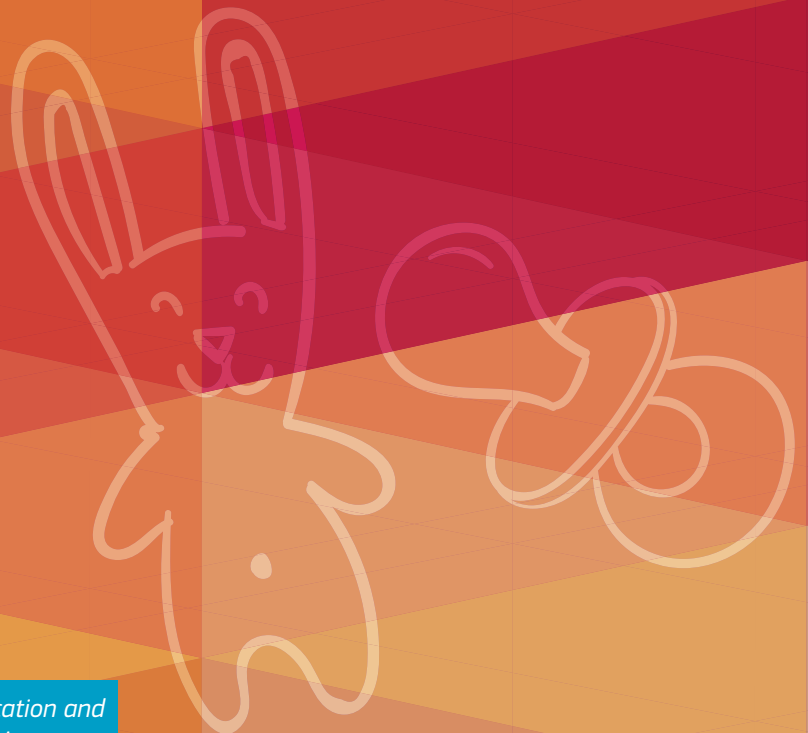




Early Childhood Education and Care Systems in Europe

*National Information Sheets
2014/15*

Eurydice – Facts and Figures



Education and
Training



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INTRODUCTION

The national sheets are provided in support for the Eurydice background report '[Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems 2015](#)'.

This Eurydice report provides early childhood education and care national information sheets. These sheets and the comparative analysis in Chapter 1 of the Eurydice background report *Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems 2015* are complementary products that together aim to reveal the current situation of ECEC policies in Europe. Together they provide background information to a number of structural indicators included in the Education and Training Monitor 2015 ⁽¹⁾, published by the European Commission.

The sheets include all EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.

Scope

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) covers provision for children from birth through to compulsory primary education that falls within a national regulatory framework, i.e., it has to comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures. It includes:

- Public, private and voluntary sectors – both publicly subsidised and self-financing private/voluntary sectors are within the scope.
- Centre-based as well as home-based provision – but only publicly regulated ECEC provision delivered in a provider's home is covered; in-home care (i.e. care which occurs in the child's own home) is excluded.

Only 'mainstream' provision, or the most common types of ECEC provision available to all children, is covered. The sheets do not include:

- settings which operate out of normal hours e.g. breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday programmes;
- 'specialist' provision, e.g. programmes integrated into hospitals, orphanages or other such institutions;
- pilot, experimental or temporary ECEC provision;
- 'open' early childhood education services organised for children and their families, e.g. playgroups, open kindergartens, mother/child centres.

These information sheets provide a concise overview of the key features of each country's ECEC system, including:

- Diagram: visual representation of the principal elements of the ECEC structure
- Organisation: short description of the main types of ECEC provision
- Participation rates
- Group size regulations
- Educational guidelines
- Fees for full-time provision
- Current reforms

⁽¹⁾ <http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor>

Diagram

The diagrams represent the structure of mainstream ECEC that is available to all children in each country. Separate provision outside mainstream ECEC for children with special educational needs is not included.

The diagram is structured around the 'age of children' scale. These ages are notional and give an indication of the official age at which children might begin different types of ECEC.

The first thin line indicates the theoretical length of adequately compensated childcare leave, which is the accumulated length of three possible types of leave: maternity, paternity and parental. Leave is considered as adequately compensated if parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings during this period.

The next line(s) show the range of official ages at which children become eligible for admission to different settings or types of ECEC provision. For most countries, the term relating to the ECEC setting is shown on the diagram. However, in some countries, the type of provision is considered to be more appropriate, and so these terms are given. All terms are provided in the official national language(s) of the country. Centre-based settings are indicated in blue, while home based-settings are in pink. Involvement of the Ministry of Education is marked by a lower intensity of the respective colours.

When appropriate, the small vertical lines within the setting represent the division into different types of provision, cycles or key stages.

