Quality framework on early childhood education and care (ECEC)
European cooperation so far

Consensus on the need for EU policy cooperation to improve ECEC across Europe is relatively recent.

2011: Communication on *Early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, EU Education Ministers adopted Council Conclusions which endorsed this.

2012-2014: the Commission has set up under the OMC a Thematic Working Group (TWG) of policy-makers, academics and practitioners in ECEC.

2014: Proposal for a quality framework on early childhood education and care (ECEC)
Approach to early childhood education and care

Improving accessibility and quality simultaneously

Holistic approach to children – from birth to compulsory school age

Keeping the child in the centre of thinking about improvements
Structure of the Key Principles for a Quality Framework

- **Quality informed by high expectations**

- **Access**: available, affordable for all; encourages participation and strengthens inclusion; embraces diversity

- **Workforce**: professional and well-qualified; strong leadership; supportive working conditions

- **Evaluation and Monitoring**: regular and transparent; in the best interest of the child; effective use for policy development

- **Governance and funding**: coordinated legislation and funding; responsibilities clear; collaboration encouraged; progress towards universal legal entitlement

- **Curriculum**: holistic; flexible; requires collaboration; improved/revised regularly

- **Image and Voice of the Child**

- **Process Quality**

- **Partnership**

- **Competent System**
Framework proposal on access to ECEC

Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children

Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity

Rights-based, cost, opening hours, geography, outreach, co-construction (usefulness and comprehensibility)
Demand and supply of places in publicly subsidised centre-based ECEC settings, 2012/13

Children under 3

3 years and older children

- Demand is higher than supply
- Supply meets demand
- No data
Social gradient in the use of formal childcare for children aged 0-2

EU27

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Framework proposal on ECEC workforce

Well qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role

Supportive working conditions, including professional leadership, which creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents

Theory and practice, needs-based training, flexible career pathways, networks
Workforce

The **younger the children the lower the minimum qualification requirements** for staff

**Continuous professional development** is professional duty for education and care staff in settings for younger children in 2/3 of European countries

**Childminders** – min. level of qualification is required in 1/3 ed. systems with home based provision, in half only special course is needed
Framework proposal on ECEC curriculum

A curriculum based on **pedagogic goals, values** and **approaches** which enable children to reach their **full potential** in a **holistic** way

A curriculum which requires **staff to collaborate** with children, colleagues and parents and to **reflect on their own practice**

Traditions, based on child development, sense of identity and belonging, co-construction
## Educational guidelines

### Children Over 3 years
- literacy
- numerical and logical reasoning
- adaptation to school life

### SOME countries
- understanding of the world
- health education
- physical development
- artistic skills

### ALL countries
- personal development
- emotional and social development
- language and communication

## Learning objectives

- balance between adult-led and children-initiated activities
- free play

## Learning approaches
Framework proposal on ECEC monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child

What, how, for which purpose?
Monitoring and evaluation

Each country has a monitoring system in place but the focus is mainly on structural quality, on compliance with rules. For older children it is more complex.

Monitoring and evaluation often happens under different bodies at central, regional and local level.

Often accreditation is done by a different body.
Framework proposal on ECEC governance and funding

**Stakeholders** in the ECEC system have **clear** and **shared understanding** of their **role** and **responsibilities**, and know that they are expected to **collaborate** with partner organisations.

**Legislation, regulation** and/or **funding** supports **progress towards a universal legal entitlement** to publicly subsidised or funded ECEC, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.

**coherent frameworks, public commitment, targeted vs. universal**
Next steps at European level

November 2015: Education Council – informal debate about diversity and multilingualism in ECEC
Creating a corresponding indicator set, from which countries can choose from

Education and Training Monitor 12 November 2015 with a chapter on ECEC and country analysis

Research plan for further European research in the field of early childhood education and care

EU supports Member States in welcoming refugee children in the service (peer learning)

Peer Counselling
Peer Counselling

- International peers and scientific experts
- Commission as a match-maker
- Independent report to support national policy
- Part of ET2020 toolbox

1. Clear objective
2. Commitment
3. Careful timing
4. Complementarity
# Light vs. Full version of peer counselling

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## European initiatives, policy cooperation

### Policy priorities
- Europe 2020 Strategy: European Semester; Annual Growth Survey
- Country Specific Recommendations
- Cross-sectoral synergies: work-life balance package, rights of the child, social benchmarks, SDG 4.2

### Education and Training 2020 Strategy
- Open Method of Coordination
- New Working Groups (Schools)
- Joint Report priorities (new emphasis on social inclusion)
- Peer Counselling

### Policy debate
- Education Council
- DG Schools

### Funding
- Structural Funds
- European education and research programmes through Horizon 2020
- Erasmus+
- Investment Plan for Europe

### Tools
- eTwinning,
- School Education Gateway
Thank you for your attention.

Email: viktoria.bolla@ec.europa.eu

ECEC Quality framework: