions into compulsory settings (what investigations are made, who runs the investigations, and who decides).



### 3. ECEC Quality

**3.1 Responsibility for the accreditation and evaluation of ECEC settings.** Inform about the national, regional, or local responsibility for accreditation and evaluation of different ECEC settings.

**3.2 Which levels of ECEC-services are subject to control (i.e., monitoring)?** Tell us if all settings are subject to monitoring (e.g. by any authority – see next question) or if the type of monitoring differs between different types of ECEC-settings, tell us also if the monitoring process induces recommendations or requirements for changes.

**3.3 Responsible monitoring bodies.** Who has the responsibility for the control and monitoring development, at what level (national, regional, local), and how is monitoring executed at the different levels of ECEC-settings?

**3.4 What services and material are provided for by authorities to support and develop ECEC qualities?**



#### 4. Staff resources (staff density and qualifications)

**4.1 Qualifications:** Inform on the requirements of staff qualifications for service at all levels of ECEC-settings. Tell if the same requirements apply to all staff or if there are staff with different qualifications at a center/provider. Please provide any links to resources or documents where available. (Keep short, the question overlaps with Output 4)

**4.2 Number of caregivers and teachers:** Inform on the directives or recommendations for the number of staff and the size of child groups at different services (references?).

#### 5. Statistics

In case you have easy access figures. If not please just provide an estimation (and say so) or indicate if not figures or estimation is possible.

##### *Younger ECEC age group*

In total \_\_\_\_\_% of the very young children (younger than \_\_\_\_\_) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers). (Reference\_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_% of the children in this age group are enrolled at ECEC-centers.

(Reference\_\_\_\_\_)

##### *Elderly ECEC age group*

In total \_\_\_\_\_% of the elderly ECEC children (in the ages from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers). (Reference\_\_\_\_\_)



\_\_\_\_\_ % of the children in this age group are enrolled to ECEC-services governed according to the national ECEC recommendations or rules.

\_\_\_\_\_ % of the children attend to the *pre-primary program* described above.  
(Reference \_\_\_\_\_)

## 6. Education of children with disabilities and special educational needs

**6.1 The rights:** Develop the information on the national rules and support for special need education in ECEC and compulsory education.

**6.2 The decision-making body:** tell us about the process and the decision-makers: who are the initiators (ECEC staff, parents, “tests”), which competencies are involved in the decision process, who is responsible for the decision (e.g., parents, committee, authority).

**6.3 Provisions and implementation of the education of children with disabilities and special educational needs:** inform about the execution, where does the execution take place



## 7. Tools and partners relevant for NEMO

List and give a short description of tools, programs and partners in this section

**7.1 Methods or material for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that are developed or sanctioned by national central authority (please tell us if they are optional or obligatory):**

**7.2 Other standardized materials aimed for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that can be used at preschools (developed and promoted by associations and companies):**

**7.3 Other organizations and programs that may be relevant in preschools (private sector - e.g. associations and companies):**





**7.4 Tools or models that are specifically designed for assessing disability and special educational needs (please indicate if any of those are specific to ASD), and for educational interventions, that are of relevance for NEMO:**

**7.5 Other relevant things to list...:**

8. Comments



Partner's report from CYPRUS

### About the form:

This form provides information for IO2. Please fill in the form and share relevant links and references. Sometimes you may find the questions redundant or not relevant for your country. Be creative and explain the conditions for ECEC monitoring systems and ECEC teacher's education. We will do our best to pick up the information from wherever you have put it.

Please, type with a different colour so it is easy to see where your answers start and end.

Thank you for your help,

Team 2

## 1. ECEC structure and head

**1.1 Types of ECEC settings and heads:** In this section, we ask you to tell us about the overall national structure (i.e. the general organization) of ECEC settings from birth until primary school, including pre-primary program. Tell us if your country has an ECEC system with split phases for the children **according to age**, or provides a unified educational system until primary school. Inform *on the age breaks* and if there is *one, or more than one central authority* for ECEC activities and what type of authorities they are (e.g. social welfare or national education) respectively.

The educational system in Cyprus is highly centralized and policies of funding, administration and pedagogy are centrally developed by the government. It is characterized as a "somewhat split" system, as children who start ECEC at a young age have to make the transition from a childcare-type setting to a pre-primary setting, at the age of three. Staff is highly qualified (ISCED 6) across the entire phase of ECEC, but the educational guidelines applies to the setting for older ages. The settings are governed by different authorities, namely:

- Early Childhood Education 3-6 years (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth)<sup>1</sup>
- Early Childhood Education 0-3 years: Social Welfare Services (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)<sup>2</sup>.

**1.2 Levels of authorities in the national organization of ECEC:** Note: central authorities, regional authorities, local authorities (municipality), preschool administration (local head, micro-level). In split systems; inform about the levels of authorities in the different settings respectively.

There is a central authority that falls under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth that covers the ages of over 3 years old children. Schools that have three

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.moec.gov.cy/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmlindex\\_gr/dmlindex\\_gr?OpenDocument](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/dmlindex_gr/dmlindex_gr?OpenDocument)



or more classrooms (based on the numbers of students attending the school) are run by a school Head (Principle). Schools that have less students that consist two (or one) classrooms are run by or an Assistant Principle or if there is no assistant principle, the teacher that has more teaching experience acts as the Head of the school.

For the education of children ages 0-3 years, there is a central authority that falls under the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, which is responsible for family, children and social services.

There are also community schools that are founded by local authorities, Parents' Associations, Societies based on the Private Schools Law of 1971 until 2012, but function based on the regulations and the program of the public Pre-Primary schools and serve children from 3 years to 4 years and 8 months.

**1.3 National regulation documents and laws:** please enter the main national regulation documents and laws that rule and guide ECEC activities and young children's education. Note any differences between settings in split systems, or between integrated sections in unified systems. Mention also if the rights for special-needs education is statutory, and if this applies to ECEC. (Further development of this information is asked for below.)

According to the law, Pre-Primary education is obligatory and free of charge from the age of 5 years old before 1<sup>st</sup> of September (this changed gradually in 2020). It used to be 4 years and 8 months in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

“Pre-primary special education is provided by the State to children with special needs from age of three until their integration into the education system, so that they can grow by way to integrate into it, and included education for parents of children with special needs.”<sup>4</sup> The phrase ‘until their integration into the education system’ actually refers to compulsory education, though children over the age of 3 are entitled to support as indicated below.

More specifically, education of children with disabilities is under the provisions of the The 1999 Education Act for the Education of Children with Special Needs<sup>5</sup>, put into force in 2001, is the current legislation that provides for the integration of children with special needs in the mainstream schools. The provisions of the Law, established formal procedures for the identification, assessment and educational support for learners with disabilities of the ages 3 to 21, under the approach of integration. In general principle, that provides children the right to attend their neighborhood school

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoi\\_2008\\_2020\\_anepisimi\\_enopoiisi.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoi_2008_2020_anepisimi_enopoiisi.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/eidiki\\_ekpaidefsi/peri\\_agogis\\_1999\\_113i\\_99.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/eidiki_ekpaidefsi/peri_agogis_1999_113i_99.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/1999\\_1\\_113/full.html](http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/1999_1_113/full.html)



and be supported within the mainstream school. Early childhood education children are entitled to special education support in all forms provided (see relevant sections below), once the child attends any type of public/community ECEC setting, but not private settings. In private ECEC children are entitled to assessment and suggestions by the competent committee but not support by the public education system (the State). Relevant support can be achieved in terms of funding under the provisions of disability benefits (e.g. funding of rehabilitation sessions) of the Ministry of Health and the Department for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities<sup>6</sup>.

**1.4 Educational guidelines:** Note specifically if there are educational guidelines for children's education at ECEC, if they are binding, and for what groups of children they account to.

There is no educational guidelines for Home-based child care provision. There is only educational guidelines that applies and is binding for the setting that attend children aged 3 years old and over. In cases of children that cannot for any reason live with their birth families, home based child care is provided by fostering families/persons that are approved by the Welfare services, according to the For Children Law of 1956 – 2014 (Chapter 352, art 28(2)(b))<sup>7</sup>. However this is not an educational setting, but a child-care provision.

#### **1.5 Types of services, delivering sectors and environments**

Please inform about the different types of service environments (e.g. ECEC-centers, home-based provisions), what services are offered (daycare, education, evening and night care), and which sectors deliver the services (public, private and voluntary sectors). Note that, these divisions may be relevant to age or not. In split systems, inform about each setting individually. In a unitary system, describe if there are integrated sections that offer different kinds of services.

- Home based child care is approved and registered by the Social Welfare Services, the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Security. They offer child care daycare and education (without a specific curriculum) on a private basis for the children up to 4 years and 8 months (before the preprimary education is compulsory). Post-secondary non-tertiary is required for home based child care.
- Private infant/child care settings/Nurseries are approved and registered by the Social Welfare Services, the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Security. They offer daycare and education (without a specific curriculum) on a private basis for the children up to 4 years and 8 months (before the preprimary education is compulsory). People employed at these settings must hold a

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/index\\_en/index\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/352.html>



certificate or diploma of higher education or a bachelor's degree in the field of child care/ psychosocial and spiritual education of the child.<sup>8</sup>

- Private Pre-Primary schools are founded and conditioned by the Law related to Private Schools of 1971 – 2012. They are regulated by the same legislation and same rules regarding age ranges apply. They are available for children aged 0-6 years old. Private settings are self-financing – drawing their funds from private sources.<sup>9</sup>

The entire second phase of ECEC (from age 3) is considered as a preparation for primary education:

- Public Pre-Primary schools: Children 4 8/12 years
  - Schools with one Pre-Primary teacher: One-teacher schools
  - Schools with two Pre-Primary teachers: Two-teacher schools
  - Schools with three or more Pre-Primary teachers: Many-teacher schools<sup>10</sup>
- Community Pre-Primary schools: children aged 3 - 4 8/12 years, Co-funded by the Ministry of Education & Local Community. Founded by local authorities, Parents' Associations, Societies based on the Private Schools Law of 1971 until 2012, but function based on the regulations and the program of the public Pre-Primary schools.<sup>11</sup>

**1.6 Pre-primary program:** inform on the availability and the status of a pre-primary program. Note at which ages the children attend to the service and at which level of educational organization the program is delivered (e.g. ECEC, primary school or else)

Pre- Primary Education is compulsory (since September 2019) from the age of 4 years and 8 months old and the compulsory Pre-Primary class at the age of 5 years old. The implementation of the decision for the Pre-Primary class applied in September 2019 (4 years and 10 months old) and will be completed in September 2020 (5 years old).

