



METADATA

Title: Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe for children under 3 years of age

Other Titles: Historical trajectory, organization, governance, access, quality

Language: Greek

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ISBN: 978-618-85850-4-1

Subject: HUMANITIES AND ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Keywords: Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe / Children under the age of 3 / Organization and management ECEC / Accessibility ECEC / Quality ECEC

Bibliographic Reference: Megaloniidou, C. (2022). Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe for children under 3 years of age [Monograph]. Kallipos, Open Academic Editions. <http://dx.doi.org/10.57713/kallipos-24>

Abstract

In Europe, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) systems are organized in two basic ways: 1) The facilities are separate for younger children and older children. For children under-3s, focus is given in childcare and in settings of pre - school education while for older children emphasis is given in educational goals. 2) Unitary settings for the whole age range, up until the start of primary education. Both care and early education form an integral part of the provision in unitary settings. In most European countries ECEC is provided in two separate types of facilities based on children's ages. This monograph provides an up-to-date analysis of the ECEC systems in European countries, especially for children under-3s. First of all the historical trajectory, organization, and quality of the ECEC systems in European countries are presented. Moreover the five quality dimensions of the ECEC systems in European countries

such as governance and financing, access, staff, educational guidance, evaluation and monitoring are separately presented. The findings reveal that there is still some way to ensure access and quality of the ECEC systems in European countries. Universal access as well as high quality and integration of ECEC services have not been achieved so far in many European countries. The types of ECEC services and their quality differ according to children's age in most parts of Europe. Good quality ECEC for children under age 3 is not available in many European countries yet. Accessibility, availability and affordability for children is considerably better for older children than those under the age of 3. Staff qualification requirements are higher for staff working with older than for those working with younger children. Only a few of European ECEC systems have established evaluation systems for structural and process quality.