When applicable, underlining indicates the period of education defined by UNESCO as ISCED 010 (dashes) or ISCED 020 (dots) in the 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Special symbols indicate the starting age of any legal entitlement to ECEC provision, the availability of free provision for at least some hours a day, and the beginning of compulsory education.

Organisation

A short description of the main types of ECEC is provided in the Organisation section. It also specifies which central authorities are responsible for which types of settings. Additional information on non-mainstream provision is provided as appropriate.

Participation rates

ISCED 0 and ISCED 1 participation rates for 3 to 7 year-olds are shown using Eurostat data from 2012. When available, national data on participation rates for under-3s or national data showing participation by setting is also included, specifying the reference year and source. Differences between rates provided by different sources might be due to disparities in the methodology used.

Group size regulations

Regulations regarding the maximum number of children per member of staff/group refer to the core hours of a working day. Possible reductions in the maximum number of children per staff/group for to specific categories of children (e.g. children with disabilities) are not considered.

Educational guidelines

Availability of official documents issued by central level authorities that describe the learning opportunities provided to young children is indicated, specifying ages and types of provision.

Fees

When available, the fee structure is described. For comparability, fees are shown in Purchasing Power Standard (PPS – see Glossary). The amounts in PPS can be converted back to the national currency using the figures provided in the note. Hourly fees were multiplied by 40 for obtaining weekly fees; weekly fees were converted to monthly by multiplying by a factor of 4.345. Hence, the actual monthly fees may differ slightly.

Many countries did not report any changes/new information since the ECEC country sheets were published in 2012/13. However, as data have been recalculated using PPS conversion for year 2013, the amounts in PPS might have changed. A sentence 'no change/no new data since 2012/13' has been added when no changes or updates in national currency were reported.

Current reforms

The section lists the major reforms underway during the reference year 2014/15 or those which have taken place since that period. Only reforms already approved are included (i.e. changes still under discussion are not considered).

Further information on national education systems and related policies

Up-to-date and comprehensive information by country and level of education:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care

DEFINITIONS

Adequately compensated childcare leave: accumulated length of post-natal maternity, paternity and parental leave for which parents receive at least 65 % of their previous earnings. In case of flat rate, the payment is considered adequately compensated if it constitutes 65 % of the minimum monthly wage in the country.

Central level authorities: The highest level of government in a state. In the vast majority of countries, central authorities have ultimate responsibility for education. However, in Belgium, Spain and the United Kingdom, regional authorities (Communities, etc.) have responsibility for all or most matters relating to education and are considered the top level authority in this area.

Centre-based ECEC provision encompasses provision that is within the regulatory framework and is provided outside the home. The services provided are most commonly referred to as nurseries, daycare centres, *crèches* and kindergartens (adapted from OECD, 2012).

Early childhood education and care (ECEC): Provision for children from birth through to compulsory + primary education that falls within a national regulatory framework, i.e., it has to comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures.

Home-based ECEC provision refers to publicly regulated ECEC provision that is delivered in a provider's home. Regulations usually require providers to meet minimum health, safety, and nutrition standards. Home-based provision excludes in-home care (i.e. care which occurs in the child's own home), even where such provision must comply with basic quality standards (e.g. accreditation of staff).

Legal entitlement to ECEC exists when every child has the enforceable right to benefit from ECEC provision. Enforceable right means that public authorities guarantee a place for each child whose parents demand it (in the age-range covered by legal entitlement), regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status. It does not necessarily imply that provision is free, only that provision is publicly subsidised and affordable.

Private ECEC settings may be owned and operated by businesses, which are profit-oriented, or by the voluntary (non-profit) sector which may include charitable organisations. They often operate under license and may be required to meet basic minimum standards of care. Private settings may be:

Self-financing: Drawing their funds from private sources, usually parental fees; or

Publicly subsidised: Receiving some funding from public sources, in particular, for delivering education and care on behalf of public authorities where children have a legal entitlement to an ECEC place.

Public ECEC settings are owned and operated by public authorities at central, regional or local level. They are not profit-driven but aim to provide a public service.

Purchasing Power Standard (PPS): The artificial common reference currency unit used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of cross national comparisons in such a way that price level differences between countries are eliminated. Economic volume aggregates in PPS are obtained by dividing their original value in national currency units by the respective PPP. PPS thus buys the same given volume of goods and services in all countries, whereas different amounts of national currency units are needed to buy the same volume of goods and services in individual countries, depending on the price level.

Separate ECEC settings: Centre-based settings in split ECEC system.

Split ECEC system: Provision is delivered in separate settings for younger and older children (usually for under and over 3 years of age). The responsibility for ECEC governance, regulation and funding are divided between different authorities. An educational framework is normally only established for older children. The requirements for staff qualifications also usually differ depending on the type of provision. Moreover, conditions of access may vary greatly; with a legal entitlement usually applying to older children and not to younger children.