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[http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/All/D06E9B316032FA00C225791900399705/\\$file/O%20%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF%20%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CF%8E%CE%BD%20%CE%9D%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82%20\(%CE%9A%CE%B5%CF%86.%20352\)%20\(%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%AF%20%CE%A3%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B8%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%AF\)%20%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%AC%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%BC%CE%B1%20%CE%B4%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%AC%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%B9%20%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%20%CE%AC%CF%81%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85%2029\(4\).doc?OpenElement](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/All/D06E9B316032FA00C225791900399705/$file/O%20%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF%20%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CF%8E%CE%BD%20%CE%9D%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82%20(%CE%9A%CE%B5%CF%86.%20352)%20(%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%BF%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%AF%20%CE%A3%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B8%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%AF)%20%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%AC%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%BC%CE%B1%20%CE%B4%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%AC%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%B9%20%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%20%CE%AC%CF%81%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85%2029(4).doc?OpenElement)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/en/private\\_education.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/en/private_education.html)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/en/preprimary\\_types.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/en/preprimary_types.html)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/en/preprimary\\_types.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/en/preprimary_types.html)



**September 2004:** Pre-Primary compulsory education, one year before children attend primary school, was established since.

**September 2019:**

- Compulsory Pre-Primary education is established at the age of 4 years and 8 months old
- Compulsory Pre-Primary class (4 years and 10 months old)

**September 2020:** Compulsory Pre-Primary class (5 years old).

Public Pre-Primary schools: 3 - 4 8/12, year olds, provided that there are available places.

Regarding the settings for children from 0-3 years old is an area of autonomy, so there are no recommendations for an enacted educational approach.

The educational approach that applies on the setting for children from three years old and over, focused on the following aspects:

- Free and/or structured play
- Adults listening to children play and encouraging their thinking
- Both/balance between adult-and child- initiated activities
- Both/balance between group and individual learning
- ICT-based activities
- Minimum time for outdoor activities defined
- Parent/family involvement in children's learning.

Based on the Eurydice (2019) report<sup>12</sup>, the educational guidelines in Cyprus, that apply for children of three years old and over, emphasize the pedagogical use of digital technologies to support the learning process without specifying the digital competences to be developed. The recommended activities include, for instance, reading digital books, exploring nature and science with digital devices such as webcams and GPS, experiencing and producing art using digital forms of expression, or playing games on computers.

## 2. Access to ECEC and obligations

### 2.1 Inform us of the rights to access and the actual access to ECEC-services (i.e. authorities' obligations):

All the children, who permanently or temporarily live in Cyprus, have the right for registration at public Pre-Primary schools. If public Pre-Primary schools have available places, then these are offered to younger children who will reach the age of 3 before

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2019). Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Education and Training. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



the 1st of September of each new school year according to approved criteria. Priority for registration is given to the children with special educational needs, aged of 3 and above, after they are approved by the District Committees of Special Education.

## **2.2 Inform us on compulsory educational levels for the child (i.e. parents' obligations):**

Education is compulsory only for pre-primary schooling (children ages 5-6ys) and above, till the age of 15years (lower secondary education). Parents are obliged to enroll their children in the school of their region. If the number of children registered in a school is not completed, then children whose residence is not located in the school's area can be accepted after approval by the District Office. The cost of transport of children to the pre-primary school is undertaken by their parents.

**2.3 Procedures for deviations from the above rules.** Note especially for deviations (e.g. retention, earlier start) regarding children's transitions into compulsory settings (what investigations are made, who runs the investigations, and who decides).

Repetitions and extensions are given for a maximum of 2 years, including both pre-primary and primary. The parents are the ones who decide/apply if they wish their child to repeat or extend their attendance to pre-primary school and the school setting itself gives their written feedback/evaluation for the child's progress with suggestions send to the District Education Office.

## **3. ECEC Quality**

**3.1 Responsibility for the accreditation and evaluation of ECEC settings.** Inform about the national, regional, or local responsibility for accreditation and evaluation of different ECEC settings.

At a macro-level, the educational setting for children of three years old and over, falls within the competence of the Ministry of Education under the leadership of the Minister of Education and the Council of Ministers. At meso-level, school groups (criteria based on their address) are coordinated and controlled by the respective regional educational authority. At a micro-level, each school is managed by the head, who belongs to the educational staff and has also administrative duties.

**3.2 Which levels of ECEC-services are subject to control (i.e. monitoring)?** Tell us if all settings are subject to monitoring (e.g. by any authority – see next question) or if the type of monitoring differs between different types of ECEC-settings, tell us also if the monitoring process induces recommendations or requirements for changes.

Home based settings and educational settings for children under the age of three (private education),as mentioned earlier is monitored by the Social Welfare Services,



the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Security and it focuses on group sizes, child/staff ratios, health and safety issues, layout to the premises and not on the curriculum that the settings follow. These settings are free to choose whatever curriculum they want.

The evaluation of the educational settings for children aged three years and over (private and public as well as community schools) is monitored by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth and it focuses on both quality of education (following national curriculum) and health and safety, staff qualifications, group sizes, child/staff ratios.

**3.3 Responsible monitoring bodies.** Who has the responsibility for the control and monitoring development, at what level (national, regional, local), and how is monitoring executed at the different levels of ECEC-settings?

Based on the Basic Education Law (1967-1998)<sup>13</sup> responsible for the evaluation of structural quality are the “selection Committee” and the “relevant inspector” under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth<sup>14</sup>.

The “Selection committee” means the committee of each kindergarten that has responsibility to choose which children will attend kindergarten according to criteria by the competent Authority, with the exception of those that will attend the pre-primary class. It consists of the Head of the school, the principal of the nearest primary school, a representative of the parent association and the kindergarten teacher of other person to be appointed by the Competent Authority.

“Relevant inspector” means the inspector designated by the Director of the Department of Primary Education (which includes Pre-Primary Education) to advise, supervise, guide and evaluate staff and the operation of a specific Primary School or to advice, supervise, guide and evaluate a specialty teacher, according to service plans,

**3.4 What services and material are provided for by authorities to support and develop ECEC qualities?**

There is a certain budget each year that is provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth that covers the ages of over 3 years old children and schools can use it for educational material each year.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/166.html>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoι\\_2008\\_2020\\_anepisimi\\_enopoiisi.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoι_2008_2020_anepisimi_enopoiisi.pdf)





#### 4. Staff resources (staff density and qualifications)

**4.1 Qualifications:** Inform on the requirements of staff qualifications for service at all levels of ECEC-settings. Tell if the same requirements apply to all staff or if there are staff with different qualifications at a center/provider. Please provide any links to resources or documents where available. (Keep short, the question overlaps with Output 4)

Home based child care providers are used for the care of children 0-4.8 years old. There are no qualifications needed. The only thing that they need is the approval of the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Security

The staff of the educational settings in Cyprus for children 3-6 years old, consists of the pre-primary teachers (as leaders of a school classroom), the school assistants (these are not teacher assistance but persons that help in the self-care of children as well as some more procedural classroom issues but not actually involve in the teaching process) and the head teachers of the school unit. This applies in both private and public sectors.

The pre-primary teachers need to have a Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6) in Early Childhood Education (so this is the minimum qualification that they need) in order to work in early childhood setting.

The school assistants have no qualifications since their main work has to do with cleaning. The number of school assistants for each preprimary setting is based on the number of classrooms in the school:

- Schools with one classroom: one assistant
- Schools with three classrooms: two school assistants
- Schools with four or more classrooms a school assistant is required for every two classrooms. However, a five classroom school is possible to be served by two assistants and seven classroom school by three school assistants.<sup>15</sup>

Head teachers need to have, a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education (ISCED 6) and certain years of experience and also further compulsory training in headship<sup>16</sup>.

**4.2 Number of caregivers and teachers:** Inform on the directives or recommendations for the number of staff and the size of child groups at different services (references?).

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1994\\_1\\_256.pdf](http://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1994_1_256.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2019). Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Education and Training. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



According to Eurodice (2019), on the centre-based ECEC settings a home based child care provider can take care up to six children (ratio 1:6), but no more the ratio depends on the ages of children. The ratio for children 0-2 years is 1:3.

For school settings, the ratio for children 2-3 years old is 1:16 (one pre-primary teacher with 16 children). School assistants don't count on the ratio.

For pre-primary school (3 – 6 years) the ratio is 1:25 (one pre-primary teacher with 25 children) <sup>17</sup> **Note: 3 - 3 ½ years old: 1:20**

## 5. Statistics

In case you have easy access figures. If not please just provide an estimation (and say so) or indicate if not figures or estimation is possible.

### *Younger ECEC age group*

In total **28,1%** of the very young children (younger than **3**) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers). (Reference: **Eurodice 2019**)

**86,5%** of the children in this age group are enrolled at ECEC-centers. (**92,0% Age 4 and over**) (Reference **Eurodice 2019**)

### *Elderly ECEC age group*

In total **86,5%** of the elderly ECEC children (in the ages from **3** to **6**) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers). (Reference **Eurodice 2019**)

**86,5%** of the children in this age group are enrolled to ECEC-services governed according to the national ECEC recommendations or rules.

**92,0%** of the children attend to the *pre-primary program* described above. (Reference **Eurodice 2019**)

## 6. Education of children with disabilities and special educational needs

**6.1 The rights:** Develop the information on the national rules and support for special need education in ECEC and compulsory education.

In Cyprus the provision for 'children with special needs' (the official terminology currently used in the relevant educational legislation) has traditionally taken place in segregated special schools, as called by the 1979 Special Education Act. The Law for the education of children with disabilities has changed in 1999, but till then, integration

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1997\\_1\\_223.pdf](http://www.cylaw.org/KDP/data/1997_1_223.pdf)



has unofficially been implemented, and the number of children attending special schools has considerably decreased during this time. The 1999 Education Act for the Education of Children with Special Needs, put into force in 2001, is the current legislation that provides for the integration of children with special needs in the mainstream schools. The provisions of the Law, established formal procedures for the identification, assessment and educational support for learners with disabilities of the ages 3 to 21, under the approach of integration. In general principle, that provides children the right to attend their neighbourhood school and be supported within the mainstream school.

According to the Law, schools and the Ministry of Education are required to provide the child with all the resources and support necessary for a more inclusive education. In brief provisions and support include the following:

- Special Schools: Special education (Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)), Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Vocational Education programmes for adolescence
- Special Units: Special education (IEPs), Speech and Language Therapy, a few hours weekly mainstream classroom integration
- Integration: Individual sessions of Special education (IEPs), Speech and Language Therapy in resource rooms (a few hours weekly)
- Home schooling: some hours support for Special education (IEPs), and/or Speech and Language Therapy, and/or OT or Physio
- Assistive Technology: in all settings when assessed and approved by the District Committee of Special Education
- Educational Psychologists: Mainly for assessments and participation in multidisciplinary teams for the development of the IEP

**6.2 The decision-making body:** tell us about the process and the decision-makers: who are the initiators (ECEC staff, parents, “tests”), which competencies are involved in the decision process, who is responsible for the decision (e.g. parents, committee, authority).

The competent decision making body for the education of children with disabilities is the Committee of Special Education of the Ministry of Education. The Committee is set up in each district, and hence there are three District Committees in the country, members of which are appointed by the Ministers’ Council and they consist a multidisciplinary team of: the Inspector of Special Education, a Speech and Language Therapist, a representative of the Social Welfare Services, an Educational Psychologist, a representative of the Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health, and in cases that is considered necessary other disability related professionals (OT, PT etc), as well as administrative personnel of the Ministry of Education. The District Committees do not carry-out assessment themselves, but appoint professionals of the



public (educational) sector, as part of multidisciplinary teams to carry out assessments to children referred to the committee by any citizen (based on the Law). Based on the reports, the Committee prepares a statement and the child is assigned appropriate support as outlined above.

### **6.3 Provisions and implementation of the education of children with disabilities and special educational needs:** inform about the execution, where does the execution take place

In policy and practice, the law provides for the following types of education for children with disabilities ('special needs'): (a) **integration**: specialised support in the mainstream school, mostly withdrawn some hours per week to one to one sessions by a special teacher and/or a speech and language therapist, where applicable. In a few cases, and only after the initiative of the teachers, a special educator can collaborate with the classroom teacher and offer differentiation and collaborative teaching in the mainstream classroom; (b) **special units**: children are educated in small classrooms with other children with disabilities (max number 6-7), and they are integrated some hours per day/or during the week in the mainstream classroom. Most of the time, special units are heterogeneous in terms of disability characteristics. However, in the case of ASD very often special units consist solely of learners in ASD spectrum, supported by ASD specialized teachers and resources. This is not an official policy, but rather a practice that was established during years, based on arguments of specialization, ASD needed accommodations, etc; (c) **special schools**: as stated by the Law, in 'rare cases' and in 'exceptions decided by the competent bodies' learners with disabilities attend Special Schools (which as suggested by the Law should hold premises close to the premises of mainstream schools); in Early Childhood Education no child attends the Special School, unless there is a need to attend the School for the Blind or the Nursery School of the School for the Deaf. The School for the Blind only holds a small group of children (3 to 5) with multi-sensory and other multiple disabilities, and all other visually impaired students attend the mainstream schools. Similarly, the School for the Deaf, has only a few students that do not exclusively attend mainstream schools. However, one of the public mainstream preschools holds its premises in the school for the Deaf, also accommodating hearing impaired and Deaf children. The School for the Deaf also holds a unit for children ages 0-4 (d) **home schooling**: for children that for health and other reasons cannot move to school buildings and need to be educated at home.

## **7. Tools and partners relevant for NEMO**

List and give a short description of tools, programs and partners in this section

### **7.1 Methods or material for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that are developed or sanctioned by national central authority (please tell us if they are optional or obligatory):**



Regarding the methods and practices of evaluation of the educational work and children's school progress, teachers choose, without being binding, the portfolio (samples of children's (Art)work) or other forms of narrative assessment. Another evaluation method followed in Cyprus is the observation and recording of the important events of the day -to day school life.

Children with ASD do not have specific provisions in the legislation, but there are specific programs implemented by educators and professionals based on educators' choice, training, education and preferences. These include methodologies of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), TEACCH, PECs and other Alternative and Augmentative Communication and combination of several approaches in IEP

The main responsible professionals for providing official diagnosis for ASD are the Children Psychiatric Services of the Ministry of Health. In addition, families also collaborate with child psychiatrists in the private sector.

**7.2 Other standardized materials aimed for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that can be used at preschools (developed and promoted by associations and companies):**

There are no other known standardized materials for monitoring available or to our knowledge

For children with disabilities a number of tests (e.g. WISC-V, learning disabilities Greek language screening tests, speech and language and occupational therapists standardized test that are used by particular professionals in private practices) may apply during the assessment of children.

**7.3 Other organizations and programs that may be relevant in preschools (private sector - e.g. associations and companies):**

Parents organizations for ASD:

- **Cyprus Autism Society** (<http://www.autismsociety.org.cy/?pageid=1>). The association also holds private (charity based) units for supporting children and adults with ASD
- **MAZI4Autism** (<http://www.mazi4autism.com/index.php/1-getting-started>). The association is involved in seminars and information provided to families, and does not provide any services

**7.4 Tools or models that are specifically designed for assessing disability and special educational needs (please indicate if any of those are specific to ASD), and for educational interventions, that are of relevance for NEMO:**



As mentioned in sections 6 and 7.2 assessment of children with disabilities (including children in ASD) is conducted by multidisciplinary teams as these are appointed by the Special Education District Committees under the 1999 Law. Tools used for the assessment of children may vary according to professionals involved and sector/area of assessment.

For Learning and Cognition, Intellectual ability tests are often implemented by educational psychologists, such as WISC-V and Raven scales. Educators and special educators are using non-standardized materials and tools for assessing pre-reading and reading skills, pre-math and mathematical skills, social, emotional and behavioural characteristics through observations and classroom experiences. Some non-Cyprus standardized test have recently been developed in Greek for capturing phonological awareness and pre-reading skills screening and language development.

For Language Development formal assessment is performed by Speech and Language Therapists, and often there are no specific standardized Greek language tools, but other pre-language and language independent tools are used such as PPVT.

For motor (fine and gross) skills and other life skills, occupational therapists are conducting relevant assessments.

ASD official diagnosis is provided through the Child Psychiatry Services, though characteristics of the spectrum may be presented in all above professionals' assessment procedures and reports.

#### **7.5 Other relevant things to list...:**

N/A

#### **8. Comments**

It is noted that Cyprus is at the process of educational reform with respect to the education of children with disabilities. A new green paper was suggested, and currently (since February 2020) groups of stakeholders were called to work on the various aspects of the implementation of the new Law, and the development of the legislative regulations, before this is submitted to the Parliament. However, the new legislation plan is highly criticized by the majority of the disability representatives, parents' associations and academia, and there are currently a number of debates, taking place officially and unofficially with stakeholders groups and between representatives and the Ministry.

Partner's report from Sweden, 2021 \_\_\_\_\_

### About the form:

**This form provides information for IO2. Please fill in the form and share relevant links and references. Sometimes you may find the questions redundant or not relevant for your country. Be creative and explain the conditions for ECEC monitoring systems and ECEC teacher's education. We will do our best to pick up the information from wherever you have put it.**

**Please, type with a different color so it is easy to see where your answers start and end.**

**Thank you for your help,**

**Team 2**

## 1. ECEC structure and head

**1.1 Types of ECEC settings and heads: In this section, we ask you to tell us about the overall national structure (i.e., the general organization) of ECEC settings from birth until primary school, including pre-primary program. Tell us if your country has an ECEC system with split phases for the children according to age or provides a unified educational system until primary school. Inform on the age breaks and if there is one, or more than one central authority for ECEC activities and what type of authorities they are (e.g., social welfare or national education) respectively.**

Swedish preschool is optional and open for every child 1-5 years of age. According to the Swedish school system, there are municipal preschools and grant-aided independent schools funded by municipal tax revenues. All grant-aided ECEC settings (children 1-5 years old) in Sweden must apply to the national Preschool Curriculum (Lpfö 98: Revised 2010) and the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800). In that sense, Sweden has a unitary system with the *National education agency* (Skolverket) as the central authority for all ECEC-settings, 1-5. For the implementation, however, Sweden has a decentralized education system, steered by goals and learning outcomes defined at central level. The government has the overall responsibility and sets the framework for education at all levels.

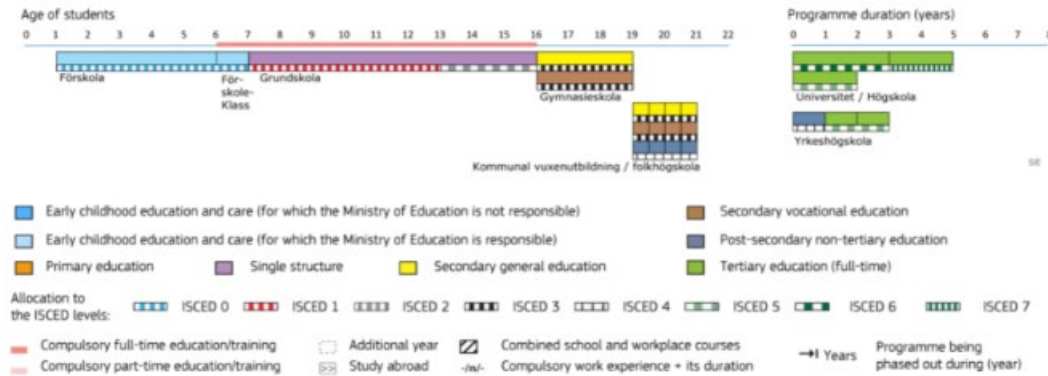
The major part of school funding, including grant-aided independent schools (fristående skolor), comes from municipal tax revenues. Grant-aided independent schools are open to all and follow the same curricula as municipal schools do.

Since 2011, every child has the right to ECEC 15h/week (525h/year) free of charge from August the year the child turns three until the onset of pre-primary school (August the year the child turns 6). The onset of the free ECEC-education (Allmän förskola) is continuous and integrated in daycare service having the same local head, staff and locations. Often however the preschool activities are organized in separate subdivisions (units) for children in the ages 1-3 (toddlers' unit) and 3-5, respectively.

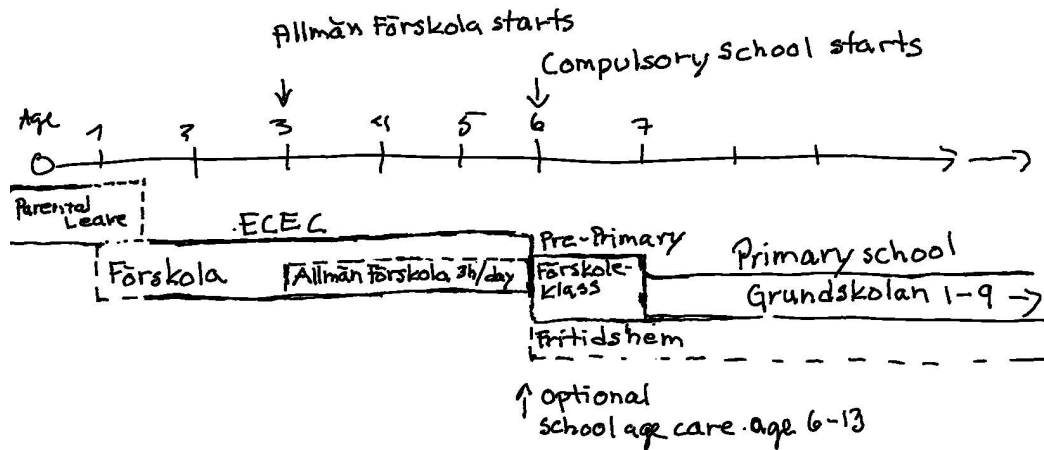
Since 2018 the interim stage between preschool and primary-school "Förskoleklass" (Pre-primary class), is made compulsory and is integrated in the primary-school environment. This is a clear break from point of view of the child the year the child turns 6 years of age. Pre-primary class is run in primary school environment, with a new team of teachers (teacher in primary school and preschool teachers together). There is no tests or qualification limits for the child to start Pre-primary class.

# Structure of the National Education System

Sweden – 2020/21



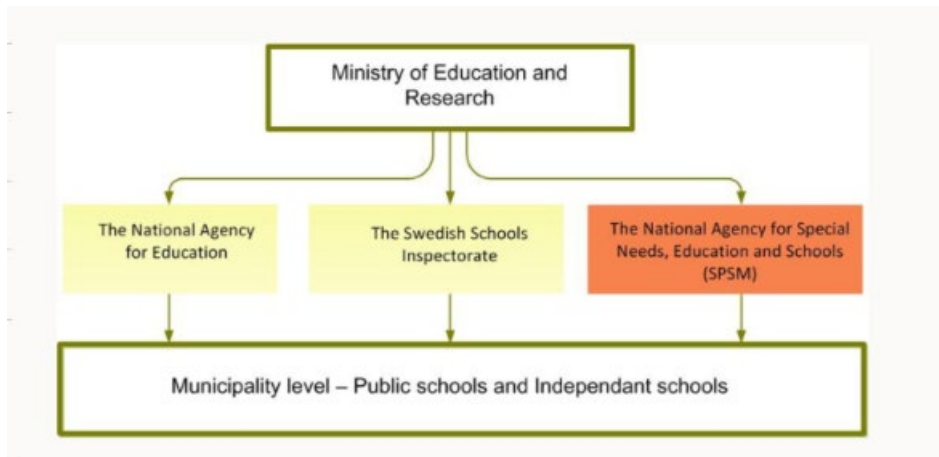
Source: Eurydice 2020/21



**1.2 Levels of authorities in the national organization of ECEC: Note: central authorities, regional authorities, local authorities (municipality), preschool administration (local head, micro-level). In split systems; inform about the levels of authorities in the different settings respectively.**

The education system in Sweden is steered nationally on the overall education priorities, but on the same time, the local authorities have great influence on the organization and design of its implementations. Preschool is funded through agreements with municipalities and independent education providers, which have the main financial responsibility (OECD 2017, p.4). Responsibilities at the central level are shared between the Ministry of Education and Research and three autonomous national agencies established by legislation (OECD 2017, p.15): The National Agency for Education, The Swedish school Inspectorate and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools.





Source: SPSM, <https://www.spsm.se/om-oss/other-languages/english/the-swedish-education-system/the-national-agency-for-special-needs-education-and-schools/>

Note that the Municipality level consists of two instances: the municipal authority and the preschool principal.

The organization for Swedish preschool is practiced in five instances at mainly two levels: the three instances on national levels already mentioned (National agency for education, School inspectorate and National Agency for Special Needs), and two instances at the local municipal level (Municipality and the preschool Principal). The Swedish national agency for education (Skolverket) is the national administrative authority for the public-school system, publicly organized preschooling, school-age childcare and for adult education in Sweden. The national agency is ruling directly under the Swedish parliament and has the specific responsibility to support and publish guidelines according to governmental decisions.

At the local level the principal organizer of the school system (i.e. *the municipality* or the *operators of Independent schools*) is responsible for the organization, management, and operation of the activities. The municipality must allocate resources, monitor and evaluate the results, and correct possible deficiencies. The principal organizer has the ultimate responsibility for the quality work in education. At the preschool level, the head of the preschool together with the preschool teachers are responsible for the educational and organizational planning and implementation, follow-up, evaluation, and development of teaching and activities (Vallberg Roth 2015).

### Central Authorities (National level)

**The National education agency (Skolverket)** is the central authority for all school forms in Sweden: age 1-5, Preschool; age 6, compulsory pre-primary school; age 6-13, School age care (Fritidshem); class 1-9, compulsory primary school; class 1-6 Sameskolan (Schooling with a special focus on knowledge of the Sami language and culture); upper secondary school; adult education. **The National education agency** oversees developing curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the education system.

The *National education agency* (Skolverket) is also the central authority for Special Schools (Specialskola) and Special Needs Schools (Grundsärskola).

**The National Agency for Special Needs Education** (Specialpedagogiska myndigheten SPSM) is the national *provider* of Special Schooling and SNE. The National Agency for Special Needs

Education and Schools provides children, young people and adults with disabilities with the same opportunities for development and education that everyone in society is entitled to.

**Swedish Schools Inspectorate:** Has the responsibility to monitor education quality and compliance with national regulations. Carries out external evaluations of school and preschool activities.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate can exert sanctions and impose fines (through a strengthened role granted by the Education Act, 2011) to schools not complying with regulations and standards. In the model introduced in 2011, the Inspectorate should prioritize the schools which have the greatest need for support, as well as increase the overall level of school supervision. Inspection reports are publicly accessible on: <https://www.skolinspektionen.se/beslutsrapporter-statistik/>

### Local Authorities

#### Municipal Authority: Responsible

According to *the Education Act*, Sweden's 290 municipalities are responsible for planning and running public preschools and schools. They are also expected to inspect, follow up and evaluate public and grant-aided independent preschools on a continuous basis and through annual follow-up and evaluation measures. The follow-up is often based on administrative and economic reports. Factors examined are expansion, use and allocation of resources and ensuring that the national goals for education are met. (Eurydice 2020; OECD 2017, p.15)

**The local principal (head)** (Micro level) has the responsibility for ensuring the quality of educare and the development of the staff's qualifications at the preschool service. The certified preschool teacher is responsible for his/her teaching.

**1.3 National regulation documents and laws: please enter the main national regulation documents and laws that rule and guide ECEC activities and young children's education. Note any differences between settings in split systems, or between integrated sections in unified systems. Mention also if the rights for special-needs education is statutory, and if this applies to ECEC. (Further development of this information is asked for below.)**

*The Education Act* (Skollag [SFS 2010:800]) and the *Education Ordinance* (Skolförordning [2011:185]) provide the basic regulations for all levels of education from preschool to upper secondary school, the Sami school and municipal adult education, including tuition for immigrants and students with certain disabilities.

*Education Act* [SFS 2010:800]

- States rules for Preschool all ages (1-5). [Chapter 8]
- The rights to Special-need education are included in the Act [Chapter 8, §9, and also §2,§7].
- All children in the ages 3-5 have the Rights to free preschool 525h per academic year (Allmän förskola) [Chapter 8, §4]

*Education Ordinance* Skolförordning [SFS 2011:185]

- States the fact that preschool is regulated by the national curriculum for preschool according to the education act. [SFS 2011:185, Chapter 7; §1]
- Applies to Pre-primary school (Förskoleklassen) as part of the compulsory school.
- States the obligation to use the national monitoring system measuring the child's linguistic awareness and mathematical thinking. [SFS 2011:185, Chapter 8, §2, §9]

- States the rights for transition between school forms [SFS 2011:185, Chapter 4 §4-7] (See 2.3 below)

*Basic constitution* (Grundförfattning [SKOLFS 2010:37]: Ordinance on the curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and after-school center.

The Ordinance with the Instructions for Skolverket (Förordning [SFS2015:1047] med instruktion för Statens skolverk)

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-20151047-med-instruktion-for\\_sfs-2015-1047](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-20151047-med-instruktion-for_sfs-2015-1047)

*Ordinance with Instructions for Special Pedagogy* [SFS 2011:130] (Förordning med instruktion för Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten)

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2011130-med-instruktion-for\\_sfs-2011-130](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2011130-med-instruktion-for_sfs-2011-130)

- Regulates SPSM's operations.

<https://www.lagboken.se/Lagboken/lagar-och-forordningar/lagar-och-forordningar/skola-och-hogskola/>

**1.4 Educational guidelines: Note specifically if there are educational guidelines for children's education at ECEC, if they are binding, and for what groups of children they account to.**

*Curriculum for ECEC:*

Lpfö 18 (Läroplan för förskolan) is the national curriculum for ECEC. The curriculum covers all ages 1-5 and are binding for all ECEC services (ISCED 0).

Link to Curriculum for the Preschool (Lpfö2018) in English:  
<https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.6bfaca41169863e6a65d897/1553968298535/pdf4049>

*Curriculum for children at the pre-primary school and at school-age educare* is covered by the Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare (revised 2018):  
<https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/styrdokument/2018/curriculum-for-the-compulsory-school-preschool-class-and-school-age-educare-revised-2018?id=3984>

Binding policy document for ECEC:

Skolverket (2017). *Måluppfyllelse i förskolan: Skolverkets allmänna råd med kommentarer*. Skolverket; Stockholm. (Goal fulfillment in preschool: The Swedish National Agency for Education's general advice with comments. The National Agency for Education)

Binding guidelines on how to implement the Curricula for ECEC (Preschool) and fulfill the overall goals for the preschool activities. In *Måluppfyllelse i förskolan* the *National Agency for Education* reports on how to work with special support in preschool.

Skolverket (2014). *Arbete med extra anpassningar, särskilt stöd och åtgärdsprogram: Skolverkets allmänna råd med kommentarer*.

Provides binding guidelines for special education policies in compulsory schooling and in school age care.

**1.5 Types of services, delivering sectors and environments**

**Please inform about the different types of service environments (e.g. ECEC-centers, home-based provisions), what services are offered (daycare, education, evening and night care), and which**

**sectors deliver the services (public, private and voluntary sectors). Note that, these divisions may be relevant to age or not. In split systems, inform about each setting individually. In a unitary system, describe if there are integrated sections that offer different kinds of services.**

ECEC service is provided at ECEC centers for age 1-5, both municipal public centers and independent schools (private and voluntary sections). Home based provision (municipal head) is optional for pedagogical care (1-5), however, the free ECEC-education at "Allmän förskola" (see 1.1) that is entitled to every child between the ages of 3-5 is only offered at ECEC-centers. It is possible to attend to Allmän förskola at an ECEC center and then spend the rest of the time at a home-based provision. For those (relatively few) who chose a home-based provision the most common choice is to shift to full time ECEC-centers at the age of 3. All provisions must apply to the Education Act and National curriculum for preschool.

