



European Education Area Strategic Framework
**Working Group on Early Childhood Education
and Care (ECEC)**
Activity report (2022-2023)



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate B — Youth, Education and Erasmus+
Unit B.2. — Schools and multilingualism

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European Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

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Manuscript completed in January 2024

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PDF	ISBN 978-92-68-08188-4	doi: 10.2766/324122	NC-09-23-460-EN-N
PRINT	ISBN 978-92-68-11828-3	Doi: 10.2766/703580	NC-09-23-460-EN-C

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

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Executive summary

Within the context of the European Education Area (EEA) strategic framework¹, the working group on early childhood education and care (ECEC WG)² supports EU members states to implement the European Quality Framework for ECEC, which is a key part of the 2019 Council Recommendation on High-Quality ECEC Systems³.

Throughout 2022-2023, the ECEC WG has been focusing on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of quality in ECEC. This topic is one of the five pillars supporting the provision of quality ECEC described in the European Quality Framework for ECEC. The WG focused on three key topics:

1. Purposes and values of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC;
2. Coordinating monitoring and evaluation efforts across levels;
3. Involvement of stakeholders, including children and families in monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC.

Following 13 working group meetings and 2 Peer Learning Activities (PLAs), the group published four key outputs with a focus on M&E:

- [*Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: Purposes, Values and Principles*](#) (2022) focuses on the purposes, values and principles that should underpin the design of M&E processes, while also exploring the challenges and unintended effects of M&E;
- [*Improving the governance of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC*](#) (2023) examines the best ways to coordinate and streamline M&E processes across the centre and system levels, including a cross-national analysis of case studies and pointers for policy developments;
- [*Involving children, parents, staff and stakeholders in monitoring & evaluation of quality in ECEC*](#) (2023) covers how children, parents, staff and other stakeholders could be meaningfully involved in M&E processes to increase the inclusiveness and quality of ECEC systems; and
- [*Making Early Childhood Education and Care more inclusive through monitoring and evaluation of quality*](#) (2023) evaluates the visibility and efficiency of inclusive policies, in addition to looking into which data should be collected and how, that can usefully inform the M&E of inclusive ECEC policies targeting vulnerable groups.

In addition, the group discussed a number of topics related to the organisation and the quality of the ECEC sector:

- providing support for the ECEC of Ukrainian refugees,
- staff shortages in the ECEC sector,
- home-based ECEC services, and
- the [SELFIE for TEACHERS](#) online tool among others.

The activity report ends with the next steps for the WG's upcoming mandate that will revolve around staff and inclusion, with a specific focus on leaders, their role, and the support they need to make quality ECEC for all a reality.

¹ [Homepage | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](#)

² [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [EUR-Lex - 32019H0605\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

1. Background

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) has been an important priority in the European education agenda for several years as showcased by the following key policy documents:

- the Council Recommendation on High-Quality ECEC Systems of May 2019⁴,
- the Commission's Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 of September 2020 – the EEA Communication⁵, and
- the Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training towards the European Education Area and Beyond (2021-2030) of February 2021 – the Council Resolution⁶.

Within the context of the European Education Area (EEA) strategic framework⁷, the working group on early childhood education and care (ECEC WG)⁸ supports EU member states to implement the European Quality Framework for ECEC, which is a key part of the 2019 Council Recommendation on High-Quality ECEC Systems. The general objective of the working group is to promote mutual learning on policy reforms of ECEC systems.

The ECEC WG is composed of representatives from EU Member States⁹ and additional participating countries¹⁰, as well as European and international agencies and institutions including Eurydice, Eurofound, UNESCO, UNICEF and OECD. The WG also consists of representatives from the following stakeholder organisations: Alliance for Childhood, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), Eurochild, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA).

The ECEC WG (2018-2020) recently focussed on inclusion, staff professionalisation and the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in the ECEC sector. It published two reports:

- [The Toolkit for inclusive ECEC](#);
- [Guidelines on How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified ECEC staff](#).

During its 2022-2023 work cycle, the ECEC WG discussed the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of quality in ECEC, with a key emphasis on the following three areas:

1. the **purposes, values and principles** that should underpin the design of M&E processes,
2. the best ways to **coordinate and streamline M&E processes** across centre and system levels, and

⁴ Council Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605(01)&from=EN).

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&from=EN>.

⁶ Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48584/st06289-re01-en21.pdf>.

