Achieving the EU’s Targets for Transformation in ECEC

Quality, inclusion and access to break poverty and inequality cycles in Europe.

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ECEC is a key component of the Child Guarantee

All children benefit from ECEC – but vulnerable and marginalized children benefit the most.
Investing in early childhood education and care (together with a package of ECD services) is an investment into society, economy and future stability.

It is one of the smartest investments a society can make and a core component of interventions to realise the objectives of the Child Guarantee.
Benefits for the Child

- Stronger socio-emotional skills, better quality relationships, and resilience to cope with stresses.
- Improved mathematics competencies in primary education and beyond.
- Highscope Perry Preschool study – Preschool attendants Graduation rates: 80%, not enrolled in preschool: 60%

Improved education outcomes and higher lifelong earnings.

Improved language, reading and communication skills.

Improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
Universal ECE narrows early achievement gaps for children from disadvantaged households.

Children who attended ECE are more likely to enter school on time.

Poor foundational learning leads to high drop-out rates and repetition costs—ECE prevents this costly cycle from occurring.

ECE children are more likely to complete primary and secondary school.

ECE prevents inequalities from becoming persistent within vulnerable communities.

Benefits for the education system
Every $1 invested in ECE yields a $16 return

ECE investment aids college matriculation and economic development

Higher rates of social and economic growth leads to a larger tax base and lower rates of poverty and social exclusion

Decreased overall crime-related costs, incarceration rates and dependance on social welfare services

Healthier populations relieves the strain on medical resources and personnel
Deep Dive Analysis Findings - ECEC

Progress made across areas of:

- Increased legal provision for ECEC across EU in last 10 years.
- Improved coordination across split systems.
- ECEC a key area as part of education agenda across EU.
- Targets in place to increase participation.
- Major developments in advocating for quality ECEC. European pillar of social rights: "children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality".
- EU Quality Framework and national frameworks developed/in development across EU.
- Extensive guidance documents developed to strengthen quality, inclusion, workforce and now M&E in progress.
Excellent Progress in EU MS’s - but still work to be done

Challenges consistent across Deep Dives and Eurochild ECEC CG analysis:

- Significantly lower access to ECEC for children:
  - from AROPE households (including minority groups)
  - With disabilities and complex needs
  - From rural/ remote settings
  - Children under 3
  - Children from refugee/migrant families
- This is true even where countries are reaching/ close to reaching Barcelona targets for 3-6.
Children by household type, income group, degree of urbanization and main reason for not meeting needs for formal childcare services. EU27 countries (Eurostat 2019)

Children receiving formal childcare services by household type, income group, degree of urbanisation and level of difficulty to afford formal childcare services. Eurostat 2019
Service access ranges hugely from 0-3 and 3+

- Services for children 0-3 are fragmented and/or informal resulting in additional challenges related to costs, quality and range of opening hours.
- These services also tend to be less regulated with lack of data/monitoring.
- Lack of flexibility around opening hours, hours of provision.

Place guarantee in ECEC, 2018/19

Source: Eurydice.
Service access ranges hugely from 0-3 and 3+

Significance of private self-financing centre-based ECEC provision, 2018/19

a) Settings for children under the age of 3 years

b) Settings for children aged 3 years and over

Source: Eurydice.
Reaching most marginalized with quality, inclusive ECEC

- Supply/demand challenges across urban and rural.
- Challenges with quality and inclusion – linked to teacher training, especially on play-based learning and inclusion.
- Need for alignment of quality monitoring.
- In some cases policies shaped to support stay-at-home mothers – at cost of children not benefitting from quality ECEC.
- Challenges for single parents in terms of affordability.
Key considerations for ECEC in CG Planning

- Quality and inclusion needs to be at the heart of access expansion.
  - Ensure inclusion efforts are targeting all children – AROPE, CWDs, ethnic/language/ gifted children.
  - Introduction of common national standards for ECEC for all services 0-6 focusing on both structural and process quality.
  - Ensuring curricula is inclusive and play-based with teachers trained to deliver.
- Strengthen data collection, analysis and use.
  - Disaggregate data by age, sex, location, AROPE as well as other details related to marginalization as much as possible.
  - Improve use of data for planning, budgeting and quality monitoring.
- Raise awareness about importance of ECEC with parents and communities.
Key considerations for ECEC in CG Planning

• Increased public investment needed.
  • Increased supply in areas of high demand as well as in areas of high need.
  • Establish guaranteed places and mechanisms for affordability (voucher systems/subsidies)
  • Support to families to remove secondary financial barriers.

• Ensure a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to ECEC is taken in country at national and local levels.
  • Strengthen horizontal and vertical cooperation and integration.
  • Integrated services across CG focus areas and beyond.
• Phenomenal opportunity to prioritize ECEC and strengthen access, quality, inclusion.
  • Leverage momentum and potential of CG to give children a strong start.

• For all children with specific focus on the most marginalized
  • They benefit the most from quality ECEC

• Integrated ECD services have the greatest impact.
  • ECEC going hand in hand with ECI, DI, Protection, Health and Nutrition, Parenting support.

• Quality data are critical for planning, budgeting and ensuring equity lens.

This is the moment!
Thank you.

For more information:

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