**1.6 Pre-primary program: inform on the availability and the status of a pre-primary program. Note at which ages the children attend to the service and at which level of educational organization the program is delivered (e.g. ECEC, primary school or else)**

Förskoleklass (Preschool class) is compulsory education the year the child turns 6. The program is delivered at the primary school environment. The level of education is interim. The Preschool class curricula is incorporated as special section in the compulsory school curriculum.

In distinction to the ordinary preschool the compulsory preschool class has more specified learning goals for the children, fulfillment of these is measured with statutory measurements (see 1.3). The preschool class is regulated by the *Education ordinance* [SFS 2011:185] (Skolförordningen) (see 1.3) and is ruled by the Education Act [SFS 2010:800].

## 2. Access to ECEC and obligations

**2.1 Inform us on the rights to access and the actual access to ECEC-services (i.e. authorities' obligations):**

From 1 year of age the child has the right to ECEC. Parents have the right to the service of ECEC pedagogical daycare for their child for full time /ordinary working hours. For nights and weekends, most municipals have night care services, but this is not mandatory. If parents are out of work, or on parental leave (sibling) the child still has the rights to ECEC daycare 3h a day or 15h a week.

The right to "Allmän förskolan"; According to the Education Act [chapter 8:§4] Children shall be offered pre-school education for at least 525 hours a year from the autumn term when the child turns three years old (see 1.1)

**2.2 Inform us on compulsory educational levels for the child (i.e. parents' obligations):**

Children who reside in Sweden have a compulsory schooling from the age of six.

On ECEC in the Education Act [SFS 2010:800] Chapter 8:

§10: The school duty enters the autumn term the calendar year when the child turns six.

The first compulsory school form is Förskoleklass (pre-primary school).

§12: The school duty shall expire at the end of the spring term of the tenth year or, if the student attends the special school, the eleventh year after the student has begun to fulfill the school duty, unless otherwise provided for in § 13 or 14. Layer [SFS 2017: §1115].

Children who reside in Sweden and have compulsory schooling also have the right to free education in public schools.

**2.3 Procedures for deviations from the above rules. Note especially for deviations (e.g. retention, earlier start) regarding children's transitions into compulsory settings (what investigations are made, who runs the investigations, and who decides).**

Transitions between school forms and classes are regulated in the Education Act (SFS 2010:800,§7; the first part in §6,) and in the *Education Ordinance* 2011:185

According to *Swedish Education Act* [SFS 2010:800] Chapter 8:

§10: If there are special reasons, the child may begin to fulfill his or her school duty only in the autumn term of the calendar year when the child turns seven.

The question of deferred compulsory schooling is being considered by the home municipality at the request of the child's guardian. Addition in Layer [SFS 2017: 1115].

§11: Earlier school start and exemption from the obligation to fulfill compulsory schooling in preschool class.

A child may be accepted in the preschool class as early as the autumn term of the calendar year when the child turns five. Addition in Layer [SFS 2017: 1115].

According to the *Education Ordinance* [SFS 2011:185], Chapter 4:

§6: In the preschool class, the principal may, at the request of a pupil's guardian, decide that the pupil may attend the preschool class for another school year, if there are special reasons for doing so.

Further it appears from Chapter 7, §§ 11a and 11b in the Education Act [2010: 800] that a child under certain conditions may completely skip the preschool class. In addition, a pupil in the preschool class may be moved to year 1 of the compulsory school, if the school principal deems that the pupil has good conditions for it and the pupil's guardian allows it.

### 3. ECEC Quality

**3.1 Responsibility for the accreditation and evaluation of ECEC settings. Inform about the national, regional, or local responsibility for accreditation and evaluation of different ECEC settings.**

*Education Act Chapter 4 and chapter 26 regulate the national and local responsibilities for accrediting quality.* There are obligations on all levels:

- National level: the school inspectorate supervises how a municipality fulfils its obligations towards the activities and how the municipalities' activities are conducted.
- Local/Municipal level: the municipal authority supervises the independent grant-aided schools.
- Local/unite level: The principal together with the regular staff is responsible for the continuous assessment of the activities.

*The education act* (Chapter 8:§8):

The principal shall ensure that the children's groups have a suitable composition and size and that the children are also otherwise offered a good environment.

**3.2 Which levels of ECEC-services are subject to control (i.e. monitoring)? Tell us if all settings are subject to monitoring (e.g. by any authority – see next question) or if the type of monitoring differs between different types of ECEC-settings, tell us also if the monitoring process induces recommendations or requirements for changes.**

All levels of ECEC-services are subject to control. All preschool activities are subject to the National Agency for Education and the Education Act.

*The School Inspectorate*

The monitoring process may induce recommendations but also state requirements for change.

**Tell us also if the monitoring process induces recommendations or requirements for changes:**

From *Education act* Chapter 4, §7:

If, during follow-up, through complaints or in any other way, it emerges that there are deficiencies in the business, the Municipal authority must ensure that the necessary measures are taken.

Further it is stated in chapter 4 that Quality review must be documented, and that there must be written routines for receiving and investigating complaints against the ECEC training and schools.

**3.3 Responsible monitoring bodies. Who has the responsibility for the control and monitoring development, at what level (national, regional, local), and how is monitoring executed at the different levels of ECEC-settings?**

See Eurydice: *Quality Assurance in Early Childhood and School Education* (2020)  
<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/quality-assurance-early-childhood-and-school-education-71>

- The *Swedish Schools Inspectorate* (Skolinspektionen) is the national agency that is responsible and leads the development of quality assurance in Swedish preschools and schools. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is tasked with examining the quality of education and pedagogical activities that are under the authority's supervision. The overall purpose of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's inspections is to contribute to development based on the equal right of all children and pupils to a good education in a safe environment.
- **The municipalities** have supervisory responsibility for the *independent preschools* located in the municipality. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has supervisory responsibility for municipal preschools. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is also responsible for examining how the municipalities take their responsibility for the supervision of independent preschools.

**3.4 What services and material are provided for by authorities to support and develop ECEC qualities?**

- **The National Agency for Education** (Skolverket) is the leading authority for putting the standards and developing the quality work in Swedish preschools and schools.

- *The school inspectorate* (Skolinspektionen) provides a step-by-step information on how to prepare an inspection, on what happens during the inspection and how to best follow up:  
<https://www.skolinspektionen.se/inspektion-och-tillstand/inspektion-steg-for-steg/>
- Check list for monitoring quality provided by Skolinspektionen:  
<https://www.skolinspektionen.se/rad-och-vagledning/skolrepresentanter/kolla-din-skola-och-forskola/>
- The municipal authority responsible for school and education (Skolförvaltningen) has the local responsibility to assist and ensure the resources needed at the local ECEC provisions.

Below are two examples given (From the municipals of Malmö and Täby communities)

- <https://malmo.se/Sa-arbetar-vi-med.../Forskola-och-utbildning/Kvalitetsutveckling-i-forskolan.html>
- <https://doc.taby.se/handlingar/Barn-%20och%20grundskolen%C3%A4mnden/2018/2018-09-20/Handlingar/02.3%20Metodbok%20tillsyn%20och%20kvalitetsgranskning.pdf>
- SPSM: *The evaluation tool for an accessible education* (Värderingsverktyget): The *evaluation tool for accessible education* is designed to gather the knowledge in the organization about how accessible the business is for all children. The tool is web-based and consists of two main sections: the evaluation gathering section with questionnaires and an archive section for storing previous evaluations. The ECEC staff answers a questionnaire together and the workplace is supposed to see which areas of the business work well and which need to be improved. The tool is divided in four areas for the self-evaluation whose values together constitute the quality of the preschool: Prerequisites for learning, social environment, educational environment, and physical environment.

<https://www.spsm.se/stod/tillganglighet/varderingsverktyget-som-stod/>

#### 4. Staff resources (staff density and qualifications)

**4.1 Qualifications: Inform on the requirements of staff qualifications for service at all levels of ECEC-settings. Tell if the same requirements apply to all staff or if there are staff with different qualifications at a center/provider. Please provide any links to resources or documents where available. (Keep short, the question overlaps with Output 4)**

See Q4

- Preschool head: For the position of the principal at a preschool there are no requirements on having the qualification of a preschool teacher. However, school leadership training is mandatory for principals. This means that the school principal is obliged to have his principals undergo the state principal's program within four years after taking up the position of principal.
- Child caregiver: there are three levels of child caregivers: a) Staff with no formal education, b) staff with upper secondary education and c) Specialist Child Caregiver, (Higher Vocational Education, icse4). B is the most common category. C is a “growing” category. The Specialist Child caregiver can be specialized in language

impairment, to provide for specialist knowledge for teaching children on SEN (on functional disabilities and language impairment) or language development.

- Student assistant: upper secondary education
- Preschool teacher (Bachelor 210 ECTS credit points)
- Special pedagogue / special teacher: (Second-cycle study programme, 120 ECTS credits) The special pedagogue is often hired in a municipal team and is responsible (in the team) of the development of the pedagogical work at a municipal level. The special pedagogue consults teachers and assist the head in taking the initiative (together with parents) if special pedagogical measures are needed.

#### 4.2 Number of caregivers and teachers: Inform on the directives or recommendations for the number of staff and the size of child groups at different services (references?).

As a benchmark, the National Agency for Education recommends 6–12 children per group of children for children aged 1–3 years. For children aged 4–5 years, the benchmark is 9–15 children per group of children. These figures are just benchmarks. There can be both more or fewer children in a group of children depending on the following factors and how well these factors work together:

- staff training and skills
- staff density related to number of children
- composition of the children's group
- the physical environment.

The composition of the children's group means, for example, the children's ages, the proportion of children who need special support in their development, the proportion of children who speak other languages than Swedish as their first language, and at how many hours the children are attending to preschool [SFS 2010:800; Chapter 1,§10, and Chapter 8,§8] and also in the policy document *Måluppfyllelse i förskolan* (Skolverket 2017, p.15-16)

## 5. Statistics

**In case you have easy access figures. If not, please just provide an estimation (and say so) or indicate if not figures or estimation is possible.**

### *Younger ECEC age group*

In total 76% of the very young children (younger than 3) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers).

(Reference SCB 2015)

79% of the children in this age group are enrolled at ECEC-centers.

(Reference SCB 2020)

### *Elderly ECEC age group*

In total 95% of the elderly ECEC children (in the ages from 4 to 5) experience ECEC services (homecare services, ECEC-centers or other suppliers).

(Reference SCB 2020)

near 100% of the children in this age group are enrolled to ECEC-services governed according to the national ECEC recommendations or rules.

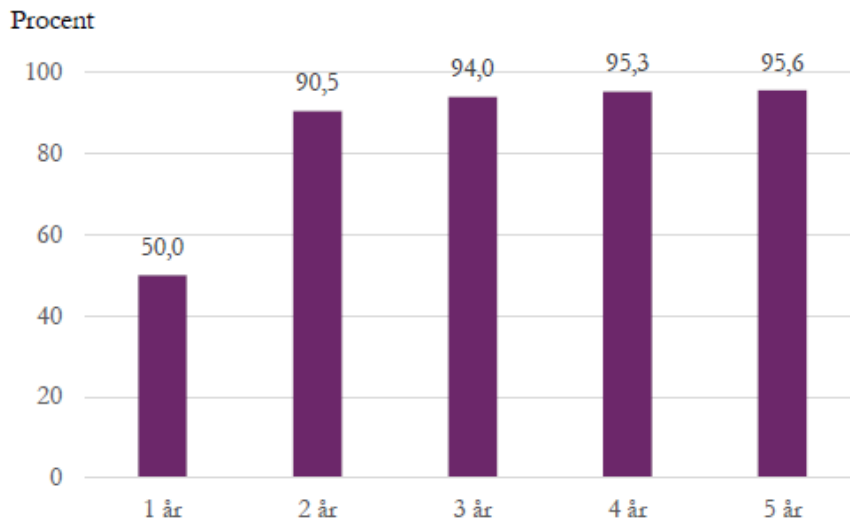
100% of the children attend to the *pre-primary program* described above.

(Reference \_\_\_\_\_)



The diagram shows % of children enrolled at preschool services in Sweden per age  
 Diagram 1 visar andel barn av befolkningen som är inskrivna i förskolan 2020.

**Diagram 1. Andel (procent) barn av befolkningen inskrivna i förskola 2020.**



Källa: Förskola, Barn och grupper, tabell 2B för 2020.

## 6. Education of children with disabilities and special educational needs

### 6.1 The rights: Develop the information on the national rules and support for special need education in ECEC and compulsory education.

The national rules for providing pedagogical support to meet children's needs in education, and their rights to special needs education, are stated differently for children at Preschool and for the children at the compulsory school. Pre-primary schooling (förskoleklassen) is part of the compulsory school.

According to the government's proposal (Prop 2009 10:165, p.350) special support in preschool means that children should be given special support in the way and to the extent necessary for the child to have the opportunity to develop and learn according to the curriculum. The regulations are adapted for the *preschool environment, not the individual child*. The goals do not relate to individual children's achievements but instead focus on the quality development of the *activities*. For the same reason, there is *no provision for an action program for the individual child at preschool*, as can be requested in compulsory school (eg. preschool class)

The support initiatives *special education group, individual education and adapted study program* is only given in compulsory school and corresponding school forms (Skolverket: <https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/extra-anpassningar-sarskilt-stod-och-atgardsprogram>)

However, it also accounts for *preschool children*, that if it can be suspected that a child will not reach the knowledge requirements that are to be achieved at least or the requirement levels that apply (i.e. to take part in the activities), the student must be given support promptly in the form of *extra adjustments* (Extra anpassningar) provided by the ECEC center. Extra adjustments are

a less intrusive support effort that teachers and other school staff can normally implement within the framework of regular teaching. No formal decision needs to be made on additional adjustments. The support must be given based on the child's education in its whole, incorporating the entire pedagogical environment, unless it is clearly unnecessary. Note again, according to the Swedish Preschool curricula *there are goals for the activity* but not individual knowledge requirements or other goals that the children must achieve. This means that for children who cannot participate in the educational and social activities in preschool it is most often considered to be relevant with “extra anpassningar”. The first step is always to evaluate the pedagogical environment. It is the local principal that has the responsibility for that the correct level of adjustments are made, and who decide on the documentation of the adjustments. [Education Act 2010:800, Chapter 2, §10]

In Sweden, there are in general three forms of support for providing the correct/sufficient special support:

- Extra anpassningar (Extra adjustments)
- Särskilt stöd (Special support)
- Special schools for students who need a different form of schooling. Special schools are categorized as a specific schooling (Skolform). Accounts only to Compulsory school, that is from preschool class and up.

Sources: *Education Act 2010:800* chapter 3, §5; chapter 8, §9, and *Skolverkets allmänna råd om extra anpassningar, särskilt stöd och åtgärdsprogram* (Skolverket, p. 11.)

See also:

Rätt till särskilt stöd i förskolan: <https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/extra-anpassningar-sarskilt-stod-och-atgardsprogram#h-Sarskiltstodiforskolan>

The Special School is for children with a certain type of disability (physical or physical that also can be in combination with cognitive disabilities), while the Special Needs School provide Special Need Education (SNE). The Special School shall provide the children and young people education which is adapted to each student's conditions and which as far as possible corresponds to the education given in primary compulsory school. The education *must form the basis for further education* (Skollagen 2010:800, Chapter 12). Special Needs School is for those children who have great cognitive difficulties and therefore need a slower pace and more time for learning. SNE has its own curricula: <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundsarskolan/laroplan-och-kursplaner-for-grundsarskolan/laroplan-for-grundsarskolan>

**6.2 The decision-making body: tell us about the process and the decision-makers: who are the initiators (ECEC staff, parents, “tests”), which competencies are involved in the decision process, who is responsible for the decision (e.g. parents, committee, authority).**

The Education Act [2010:800, chapter8, § 9] states that: Children who, for physical, mental or other reasons, need special support in their development shall be given the support that their special needs require. The same section also states that the principal shall ensure that the child is given such support.

If information from the preschool staff, a child or a child's guardian or in any other way shows that a child *is in need of special support*, the preschool director must ensure that the child is

given such support. The child's guardian must be given the opportunity to participate in the design of the special support measures (Chapter 4 in the Education Act). There is no requirement for test results or diagnosis to justify the need for extra support. The child is entitled to the support needed to be able to learn and develop.

The legal Caregivers rights and obligations:

- The legal guardian (vårdnadshavare, most often the parents) has the overall responsibility for children's upbringing. Children have the right to care, security and a good upbringing. The person who has custody of a child is responsible for the child's personal circumstances [Chapter 6, §1-2 of the Parental Code] (*Föräldrabalken*). Further, according to the Parental Code: The legal guardian has *the right and obligation to decide in matters concerning the child's personal affairs*, but in step with the child's increasing age and development, the guardian must take increasing account of the child's views and wishes (Chapter 6, §11 FB). Since 2020 the CRC is incorporated in Swedish law and consequently the child's perspective is strengthened. However, according to article 12 the restriction of the child's participation remains "in accordance to the child's maturity and age". Swedish judiciary has traditionally assigned the parents great influences in decision concerning their children.

Preschools' obligations:

- For children enrolled at preschool activities, the preschool principal is responsible for ensuring that each child receives the support they need at the ECEC center. The school needs the legal guardians' consent if a doctor or psychologist makes assessments in connection with the investigation.

The Pre-school class:

- The preschool class belongs to the compulsory school, therefore other rules on extra support also apply. The preschool director is responsible for ensuring that each child receives the support they need. The school needs the legal guardians' consent if a doctor or psychologist makes assessments in connection with the investigation. However, no consent is needed when the school makes the pedagogical assessment. If guardians should have objections to the efforts the school makes to help a student, they can appeal the content of an action program. They can also appeal if the principal decides that the student does not need special support. But otherwise, the school's responsibility remains to give the student the education he or she needs. The school must never give up on a student.

*The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, SPSM*

SPSM is the national agency and authority for special Needs Education. In the authority there is a special decision-making body, the *Board for Reception in Special Schools and for Rh-adapted education*. This is, however, seldom the applicable level for ECEC services.

The board's tasks are regulated, among other things, in the Education Act (2010: 800) and in the Ordinance [SFS 2011:130] with instructions for the Special Education School Authority. Rh-adapted education means adapted education for people with severe mobility impairments. Since November 2019, the authority has delegated to the Board to also decide on the reception of children in preschool class at the school unit with a special school. On a national level there are only two institutions that offer special

school for preschool class in Sweden (one in Stockholm and one in Umeå) within the arrangements of SPSM.

### Public health care for children:

Child health care (0-5):

- Child health care (Barnhälsovården) is aimed at all children from birth to the start in preschool class. The Child health care also has the task to instruct children's parents to promote all children's health, development and well-being. Barnhälsovården (The Child Health Care) has the overall responsibility of children's access to adequate health care 0-5. Child health care is voluntary and free of charge.

Health monitoring is organized in a three graded program (Barnhälsovårdsprogrammet) to ensure that every child have access to the level of support it needs. The three grades are organized according to three tiers (1;2;3) and is realized by the local Child health Services (CHS) (In Swedish Barnvårdscentral, BVC). Tier 1 is for every child and includes standard monitoring of growth, health and development. For children in risk – extended program can be offered (tier 2 if needed also tier 3). CHS is based in person centered care, adapting the content of each health visit to the specific family's situation and needs, which may change over time. The CHS program embraces universal targeted interventions that enable equitable provision of services. The CHS offers activities at CHS centers and via home visits, health guidance, health examinations, vaccinations, and parental support.

If further examination or program is needed, and with the consent of the guardian, CHS refer and guide to the right authority, often the *Child and adolescent psychiatry* (Barn- och Ungdomspsykiatri BUP) for further investigations and possibly diagnosis.

School health service:

- The school health service is responsible for children who attend to the compulsory school (From pre-school class and on). The school health service is regulated by the Education act (Skollagen 1985:1100) and states that "the purpose of school health care is to monitor students' development, preserve and improve their mental and physical health and work for healthy living habits in them". It is further stipulated that "school health care shall primarily be preventive" and that "it shall include health checks and simple health care interventions". For school health care "there must be a school doctor and school nurse".

Child and adolescent psychiatry

- BUP: is an abbreviation for child and adolescent psychiatry (Barn och Ungdoms Psykiatri), and is aimed for children and young people up to 18 years who need psychiatric support or care. BUP belongs with the public health care system. BUP is the instance when a child needs help at the specialist level.

The main assignment for BUP is assessment for diagnosis and decisions further treatment. When the assessment is complete, some children will continue to come to BUP. Most often, in addition to the difficulties with AST, children also need help with other types of symptoms. For example, it can be feeling very sad or anxious, having problems with coercion or fear, or having ADHD.

BUP provides:

- Assessment and investigation: investigate the child's needs, make assessments and make a diagnosis in consultation with the child and guardians.

- Care planning: When the child receives a diagnosis, the child and its guardian receives recommendations for how that diagnosis should be treated based on the individual need. A plan and agreement on what has to be done, in what order and by whom is made together with the child and the guardian.
- Treatment and interventions: implement the plan with the agreed interventions.
- Follow-up and evaluation: After the interventions have been completed, there is a follow-up and judgement of continued care at BUP, in school or/and at the habitation center (Habilitering och Hälsa, see below)

Link to BUP Info in English

<https://www.bup.se/diagnoser/andra-svarigheter/svarigheter-i-skolanforskolan/>

- BUM: (Barn och ungdomsmottagningen) is a pediatric and adolescent medical clinic, works mainly with *physical concerns instead of mental ones*. This often applies to problems such as asthma and allergies or other chronic diseases. It can also apply to obesity and severe conditions such as epilepsy or cases where it is noticed that the child does not follow growth and development according to the normal curve. Different types of medical investigations are often performed here, and clients may be further referred to BUP.
- *Habilitering och Hälsa*: (Habilitation & Health service, also called only “Habilitation”) The goal of the Habilitation service is that the client (child and family) should be able to be as independent in the everyday life as possible and feel that one has the opportunity to influence one’s own life. Habilitation provides advice, support, and training. The Habilitation also makes plans for what is needed for the child together with the family.

The Habilitation is located in the region. It can be organized in different ways in different places in the country. There is often a *Habilitation team* for children and young people, the special child and adolescent Habilitation, and one for adults over 18 years of age.

To get in contact with the Habilitation team one of the following is needed:

- Referral from another care provider, for example child and adolescent psychiatry (BUP), child and adolescent medicinal clinics (BUM), child health care (BVC) or student health.
- Parent’s own care request after the child have been diagnosed with autism, a mobility impairment or an intellectual disability.
- been enrolled previously.

Habilitation & Health service do *not treat* mental illness or other illness or provide medical care. There are no doctors, nurses or dietitians in Habilitation & Health.

### **More on the circumstances for special support:**

As mentioned above, the responsibility for giving the children the support they need at an ECEC center is on the preschool principal, and it is on the municipal authority to provide sufficient and correct resources (financially and the competences) to fulfill that mission.

There is no definition of the concept *of need for special support* in the law. It is also not described what conditions must exist for support to be given in preschool. The provision is therefore generally held and linked to a responsibility for the preschool to meet the child's

support needs. The assurance for the quality of ECEC activities is regulated in the Education act (Chapter 4 and 26). Parents and children's rights to participate in decisions is stated in the same chapter (4) §12.

In order to meet the standards Skolverket suggests a distinction between "Extra anpassningar" and "Särskilt stöd" (see 6.1 above). In the preschool setting the default level is "Extra anpassningar". The measurements for "Extra anpassningar" are directed towards the pedagogical environment prior to individual children.

The support can be given as staff reinforcement, either to the group of children in general or to the individual child, or in the form of consultation and guidance to the staff.

Reducing the number of children in the group of children or adapting the premises can be other forms of support. Efforts shall be made after an assessment in each individual case of which intervention is most appropriate.

The municipal authorities have the responsibility to support the principal in her/his work (see 6.3).

### On initiatives

- At the Child Health Services (CHS): The initiatives for examining a child's extra needs are considered during the regular visits to the local Child Health Services (CHS) in accordance with the ordinary child health care program (Tier 1). The initiative can then be taken by the parents, or the CHS staff together with the parents. If needed, CHS refer and guide to the right authority, often the Child and adolescent psychiatry (Barn- och Ungdomspsykiatri, BUP, see this section above) for further investigations and possibly diagnosis. There is always a requirement of Guardian consent for any treatment, or when a doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist is involved.
- At the preschool: When the child's extra needs are considered at preschool the preschool head is obliged to take measures. However, again, there is always a requirement of Guardian consent for any treatment, or any involvement of a doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist.
- By the municipal preschool psychologist (If authorised by the legal guardian)  
Preschool psychologists usually do not carry out any investigations on a single child but assist the staff and parents to find the best solutions. If a neuropsychiatric diagnosis is suspected, the child is investigated within the Child Health Care system (above). It differs between regions which care clinic has the investigative task, but BVC can always refer and guide to the right authority.

Barnhälsovårdsprogrammet: <https://www.rikshandboken-bhv.se/metoder--riktlinjer/informationmaterial/swedish-child-health-services/>

### **6.3 Provisions and implementation of the education of children with disabilities and special educational needs: inform about the execution, where does the execution take place.**

For ECEC at the preschool level:

The basis for pedagogical support in preschool is that the measures should be directed at the *pedagogical environment*, not at the individual child. This means that the educational activities must be adapted to all children in preschool. Children who temporarily or permanently need more support than others must have this support designed with their own needs and conditions

in mind. The staff's ability to understand and interact with the child and to gain the parents' trust is important.

The local municipals are obliged to support the preschools (and the preschool principals) in the work with children in need of special support. The rules do not regulate exactly how this support is realized, and it may differ in respect to the size of the municipal. For children with certain circumstances for their development (such as severe allergies, language impairments, psycho neurological conditions etc.) municipals can offer specialized preschool centers with specially designed preschool activities. This is most often offered in bigger municipals. (See for instance <https://malmo.se/Bo-och-leva/Utbildning-och-forskola/Forskola/Forskola-och-pedagogisk-omsorg/Sarskilt-utformad-forskoleverksamhet.html>)

For smaller municipals with less resources (and a smaller number of children enrolled at preschool services) the pedagogical adjustments are required at the specific preschool concerned.

Most often the municipals provide an arrangement with a shared Municipal Preschool Team. This kind of team can be organized differently. The team can belong to school health service and consists of a special educator, speech therapist, and preschool psychologist. The team can provide staff with guidance and training to develop play and learning environments that include all children's needs. The municipal can also provide for specific teams for educational development having focus on developing the staff's pedagogical skills (<https://malmo.se/Sa-arbetar-vi-med.../Forskola-och-utbildning/Kvalitetsutveckling-i-forskolan/Pedagogiska-utvecklingsteam.html> )

As mentioned above, the preschool class (pre-primary school level) *belongs to the compulsory school*. This means that the pre-school class is firmer regulated by having stated learning goals. There are two national mapping materials. One of them is monitoring linguistic awareness and the other monitor mathematical thinking in preschool class. Both are administrated by the Swedish National Agency for Education and are compulsory according to a binding education ordinance (SKOLFS 2019:16). (See also section 7)

## 7. Tools and partners relevant for NEMO

**List and give a short description of tools, programs and partners in this section.**

### **7.1 Methods or material for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that are developed or sanctioned by national central authority:**

For ECEC the choice of tools is optional, however monitoring per se is not optional in terms of passing the quality reviews by the School Inspectorate.

#### Optional tools designed for **ECEC services**

*IUP* (individuell utvecklingsplan): Is an **optional tool** in preschool and contains written assessments. IUP originates from school environment where the teacher must produce a written individual development plan (IUP) once a year for those students who do not receive grades. IUP consists of two parts: assessments and forward-looking planning. The assessment consists of a review of a child's knowledge development and the planning consists of a summary of what efforts are needed for the student to reach the knowledge requirements and develop as far as possible within the framework of the curriculum.

*Pedagogical documentation* is aimed for monitoring what is going on among the children at an ECEC center. It is an assessment of the pedagogical environment as a whole without having a predetermined framework of expectations or norms. The documentations consist of what is happening among children in indoor and outdoor activities. The documentation materials are photographs, videos, notes, narratives etc.

*BRUK* is an **optional tool** for operators' (ECEC centers') self-evaluations. It aims to measure the quality of all curriculum-driven activities and to support in collegiate learning. The central idea is that by collegiate dialogues learning processes are made visible and the pedagogical quality can be assessed. BRUK is developed by The Swedish National Agency.

*Värderingsverktyg* för tillgänglig utbildning (Evaluation tool for accessible education) developed and sanctioned by the the National Agency for Special Needs Education (SPSM) – (See section 3.4)

<https://www.spsm.se/stod/tillganglighet/varderingsverktyget-som-stod/>

<https://www.spsm.se/kurser--aktiviteter/nyheter/nyheter/kvalitetsutvecklande-arbete-i-forskolan-dar-leken-star-i-fokus/>

### **Compulsory Tools for Pre-primary school (six-year-olds):**

Two *compulsory tools* are developed for pre-primary assessment [SKOLFS 2019:16] The monitoring material is provided by the national agency for education (Skolverket).

- *Hitta språket* (find the language): Compulsory national monitoring of the child's linguistic awareness.
- *Hitta Matematiken* (find the mathematics): Compulsory national monitoring of the child's mathematical thinking.

### **7.2 Other standardized materials aimed for monitoring children and/or ECEC-services that can be used at preschools (developed and promoted by associations and companies):**

MIO (Matematiken Individens Omgivningen, Mathematics, the individual, the environment) Observation material for mathematic development in pre-school. Age based assessment to grade a child's level of mathematic skills. Promoted by a network connected to an academic publisher: Student litteratur.

TRAS (Acronym for "Tidig Registrering Av Språkutveckling", early language development registration). Designed as a standardized instrument for preschool teachers to observe children's language development. Trained and supported by special pedagogues and therapists the preschool teachers observe the children in everyday situations from the age of two until they are five. (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish, Sami, German and English)

### **7.3 Other organizations and programs that may be relevant in preschools (private sector - e.g. associations and companies):**

*Start*: A program and learning material that aims to train Life skills for young children at preschool (1-3 years of age). The material is designed to prepare for the "second step" (StegVis). Focus is on empathy and social skills and enhance early skills for self-reflection.



*StegVis* (StepWise or Step by step): program for 4-6 years old children at ECEC centers focused on social and emotional learning and skills.

Start and StegVis originates from the program “Second Step” developed by the organization Committee for Children ([www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)). Start and StegVis is translated into Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish and Estonian and is distributed by Specialpædagogisk forlag in Denmark.

*Stegen*: (means both steps and ladder in Swedish) is a study material for children in the ages 4-5 years of age. Stegen is developed as an extension of “StegVis” and aims to prepare for school by training self-regulations, social skills and learning to learn from early ages. Stegen includes supporting parental guidance along with the “steps”.

*SET*: (Social och Emotionell Träning; Social and Emotional Training). Promoted by individual trainers (psychology and special pedagogy). Books and materials are adapted to be used directly by preschool teachers. Children's participation in SET results in shared documentation material (photographs, drawings etc) but also individual portfolios or “SET-books”.

**7.4 Tools or models that are specifically designed for assessing disability and special educational needs (please indicate if any of those are specific to ASD), and for educational interventions, that are of relevance for NEMO:**

Models for assessing ASD and interventions in therapy that is of relevance for NEMO

ESSENCE – Early symptomatic Syndromes Eliciting Neurodevelopmental Clinical Examinations (Gillberg 2010). Essence stands for an umbrella concept including a bigger group of neurodevelopmental/neuropsychiatric disorders. ESSENCE covers several distinct assessment areas, all of which contribute in different ways to the assessment of children’s diagnosis. A basic assumption for ESSENCE is that the diagnosis of younger children is complex and uncertain but is nevertheless important in order to give the best support early on in school.

