

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

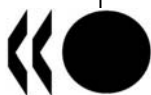
**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION AND CARE IN ECEC**

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CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION AND CARE IN
ECEC**

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA **EDU/EDPC/ECEC/A(2009)2/REV2**

1. The Network **ADOPTED** the agenda.

**2. ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY
RECORD OF THE 5TH MEETING** **EDU/EDPC/ECEC/M(2009)1/REV1**

2. The Network **ADOPTED** the summary record of the 5th meeting.

3. OPENING REMARKS

3. Ms. Barbara Ischinger, Director of the Education Department, welcomed the participants and thanked all countries who have responded to the questionnaire for their valuable contributions. She stressed that ECEC is a very visible and prominent topic in the education department and in many governments.

4. Ms. Deborah Roseveare, Head of the Education and Training Policy Division, reported that the work of the network from the last meeting was presented at the Education Policy Committee. The responses to the questionnaire resulted in valuable information on training requirements, teacher qualifications, and workforce supply and formed the basis to facilitate enriching discussions. She set out the objectives of this meeting.

**4. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME OF THE MEETING: INTEGRATION OF
EDUCATION AND CARE IN ECEC**

5. Ms. Miho Taguma, Policy Analyst in the Education and Training Policy Division, gave an overview of the country responses to a questionnaire of this meeting. She reported that the main reasons for integration cited by countries include: more political support and public recognition; better outcomes towards policy goals; better system management; increased funding; more coherent curriculum and more child-centred pedagogy. The main reasons for maintaining the split system include: political balance, history, traditions, values and administration. She reported that integration can take place at different levels, and the success factors for effective implementation would require political commitment, stakeholder buy-in, adequate funding, realistic timeframe, and coherence for parent/child and local needs. She emphasized that different strategies exist to respond to the integration agenda depending on country contexts.

6. Ms. Yoshie Kaga (UNESCO) presented the UNESCO's cross-national research on integration of ECEC in education. She stressed that integration is a trend in ECEC since many countries face problems with split systems, and she explained the rationales of countries to integrate, presenting different possibilities for integration. UNESCO's report on integrated systems "Caring and learning together" will be published in January 2010.

7. Ms. Nora Milotay (European Commission) based her observations on the issue of integration on two recent reports done for the Commission and the symposium conclusions held in Brussels in October 2008, as DG EAC currently has no policy work in the field at EU level. She stressed the importance of

quality of ECEC and noted that integration might play a role in this. In unitary settings, there is, in general, more and better access to ECEC, the curriculum is more comprehensive for the age group 0 to compulsory schooling age, and the staff is trained in a more coherent way. She said that collecting best practices and sharing them should be done more, and that more research work on integration is necessary.

5. WHY INTEGRATE (OR NOT?) EVALUATION AND RESEARCH ON OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED VS. NON-INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND CARE

8. This session focused on reviewing any existing research and country experiences on the outcomes of integrating or not integrating ECEC.

9. Mr. László Limbacher (Hungary) presented the country's split system for care and education. He mentioned some advantages of the split system like the specialisation of institutions, professions, buildings and facilities according to the age groups of children, the accumulated specialised knowledge and skills of the staff, and the differentiated child-staff ratio. There is a growing demand for crèche services, but there is a lack of places, which has led to combined ECEC settings where crèche and kindergarten are integrated. The lack of places has driven strong policy coordination between the two responsible ministries. While Hungary wishes to expand the integrated ECEC centres, it intends to maintain the split system for now. Integration is on the political agenda with a view that split forms of provision are less flexible than integrated forms when the structure of service supply does not meet the demand. Furthermore, some researchers in the country urge for the use of an integrated view on child development.

10. Ms. Catherine Hynes (Ireland) presented the split ECEC system in Ireland. The government has developed a national Quality Framework and a Curricular Framework for the ECEC sector and is currently creating a workforce development plan for ECEC. In 2010, preschool will be free for all children in the year prior to compulsory schooling. This plan will be financed by the government and is being funded by cutting the Early Childcare Supplement, a direct payment to parents amounting to EUR 480 million in 2008. Ireland was committed to implementing the 2002 Barcelona targets of providing "childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children below 3 years of age". A further factor in implementing a universal free preschool was to support existing investment in the ECEC sector, as children were being withdrawn from preschool services because parents could no longer afford to pay for that service. Since the impact of the universal preschool plan on the enrolment of children in primary school is not known, nor the impact it will have on enrolment in early years intervention programs, Ireland believes it too soon to look at an integrated model for now.