⁷ [Homepage | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁸ [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁹ AT, BE(FR), BE(NL), BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK.

¹⁰ AL, BIH, MK, RS, TR, UA, IS, LI, NO.

3. the benefits of, and best practices for, **engaging children, parents, and other stakeholders** in M&E processes.

Throughout 2022-2023, the WG on ECEC held 13 meetings – 12 online and one in person in Brussels, Belgium – and two peer learning activities (PLAs), in Brussels, Belgium and in Vilnius, Lithuania.

2. Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC

2.1. Why focussing on M&E?

The European Quality Framework for ECEC describes five pillars that support the provision of quality education and care to young children, one of which is M&E – besides access, staff, curriculum, and governance and funding.

As noted in the [Background note on Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC](#)¹¹, M&E are key components of improving quality in ECEC systems. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of ECEC provision, M&E processes can act as catalysts for change to support stakeholders and policymakers in undertaking initiatives that respond to the needs of children, parents, and local communities.

There is a consensus among researchers and policymakers that by systematically linking data collection, research, ongoing evaluation and policy action, M&E processes can lead to the continuous improvement of ECEC provision as well as to the enhancement of children's well-being, development and learning. Accordingly, an increasing number of countries in Europe are in the process of developing or improving systems for monitoring and evaluating quality in the ECEC sector.¹²

2.2. Methodology

The ECEC WG agreed to discuss three core topics, based on key questions which guided the definition of the 2022-2023 work programme.

1. Purposes and values of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC

- What are the possible main purposes (objectives) of M&E of quality in ECEC?
- What are the values which can/should underpin M&E of quality in ECEC, and how can they be included in M&E processes?
- How can M&E processes make ECEC systems more inclusive for all children?

2. Coordinating monitoring and evaluation efforts across levels

- How to coordinate M&E processes and tools across all levels of the system (centre, local, regional and national), incl. in split systems?

¹¹ This note brings together concepts, research findings and questions on the topic of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC. These were discussed during the first meetings of the ECEC Working Group in January and February 2022 to frame the discussions of the group in the following months.

¹² Klinkhammer, N., Schäfer, B., Haring, D., Gwinner, A. (2017) *Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Approaches and experiences from selected countries*. Munich: German Youth Institute.

- How can we ensure that M&E results are effectively and efficiently used to improve ECEC policies and the quality of ECEC provision across all levels of the system and horizontally across split systems?
- How to ensure that M&E results are available and useful to all stakeholders?

3. Involvement of stakeholders, including children and families in monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC

- What are the benefits and the methods to involve children, families, staff and other stakeholders in M&E quality in ECEC?

The 13 working group meetings and 2 PLAs provided space for numerous country presentations; plenary, roundtable and group discussions; on-site visits; information points to update on relevant ECEC activities; but also, presentations of relevant research findings, reports and initiatives among others. Experts provided support and expertise throughout the activities of the WG, including in the preparation of tangible outputs – such as the work programme, concept notes, and reports –, as well as in presenting the latest relevant findings for the group’s work.

The ECEC WG also has a dedicated internal Microsoft Teams channel, documenting the respective WG activities and allowing for the co-creation of WG outputs and sharing of information.

2.3. Main findings

The ECEC WG produced four key outputs between 2022-2023 with a focus on M&E:

- [Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: Purposes, Values and Principles](#) (2022);
- [Improving the governance of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC](#) (2023);
- [Involving children, parents, staff and stakeholders in monitoring & evaluation of quality in ECEC](#) (2023);
- [Making Early Childhood Education and Care more inclusive through monitoring and evaluation of quality](#) (2023).

The findings of these reports are summarised in detail below.

2.3.1. Purposes, values and principles of M&E

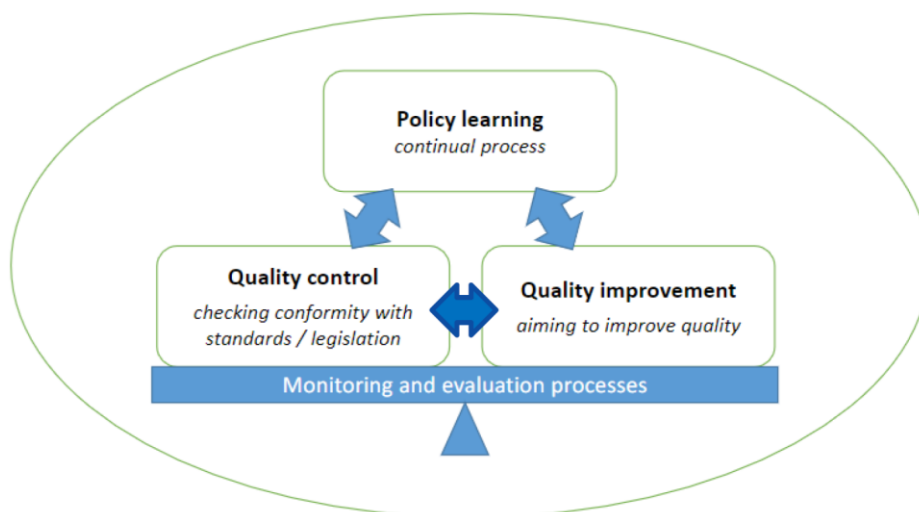
[Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: Purposes, Values and Principles](#) (2022) is the first report of the ECEC WG, addressing the following key questions:

- What are the possible main purposes (objectives) of M&E of quality in ECEC?
- What are the values which can/should underpin M&E of quality in ECEC, and how can they be included in M&E processes?

The report first focuses on the **purposes of M&E of quality in ECEC**, including quality control, quality improvement and policy learning, as seen on the figure below. Whereas **quality control** aims to ensure that ECEC provision adheres to mandatory national and sub-national quality standards or legislations, **quality improvement** goes beyond this, striving to support continuous reflection and developments towards better quality in ECEC settings. M&E also aims to foster the democratic participation of children and parents, staff and other stakeholders to guide **policy learning**, reforms, and initiatives through creating evidence on the quality of strengths and weaknesses of ECEC provision and systems.

The WG suggests that M&E processes for assessing quality in ECEC strive for a **proportionate emphasis on quality improvement and quality control** as opposed to an

over-emphasis on quality control. This would foster a sense of purpose and motivation among staff, and shift M&E from an emphasis on adhering to minimum quality standards to a focus on striving to improve ECEC policies for the benefit of children.



Secondly, the **values that should guide ECEC quality provision and M&E processes** are identified, with specific reference to having a clear image of and giving voice to children, the inextricability of education and care, the significance of staff professionalism and wellbeing, inclusiveness, families’ participation and the vision of ECEC as a public good.

Thirdly, in light of the value framework, the WG proposes and defines **six principles to guide the design and implementation of M&E processes**, while also suggesting ways for their integration into M&E:

1. democratic and participatory
2. accountable and transparent
3. impactful and supportive
4. holistic and inclusive
5. contextualised and responsive
6. equitable and consistent.

Finally, the report explores the **challenges and unintended effects of M&E**, describing ways in which these processes can be counterproductive— particularly in contexts where the tools, activities, and approaches of the M&E system are not aligned with its main purposes, principles, and values. The WG provides suggestions to anticipate and help avoid these potential pitfalls.

2.3.2. Improving the governance of M&E

[Improving the governance of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC](#) (2023) is the second report of the ECEC WG, exploring the second core topic on the best ways to coordinate and streamline M&E processes across the centre and system levels. More specifically, the output focuses the following key questions:

- How can we ensure that M&E processes and results are effectively and efficiently used to improve ECEC policies and the quality of ECEC provision across all levels of the system and horizontally across split systems?
- How to coordinate M&E processes and tools across all levels of the system (centre, local, regional and national), including in split systems?

The report first delves into the **potential benefits of investing in coordinated approaches to the M&E of quality in ECEC provision**. A focus on improving structural quality¹³ must

¹³ Such as staff-to-child ratios, group sizes, minimum staff qualifications, safety of buildings, etc.

go hand in hand with enhancing process quality¹⁴. To improve the entire ECEC system, aspects of both structural and process quality have to be made visible and easy to interpret to all stakeholders involved. Setting up robust data systems and developing coordinated M&E processes – with aligned tools and feedback loops across all levels – are therefore essential to support quality improvement throughout the levels of ECEC systems.

The **policy challenges experienced by European countries in coordinating M&E functions, processes and tools** for quality ECEC across levels are also examined. Aligning M&E processes in complex governance arrangements according to which ECEC provision is regulated, funded and managed in each country emerged as a key challenge. Responsibilities for the governance of ECEC systems are often multi-layered at the vertical level¹⁵ or partly overlapping at the horizontal level¹⁶. This can lead to a fragmented data architecture which has a negative impact on the usability of data for developing comprehensive quality improvement initiatives. Other challenges include the lack of coordination across the bodies responsible for M&E and quality ECEC, the alignment of external and internal evaluation processes and the potentially high costs of M&E.

The report then provides an overview of the **situation of European countries in relation to coordinating M&E efforts across levels**, drawing on the 2019 report of Eurydice on 'Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe'.¹⁷

This is followed by the **presentation and analysis of strategies developed by EU Member States to overcome their challenges in coordinating M&E processes**, and examples of inspiring practices in the form of case studies.

Finally, **pointers for policy developments** are presented, drawing on the lessons learnt from the cross-national analysis of case studies. M&E systems are better positioned to promote improvements in ECEC if they are designed to be coherent, coordinated, and optimised across vertical and horizontal levels of an ECEC system. Furthermore, continuing the quality development of ECEC provision relies on the commitment and responsibilities of all the actors¹⁸ that work together to create the conditions enabling all children – and their families – to benefit of the best possible educational opportunities to thrive within the communities they are living in.

2.3.3. Involving children, staff, families and other stakeholders in the M&E of quality in ECEC

[Involving children, parents, staff and stakeholders in monitoring & evaluation of quality in ECEC](#) (2023) is the third report of the ECEC WG. It investigates how a variety of stakeholders could be meaningfully involved in M&E processes to increase the inclusiveness and quality of ECEC systems.¹⁹

The report's introductory section focuses on the importance and benefits of involving various groups into M&E processes in ECEC, drawing on values, rights-based arguments and practical reasons. Since **each group can provide unique insights** based on their

¹⁴ Refers to the daily interactions that children experience with each other, staff, teachers, materials and activities.

¹⁵ Including national, regional and local authorities.

¹⁶ Meaning that diverse ECEC programmes and providers can coexist.

¹⁷ European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice (2019), Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe, 2019, Publications Office, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/813000>.

¹⁸ Including individuals, professional teams, institutions, as well as local / regional / national authorities and agencies.

¹⁹ The PLA that took place between 24-26 April 2023 in Vilnius, Lithuania – hosted jointly by the European Commission and the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in collaboration with the National Agency for Education – provide an important basis to this report. Its outcome is the report on [How to involve stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation processes to increase inclusiveness of ECEC systems?](#)

specific position with regards to the ECEC system, their diverse inputs contribute to creating a 'full picture' of ECEC quality.

It reviews **how children, parents,²⁰ staff and stakeholders are being involved in the M&E of ECEC across Europe**. This is done via a mapping of the requirements / guidelines aimed at the involvement of these stakeholders and how these differ across the age ranges of ECEC; and by presenting various methods used around Europe to include different stakeholders in the M&E of ECEC.

There are distinctive **challenges in working towards participatory M&E of ECEC quality** and involving each respective group. These revolve mainly around 1) ethical considerations and safeguarding; 2) identifying appropriate data collection tools; 3) ensuring research quality, relevance, and coordination; 4) ensuring that all the actors – including those who tend to be marginalised – are given voice and agency; and 5) making sure that M&E results do not lead to comparisons and competition or communicate unintentional messages.

To overcome these challenges, the report draws on 27 **examples of inspiring practices** across Europe. An overarching approach to conducting inclusive M&E is that the assessment or evaluation process must always put the child's best interests at the centre.²¹ The listed practices to include each group include:

- With **children**: creative approaches for playful inclusion in evaluation processes, participatory research initiatives, , and approaches to overcoming the challenge of engaging young children in policy consultation processes;
- With **families**: good practices related to parent and family surveys that create engagement, examples of how surveys are triangulated with other sources of data, parent surveys developed from the bottom up and that provide opportunities for parent-staff dialogue, surveys that are designed to be inclusive to as many families as possible, and examples of parent survey questionnaires to provide inspiration on what types of questions can be asked;
- With **staff**: case studies examining staff self-assessment tools, focus group discussions, using pedagogical documentation to guide M&E, and a model of involving staff in policy reform consultations on ECEC quality.
- With **other stakeholders in M&E**: examples of the principles used in conducting external evaluation with a range of ECEC stakeholders that have been researched, a model of the co-production approach in education, and cross-sectoral collaboration in M&E of ECEC.

Finally, the report ties the above together by providing policy recommendations and suggestions for the way forward in terms of implementing an inclusive M&E of ECEC quality.

2.3.4. M&E and inclusion

[*Making Early Childhood Education and Care more inclusive through monitoring and evaluation of quality*](#) (2023) is the fourth report of the ECEC WG exploring the objectives, challenges and practices to collect information and data which inform policymaking when it comes to making ECEC policies, systems and settings more inclusive.

The report underlines that there are numerous policies, projects and practices across Europe aiming to support the participation of vulnerable children in ECEC, and that it is important to monitor their implementation and efficiency. Accordingly, current **practices to**

²⁰ This report also includes families and primary care-givers in the category of parents, in order to remain inclusive of all variations of primary care and support structures that children in ECEC may be situated in.

²¹ In line with the Council Recommendation of 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems.

evaluate the visibility and efficiency of inclusive policies are examined, followed by a collection of basic principles for the M&E of quality in ECEC, and potential pitfalls to avoid. **Recommended approaches for successfully evaluating inclusive policies** include that when designing M&E processes, attention must be paid to the values that support the ECEC system. It is also important to collect data on the inclusiveness of ECEC settings and ensure that the M&E processes consider the views and experiences of all children.

To explore the kind of **data that can effectively inform the M&E of inclusive policies targeting vulnerable groups**, the report recalls the WG's basic principles in this regard, as well as concerning the resources needed, the importance of jointly agreed definitions, and the use of a coherent and well-coordinated range of sources.

It is highlighted that **collecting personal data is a challenging but useful operation to support the evaluation of ECEC systems' inclusiveness**. It helps determining whether policies to increase the inclusiveness of ECEC systems and services are actually working, and helps identifying weaknesses at the local, regional and national level, as well as to redesign ECEC systems. Challenges related to legal, administrative, and ethical issues therefore need to be addressed.

The **existence and implementation of an inclusive curriculum** (or pedagogical framework) **is a helpful tool to support inclusiveness of ECEC systems**. Hence, it is important to evaluate the inclusive dimension of the ECEC curriculum and consider whether it includes or it is completed by concrete guidance for its implementation. In addition, it is key to evaluate whether implementing the curriculum efficiently supports the provision of quality education and care to all children.

As **ECEC staff are essential to deliver quality ECEC**, it is suggested for national and local policymakers, as well as ECEC providers, employers, leaders, training services to:

- assess the inclusive dimension of initial and continuing education offered to ECEC staff, to equip them with the competences / attitudes to work with children with diverse abilities and profiles;
- assess the extent to which all ECEC staff have the opportunity to acquire the relevant competences; and
- follow-up these assessment results with relevant measures.

The **staff: child ratio is usually associated with a higher quality of education and care which support the inclusion of vulnerable children**. Therefore, M&E systems should ensure that appropriate staff: child ratio regulations are in place and respected, and that they are suitable to support the inclusion of all children.

The actual engagement of vulnerable children in the activities of the ECEC setting – beyond their enrolment or attendance – remains challenging to monitor and evaluate at the national level. Thus, all countries should make sure that their guiding documents for the provision and evaluation of ECEC include recommendations and tools which consider the active engagement of vulnerable children in ECEC activities. These tools should be accompanied by staff training to ensure their adequate use and follow-up.

The report closes with examples for the effective use of data collected to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of ECEC systems. **M&E processes should not only provide relevant information on the quality of practice in individual settings**, but also **on the systemic conditions within which the ECEC settings are working**. This can help identifying and addressing shortcomings in existing policies and governance arrangements.

3. Other topics

3.1. ECEC for Ukrainian refugees

Following the Russian military aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the massive arrival of Ukrainian refugees in the European Union, many of whom were very young children, the WG convened to discuss how best to welcome them and offer them access to ECEC.

Through six online meetings between March and October 2022 and a peer-learning internal document, the WG identified specific challenges (e.g. lack of places in most ECEC systems, lack of skills to care for children with war trauma, etc.) as well as solutions and resources to address them. Most of these aspects were included in the ECEC chapter of the European Commission Staff Working Document [Supporting the inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in education: considerations, key principles and practices for the school year 2022-2023](#).

In parallel, the WG discussions and cooperation with WG members have informed the [UNICEF research reports and policy briefs](#) prepared in this context.

3.2. Staff shortages

Staff shortages in the ECEC sector are increasingly common across Europe and challenge the ambition of providing more and better quality ECEC to all children, including the most vulnerable ones. The 2021 WG report [How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified ECEC staff](#) already identified many ways to address this problematic.

In 2023, as the problem appears to worsen in most countries, the WG started reviewing its assessment of the situation, gathering updated figures of current and future needs of number of staff, and reviewing strategies to address this challenge. To support this work:

- an internal peer-learning document is being updated on an on-going basis,
- the WG published a [Policy brief on Staff shortages in ECEC](#) in November 2023, highlighting why ECEC staff shortages are highly problematic, the many reasons behind staff shortages, examples of shortages figures in some European countries, and possible approaches to address the challenge.

3.3. Home-based services

Home-based ECEC services are not usually part of the WG discussions which focusses mostly on centre-based ECEC services. However, home-based services provide ECEC to many children and families in a number of European countries, who may be in the process of reforming them. In this context, several countries expressed an interest in having an ad-hoc discussion on the organisation of these services, challenges and recent or upcoming reforms to improve their quality. A specific meeting took place in September 2023 to support peer learning in this topic.

3.4. SELFIE for Teachers

[SELFIE for TEACHERS](#) is an online tool to help teachers to review and get feedback on how they are currently using digital tools and technologies in their work. In 2022, a project was launched to adapt this tool to ECEC professionals; it was presented to the WG who had the chance to comment on the project's objectives and methodology, and several WG members have been advising the project promoters (the European Joint Research Centre), sharing their experience and expertise. The ECEC version of the Selfie for Teachers will be finalised early 2024 and presented to the WG members, who can use it to support staff professionalisation in their countries.

3.5. Other initiatives and reflections related to ECEC

- The 2021 Council Recommendation adopted the [Child Guarantee](#), which foresees free access to ECEC to children in need – next to other basic services. Through presentations during several meetings and sharing of reports and experiences in its MS Teams group, the WG members have been able to learn from each other on experiences and successes to put in place efficient strategies to support the implementation of the Child Guarantee.
- In 2022, the **EU Care strategy** was adopted, including a [Council recommendation on ECEC, with revised Barcelona targets for 2030](#), regarding participation rates in ECEC of children under 3 and over 3. These new objectives were discussed in the WG during several presentations and fit within the WG's general ambition to increase access to quality ECEC.
- The European Commission's [Technical Support Instrument](#) helps a number of Member States reform their education and/or ECEC systems. Several presentations were delivered to the WG to inform them on the opportunities offered by the programme and the progresses of the on-going projects.
- The WG received regular information on **Eurydice** new publications and research plans on ECEC (e.g. [Key data on ECEC](#), 2024), which they were able to comment.
- Besides the many presentations related to research or projects results related to monitoring and evaluation of quality, a number of **research findings** were shared with the WG members, to inform policymaking, e.g.:
 - [Access to Early Childhood Education and Care for Undocumented Children and Families](#), PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)
 - [Working with multilingual children and families in early childhood education and care \(ECEC\): guidelines for continuous professional development of ECEC professionals](#), NESET (Network of Experts working on the Social dimension of Education and Training)
- **Erasmus+ project results** were also shared with the WG, in particular when related to the topics of inclusion of staff professionalisation, e.g. [Diversity+](#) (Governance, benchmarking and training tools for diversity positive ECEC provision, or [EMBRACE](#) (Fostering Inclusion of Children with intellectual disabilities in ECEC).
- During each meeting, WG members and the European Commission also informed the group about various **reforms and upcoming events in the field of ECEC**.
- Finally, the WG kept exchanging information, in particular research results on the impact of the **Covid-19** pandemic on children, ECEC staff and the ECEC sector in general.

4. Next steps

In accordance with its mandate, the European working group on ECEC will continue its discussions to support Member States in their implementation of the 2019 Council recommendation on high quality ECEC, including the European Quality Framework. Topics to be discussed in 2024-25 will revolve around staff and inclusion, with a specific focus on leaders, their role, and the support they need to make quality ECEC for all a reality.

Results of discussions and outputs will be published alongside previous WG deliverables (<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EAC/ECEC>).

Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care

This working group supports Member States as they implement the 2019 Council Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems and its main component - the European Quality Framework for ECEC.

It mainly supports peer learning based on measuring, monitoring and evaluation of quality, and follows up on the ET 2020 working group, which focused on inclusion, staff professionalisation and the management of the COVID-19 pandemic in the ECEC sector.



News and events

Find here news and events related to this working group.

Documents and deliverables

Find here the working group deliverables and other supporting documents important for its work.

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All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