Assessment areas in accordance to ESSENCE that can be documented in preschool environments:

- Motor skill development on micro and macro level
- Hypersensitivity in Perception (Touch, sounds, light)
- Language difficulties • Inhibition and Regulation of activity level
- Strong mood swings
- Social interactions; initiating and sharing
- Sleeping problems
- Eating habits

<https://gillbergcentre.gu.se/forskningsomraden/Diagnosgrupper%2C+metoder+och+vissa+p%C3%A5g%C3%A5ende+studier+vid+GNC/observation-av-barn-i-forskolemiljo>

EIBI - Early and Intensive Behavioral Intervention- An Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) for Children with Autism, and a pedagogical tool for systematic early interventions with children with ASD (before the age of 5). The method is based in learning theory and behavioristic theory. The therapy consists of a large number of discrete operative learning opportunities with *specialty qualified coaches*. At the department for special pedagogy at Stockholm University (eg. Pettersson-Roll et al 2016) researchers have been working to develop models that can be used by staff in preschool. The model consists of training combined

with coaching for all staff, system support and good support from the preschool director. The model is expected to provide conditions for the implementation of a research-based approach to children with autism spectrum diagnosis (ASD). See also Hansén-Larson et al 2021.

<https://www.spsm.se/stod/forskning-och-utveckling/aktuellt-om-forskning/nyheter/sa-kan-du-omsatta-forskning-om-autism-till-praktik-i-forskolan/>

TEACCH: (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children): A pedagogical framework for individually structured teaching program for children in autism spectrum. The culture of Autism, cognitive style and visual processing strength in Autism are core point in the theory. In a Swedish context SPSM has converted TEACCH into the pedagogical framework: “Tydliggörande pedagogik” (Clarifying pedagogy) <https://www.spsm.se/funktionsnedsattningar/neuropsykiatriska-funktionsnedsattningar-npf/tydliggorande-pedagogik/>

Durnik, M., Dougherty, J., Andersson, T., Persson, B., Björevall, G., & Emilsson, B. (2000). Influence of the TEACCH Program in Sweden. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 29(1), 72-87. Retrieved July 13, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41344931>

Mesibov, G.B., Shea, V. & Schopler, E. (2005). *The TEACCH approach to autism spectrum disorders*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

### 7.5 Other relevant things to list...:

Material provided by SPSM

- Working material for working with developmental language disorder in preschools and schools pdf  
<https://webbutiken.spsm.se/working-with-developmental-language-disorder-in-preschools-and-schools/>

Material provided Gillberg Center

- Screening document from Gillberg Center:  
<https://www.gu.se/gnc/gncs-resurser/screeningformular>
- A-TAC: Screening by telephone interview with parents (child aged 9-11).  
The A-TAC form (Autism-Tics, ADHD and other comorbidities) is a telephone interview originally developed by the Gillberg Group at the University of Gothenburg for use in CATSS (Child and Adolescent Twin Studies in Sweden). It can be used by non-child psychiatrists. It provides good indicators for several diagnostic categories within ESSENCE (including autism, ADHD, DCD and learning disabilities) but cannot be used as a stand-alone diagnostic tool.

<https://www.gu.se/gnc/gncs-resurser/screeningformular/a-tac-screeningformular>

UDL Universal design for learning is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all students developed at CAST organisation in Boston (<http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.XIIUppNKhGz>). Provides framework with guidelines for an inclusive learning environment. Diversity, motivation and presentation are key words in designing for learning.

## 8. Comments

The quote below is taken from *Måluppfyllelse i Förskolan* (Skolverket 2017, p. 22). *Måluppfyllelse i Förskolan* is a policy document from Skolverket on how to reach the goals in Swedish preschools. The passage in this policy document reflects the overall approach to Swedish preschool pedagogy/ culture:

“Children's need for special support in their development cannot be understood as a characteristic of the child but is always situational. The need is related to what happens in the meeting between the child, the staff, and the environment in the preschool. This means, for example, that children may need support in their development in one environment, but not in another. With the help of the systematic quality work, the preschool can improve its work for children in need of special support in their development. To ensure that the efforts are sufficient and work, they need to be continuously monitored and evaluated. It is not regulated how support initiatives in preschool are to be documented, but documentation is needed to be able to evaluate whether the initiative has had the desired effect. Assessment of which interventions are appropriate must always be made in consultation with the child's caregiver (eg. parents).”

Extra anpassningar (Extra adjustments) are thus aimed to develop the pedagogical environment prior to provide special treatments of individual children. SPSM provides learning material to be used by the whole working team in collegial learning.

*DATE-learning material* is educational materials (learning material) aimed to make learning environments accessible to everyone.

*Studiepaket NPF* – (Study package for NPF) Learning material for further education aimed for teachers and other professionals that meet children with neuropsychiatric disorders (e.g. ASD) in their pedagogical work. (See Questionnaire IO4)

## Selection of useful links and references

### Education in Sweden:

Eurydice 2020: Key Features of the Education System

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/sweden\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/sweden_en)

An overview Swedish school system with further links to authorities and stats:

<https://sweden.se/society/education-in-sweden/>

Eurydice 2021: Early Childhood Education

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/early-childhood-education-and-care-80\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/early-childhood-education-and-care-80_en)

### Laws and binding documents:

The Swedish *Education Act* (Skollagen) [SFS 2010:800]:

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800\\_sfs-2010-800](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800)

*Education Ordinance* (Skolförordning) [SFS 2011:185]:

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skolforordning-2011185\\_sfs-2011-185](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skolforordning-2011185_sfs-2011-185)

*Ordinance with Instructions for Special Pedagogy* (Förordning med instruktion för Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten) [SFS 2011:130]:

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2011130-med-instruktion-for\\_sfs-2011-130](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2011130-med-instruktion-for_sfs-2011-130)

*Basic constitution* (Författningssamling) [SKOLFS 2010:37]:

<http://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?fritext=SKOLFS+2010%3A+37&sort=desc>

Health and Medical Services Act (Hälso och Sjukvårdslag) [SFS 2017:30]:

[https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/halso--och-sjukvardslag\\_sfs-2017-30](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/halso--och-sjukvardslag_sfs-2017-30)

## National agencies

### **Skolverket - The Swedish National Agency for Education:**

<https://www.skolverket.se/andra-sprak-other-languages/english-engelska>

*SPSM, Specialpedagogiska Skolmyndigheten - The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools ()*

<https://www.spsm.se/>

On SPSM short in English:

<https://www.spsm.se/om-oss/other-languages/english/>

Special needs schools:

<https://www.spsm.se/om-oss/other-languages/english/our-mission/special-needs-schools/>

SNE in Sweden:

<https://www.spsm.se/om-oss/other-languages/english/the-swedish-education-system/laws-and-rights-in-swedish-schools/special-needs-education-sne-in-sweden/>

Working material in English:

<https://webbutiken.spsm.se/working-with-developmental-language-disorder-in-preschools-and-schools/>

### **Skolinspektionen - School Inspectorate:**

<https://www.skolinspektionen.se/>

<https://www.government.se/government-agencies/the-swedish-schools-inspectorate-skolinspektionen/>

Link to short information in English:

<https://www.skolinspektionen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/>

Inspection reports are publicly accessible on:

<https://www.skolinspektionen.se/beslut-rapporter-statistik/>

## Curricula (Skolverket)

Curriculum for the Preschool (Lpfö2018):

<https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.6bfaca41169863e6a65d897/1553968298535/pdf4049>

Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare (revised 2018):

<https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/styrdokument/2018/curriculum-for-the-compulsory-school-preschool-class-and-school-age-educare-revised-2018?id=3984>

Curriculum for the special primary school, Special Needs School (SNE):

<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundsarskolan/laroplan-och-kursplaner-for-grundsarskolan/laroplan-for-grundsarskolan>

### **Other binding policy documents from Skolverket**

Skolverket (2014). *Arbete med extra anpassningar, särskilt stöd och åtgärdsprogram: Skolverkets allmänna råd med kommentarer*. Stockholm; Skolverket.

<https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/allmanna-rad/2014/allmanna-rad-for-arbete-med-extra-anpassningar-sarskilt-stod-och-atgardsprogram>

Skolverket (2017). *Måluppfyllelse i förskolan: Skolverkets allmänna råd med kommentarer*. Stockholm; Skolverket.

<https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.6bfaca41169863e6a65c87e/1553967244148/pdf3749.pdf>

### **Information about the policies from Skolverket (Inclusive education and adaptation policies)**

Additional adaptations, special support and action programs:

<https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/extra-anpassningar-sarskilt-stod-och-atgardsprogram>

Special support in preschool:

<https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/extra-anpassningar-sarskilt-stod-och-atgardsprogram#h-Sarskiltstodiforskolan>

On the obligations of the principal:

<https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/leda-och-organisera-skolan/organisera-tidigt-stod-och-extra-anpassningar/organisera-extra-anpassningar-och-sarskilt-stod-i-forskola-och-skola-stod-till-rektor#h-Beslut>

### **Child health service**

Information in English about the child health services in Sweden:

<https://www.rikshandboken-bhv.se/metoder--riktlinjer/informationmaterial/swedish-child-health-services/>

Overview of the binding health care program:

<https://www.rikshandboken-bhv.se/metoder--riktlinjer/barnhalsovardens-nationella-program/>

BUP (Barn och ungdomspsykiatri) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

<https://www.bup.se/diagnoser/andra-svarigheter/svarigheter-i-skolanforskolan/>

Remisshantering BUP (Referral management):

<https://vardgivare.skane.se/patientadministration/remisshantering-och-rutiner-for-vantande-patienter/remisshantering-bup/>

**European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education**

<https://www.european-agency.org/>

**Reports:**

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017. *Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Contributions from a European Study*. (M. Kyriazopoulou, P. Bartolo, E. Björck-Åkesson, C. Giné and F. Bellour, eds.). Odense, Denmark

Eurydice 2019:

[https://www.eurydice.si/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/KD\\_ECEC\\_2019\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eurydice.si/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/KD_ECEC_2019_Report_EN.pdf)

Eurydice 2020. *Quality Assurance in Early Childhood and School Education*

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/quality-assurance-early-childhood-and-school-education-71\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/quality-assurance-early-childhood-and-school-education-71_en)

OECD 2017. *Education Policy Outlook: Sweden*. Part of the part of the Education Policy Outlook series from 2015

Vetenskapsrådet 2015. *Förskola tidig intervention – delrapport från Skolforsk*.

Vetenskapsrådets Rapporter: Ingegerd Tallberg Broman, Ann-Christine Vallberg Roth, Linda Palla, Sven Persson. Stockholm, Sweden.