11. Mr. Christer Tofténus (Sweden) explained that Sweden has an integrated ECEC system. He noted there are several advantages of an integrated system: good policy coordination between preschool and school, an increased emphasis on learning, and access for all children (no need for special programs for disadvantaged children). Sweden's main policy lessons for integration include the necessity of having a national strategy, the need for earmarked grants at initial stage, the support of researchers can be useful, and the need for well trained staff and a good qualitative curriculum. He stressed introducing a maximum fee to increase accessibility, and ensuring the holistic approach to care, nurturing, and learning.

12. Mr. Arturo Sáenz Ferral (Mexico) explained that Mexico has a split system in ECEC services at the national level, directed to children aged 0 to 3, in which the Ministry of Education is responsible for early childhood education, the Ministry of Health for early childhood health and care, and the Social Development Ministry for early childhood welfare. The children aged 4 to 6 attend compulsory preschool, which is operated (mostly) by the local Ministries of Education. Mexico's challenges for the future include how to offer ECEC for all children aged 0 to 3, and how to integrate education aspects in the development of young children. There has been a political interest to integrate the system of ECEC in Mexico. However, the Ministry of Education is currently developing the project of "strengthening the early education and

child development model”, which attempts to unite criteria for all child care institutions. Even though it is just a curricular unification, this might be a first step to incorporate all systems.

13. Discussions revealed that whether or not to integrate ECEC is a political decision rather than research-based. Research is scarce on the benefits of (non-)integrated ECEC systems. More research is needed on this topic.

6. WHAT TO INTEGRATE? INTEGRATION AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

14. The session focused on policy experiences and practices that underpin the decisions on what to integrate at the system level.

15. Ms. Tarja Kahiluoto (Finland) explained that the Finnish socio-pedagogical kindergartens started the tradition of offering services that combined education and care in 1880. At the national level, the transition from a differentiated system to an integrated one took place in 1973 with the introduction of the Day Care Act. There was a broad-based political unanimity behind the new Act. In 2000, the preschool reform took place, which made preschool free of charge for all 6-year-olds. The Finnish ECEC curriculum is a result of this reform, which brought pressure to develop an integrated pedagogy for children in ECEC settings, leading to the national curriculum guidelines on ECEC in 2003. The curriculum has been developed by the country’s Research and Development Centre, and the guidelines form the basis for teaching and pedagogy for all municipalities and ECEC institutions. Performance requirements are not taken into account in the guidelines since overall development is more important. The guidelines resulted in a better continuum from ECEC to compulsory schooling.

16. Mr. Pablo Rupin (Chile) explained that Chile’s integrated ECEC system has a strong focus on the most vulnerable in the society. The accent lies on the development of human capital equity for all children in participation. The plans for ECEC 2007-09 were strengthening the implementation of local needs in ECEC and increasing the number of places available. By the end of 2009, there should be 70 000 new places in crèches, and 43 000 new places in kindergartens. Additionally, Chile is improving the quality of ECEC and believes sharing best practices and knowledge is highly important. Therefore, the country is strengthening communication networks on the local level, between different authorities, and ECEC centres.

17. Ms. Frances Kelly (New Zealand) presented her country’s ECEC system in which there is no distinction between education and care. The government does not provide any ECEC; this is done by communities or private initiatives, but government investment in ECEC is high. Future initiatives are increasing the budget to improve teacher skills and assure high quality. For this reason, ECE regulations and relicensing requirements for ECE services are increasingly focused on quality of education. Ms. Kelly explained that to move toward an integrated system, a country needs a mandate for reform. Increased participation in and promotion of ECEC can lead to a reform mandate, but increased funding is often necessary as well, and implementation takes time.

7. HOW TO INTEGRATE? INCENTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATION

18. The session focused on policy experiences, strategies, and approaches for integration.

19. Ms. Mugyeong Moon (Korea) noted that integration is a matter of politics. In 2004, the country established a committee for policy coordination which increased the political interest in ECEC. Increasing similarities of service targets and functions between education and care, and policy incoherence and inefficiency have led to an increased need for an integrated system. The challenges in integrating ECEC for Korea are: the integration of free education and care (which will bring along an increasing public investment in ECEC), designating a superior government body to oversee policy coordination between

ministries, the integration of ECEC teacher training systems, the integration of kindergarten and childcare curricular, and integrating quality assurance schemes. Korea stressed that dialogue between different stakeholders is very relevant in the implementation process.

20. Ms. Marie-Amelie Viatte (Scotland, United Kingdom) explained that Scotland has an integrated ECEC system on regulation-level and inspection-level. However, the system has a mixed funding system and is decentralized. In December 2008, the Scottish Early Years Framework (EYF) was developed. Ms. Viatte noted that the authorities cooperate with different services in order to reach children with a low socio-economic background. The Framework is based on the Starting Strong reports and relevant research. When developing an EYF, inter-agency working is very important. An integrated system should include health, social work, police, and housing in addition to care and education. The Scottish government wishes to increase quality in ECEC and to improve the demand-supply match in the near future and is currently working on improving the early years training skills.

21. Mr. Michal Uhl (Czech Republic) explained the split ECEC system. While there is no legal regulation for childcare, the Ministry of Education has the most responsibilities for early education. The government is currently trying to streamline kindergarten curricula and primary school curricula. In March 2009, the government made the decision on “Inclusion of collective daily child care facilities for preschool children under auspices of one ministry”; but until now, a clear decision on its strategy has not been established. Because of the current financial crisis, it is most likely that the integration agenda will not be further pursued at this moment. Consultation with different parties should lead to a decision in this.

22. Mr. Takuto Miyamoto (Japan) gave a presentation on the split ECEC system of Japan. Japan currently works on improving the cooperation between kindergartens and daycare centers and has been exploring possibilities for integrating the use of facilities. Japan aims to integrate “National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens” and “Day Care Guideline”. The government promotes dual qualification and joint training courses. Additionally, to meet the needs of parents and children, the government plans to increase the number of “Centres for ECEC”, functionally integrated facilities; increase financial support; unify and simplify administrative procedures; and improve the quality in ECEC. For the future, Japan aims to establish more “Centres for ECEC” as a model of kindergartens and day-care centres combined.

23. There was a discussion on whether the integration would lead to “schoolification”. Ms. Claude Sevenig (Luxembourg) reflected upon the situation and explained that it is one of the reasons for maintaining the split system but expressed a need for better transition between ECEC and schooling, and better collaboration between different parties would ensure this. Ms. Sima Haddad (Israel) added a new dimension to “integration” of curriculum; the same curriculum has been developed for all cultural groups.

24. UNESCO announced the upcoming World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Moscow, 22-24 September 2010.

8. **REVISED PROJECT PROPOSAL** **“ENCOURAGING QUALITY IN ECEC”**

EDU/EDPC/ECEC(2009)2/REV1
EDU/EDPC/ECECD/RD(2009)40

25. Ms. Miho Taguma presented the revised project proposal, inviting discussants to react to the proposed analytical questions, output types and quality-relevant areas of policy needs. She explained that the questionnaire will be designed and piloted before being sent to countries.

26. Ms. Vicki Rundle (Australia) noted that there is no single path to quality and that the context is important: it is critical to know where countries are starting from and the geo-political environment in which early childhood services are delivered. She welcomed the idea of developing the policy toolbox; however, she stressed that definitions and indicators are country- (or even dataset-) specific. The policy packages should be about identifying a range of options to suit changing political/financial/policy climates

over time and should be based on evidence: what works and what can be implemented. She suggested an innovative approach to the forums (e.g. internet forums) since countries have travel constraints. The topics of Australia's interest in enhancing quality are: funding, governance and cooperation, and monitoring and data collection, professional education of the ECEC workforce, and curriculum and pedagogy.

27. Dr. Martina Peucker (Germany) expressed that the most relevant topics for Germany would be: the working conditions and qualifications of ECEC staff, the development of guidelines and curriculum standards (in particular regarding language promotion), and the encouragement of family involvement. She stressed the importance of promoting dialogue and finding consensus between stakeholders, which she expects as an outcome of the project. Other expected outcomes include: the possibility for exchanging views on indicators for quality in the international landscape, and a cross-sectoral analysis on ECEC. The use of recent data is important, and she urges the OECD to use the most up-to-date data available.

28. Ms. Mugyeong Moon (Korea) welcomed the revised project plan. She stressed that country context is very relevant. The policy areas of Korea's interest include: funding, evaluations and assessments, increasing family involvement, and improving the working conditions of ECEC workers. There is a need for examining how to enhance ECEC in private-market settings in Korea. She requested that the OECD update with more recent data on financing, and she noted that the suggested timeline might be too short.

29. Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde (Norway) explained that improving working conditions, training qualifications and increasing the ECEC workforce are most relevant for Norway, as is monitoring and evaluation. She stressed the importance of using more relevant data, which should be "recognizable" for a country (i.e. country specific) as well as feasible to collect. The policy toolbox should include: why, what and how. It should also classify the tools by the intended users – national, regional/local, and institutions.

30. Ms. Luisa Ucha (Portugal) explained that the main interest areas include: the encouragement of parent involvement, a flexible integration of ECEC curriculum and services, and defining the competences of different ministries involved, municipalities and directors of school clusters. She noted that the idea of a toolbox is very useful, just as the country specific profile will be. The policy forums can play an important role in raising the profile of ECEC on the political agenda. The questionnaire should be streamlined.

31. The revised project proposal was generally well received by the members. However, many countries expressed their concerns about the timeline. Some countries expressed concern about including child outcomes as part of the analytical framework; others stressed the assessment of policy interventions by measuring child outcomes. Some countries argued the need for the project to be evidence based, others expressed interest in learning what countries are doing even when their interventions have not yet been evaluated because the interventions are recent developments and it is still too early to evaluate them.

32. The Secretariat thanked the delegates for comments and decided to revise the timeline, having Q1-2 2010 devoted to desk-based research. The questionnaire to collect country experiences will be developed and the pilot questionnaire will be run in Q3 2010. Countries are invited to provide comments on the list of suggested questions to be included in the questionnaire by January 2010.

33. The Secretariat explained that the child outcomes will be defined cautiously, not solely focusing on "learning achievements" but taking a holistic approach, i.e. to include socio-emotional developments, health, etc., in collaboration with colleagues in DELSA. The project will take a mixed approach to building its knowledge base upon "evidence" and "country experiences/examples", if not being evaluated, – but not "opinions".

34. The European Commission informed that two of their recent research projects would complement the OECD's new project: i) a mapping exercise on the competences ECEC staff should have; ii) parent involvement.

9. REVISED TEMPLATE FOR UPDATING THE ECEC DATABASE

EDU/EDPC/ECEC/RD(2009)39

35. Ms. Kathrin Hoeckel, policy analyst within the Education and Training Policy Division, presented the revised template for the ECEC database. Ms. Hoeckel explained that the data on a particular indicator will be organized by topic, and the meta-data will include a precise definition of the indicator, information on data sources and their quality, and comparability issues and specific country information. She explained that the questionnaire will be piloted together with the questionnaire of the new project.

36. Mr. Dominic Richardson of DELSA gave a brief update on the planned Child Database. It will be part of the Family Database and will not be a one-off project. It will be theory/empirics driven, and all data will be quality tested. He mentioned that the ECEC database would complement DELSA's work in helping to understand the early interventions and other areas including social expenditure data.

37. The network members welcomed the cooperation and alignment between the EDU/ECEC database and DELSA/Child database. Several delegates raised concern about the timeline. They suggested that more adequate time and resources be given to the development of the ECEC database to assure the quality of data and to make the data publicly available. It was also suggested that the ECEC database needs to undertake solid ground work before collecting the data, working closely with the INES Working Party.

38. The Secretariat agreed that the ECEC database will: i) further revise the timeline; ii) explore a possibility to align the ECEC database and the work of INES; iii) cautiously select only a couple of priority indicators, and iv) design the questionnaire and run the pilot.

39. The Secretariat clarified that the network is tasked with three strands of activities: 1) sharing country experiences for thematic policy discussions at network meetings; 2) collecting ECEC indicators/country profile; 3) the new project "encouraging quality in ECEC". To streamline data/information collection, it attempted to align the administration of questionnaires for three strands of activities at once. However, the network agreed that each strand should follow its own timeline, considering the feasibility and available resources.

40. To clarify, the Secretariat stated that the questionnaire on "financing ECEC" for the next meeting will be sent to countries early next year. Questionnaires for the new project and the ECEC database will be sent separately after being developed and piloted based on the desk-based research.

10. A WAY FORWARD

41. Ms. Kari Jacobsen, the Chair of the Network, asked the network to agree on the theme for the next network meeting: "Funding and financing ECEC" to be scheduled in June in Paris. She reflected upon the meeting and commented that sharing country experiences on integration strategies and approaches was a fruitful way of knowledge gathering and learning from other's practices. She invited written comments to be sent to the Secretariat by 10 January 2010 if countries wish to further comment. She also invited delegates to inform the Secretariat of national research that are available and relevant to the new project.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

41. Japan announced that the 13th OECD-Japan seminar will be held 7-8 June 2010 in Tokyo, Japan. The theme of the seminar is "Pursuing Professional Development and Attaining Program Management and Leadership Quality in ECEC" and will include several workshops and one or more school visits.

**Participants List for Network on Early Childhood Education and Care/
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7/12/2009 - 8/12/2009

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