Educational guidelines: official documents (guidelines, standards or instructions) issued by central level authorities that describe the learning opportunities provided to young children. They may cover ECEC learning content, objectives and attainment targets, as well as teaching approaches, learning activities and assessment methods.

Unitary ECEC system: Provision for all children of pre-primary age is organised in a single phase and delivered in settings catering for the whole age range. Children have no breaks or transfers between institutions until they start primary school. The ministry of education is responsible for ECEC governance, regulation and funding. All care and education for young children is considered to be part of 'early education' services and educational guidelines cover the entire ECEC phase. Unitary settings have a single management team running provision for children of all ages and the same level of staff qualification is required for working with the entire age range. Furthermore, a legal entitlement to ECEC or free ECEC is often granted from a very early age. Unitary systems are sometimes referred to as 'integrated systems'.

Unitary setting: *Centre-based setting in unitary ECEC system.*

ISCED 010 early childhood educational development programmes (in the age range of 0 to 2 years) are characterised by a learning environment that is visually stimulating and language- rich. These programmes foster self-expression, with an emphasis on language acquisition and the use of language for meaningful communication. There are opportunities for active play, so that children can exercise their coordination and motor skills under supervision and through interaction with staff. Programmes providing only childcare (supervision, nutrition and health) are not covered by ISCED (UNESCO, 2012).

ISCED 020 pre-primary education programmes (from age 3 years to the start of primary education) are characterised by interaction with peers and educators, through which children improve their use of language and social skills, start to develop logical and reasoning skills, and talk through their thought processes. They are also introduced to alphabetical and mathematical concepts, and encouraged to explore their surrounding world and environment. Supervised gross motor activities (i.e. physical exercise through games and other activities) and play-based activities can be used as learning opportunities to promote social interactions with peers and to develop skills, autonomy and school readiness (UNESCO, 2012).

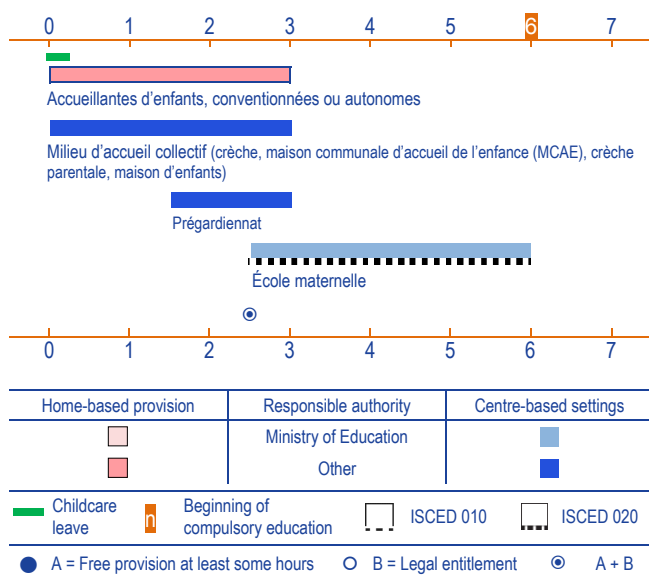
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* *

COUNTRY SHEETS

Belgium – French Community

Diagram



Organisation

Children from birth to 3 years may attend different types of centre-based settings (*milieu d'accueil collectif*), including *crèche*, *maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance* (MCAE) or *maison d'enfants*. In addition, *prégardiennat* is available for children between 18 and 36 months. There is also a system of regulated home-based care, which is delivered by child-minders (*accueillantes d'enfants*) who either work independently (*accueillantes d'enfants autonomes*) or are affiliated to specific child-minding organisations (*accueillantes d'enfants conventionnées*). Home-based and centre-based care for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the organisation ONE (*Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance*), which is under the authority of the Minister of Childhood. From age 2½, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in the *école maternelle*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Education. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Two separate educational guidelines, for children under- and over- 3 year old are available.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. Fees are regulated for children aged under 2½ in public and publicly subsidised settings to min. PPS 2.1 and max. PPS 32.8 per day (food included), which makes approximately PPS 45 to 639 monthly. The same applies for centre- and home-based ECEC. Fees taken by private (self-financing) providers are not regulated. 22 % of *accueillantes d'enfants* and 32 % of *crèches* do not receive any public subsidies.

ECEC for children aged 2½ and over in the *école maternelle* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision in the *garderie*.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013	Under 3
Accueillantes d'enfants, conventionnées ou autonomes	29.0
Milieu d'accueil collectif (crèche, prégardiennat, maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance (MCAE), crèche parentale, maison d'enfants)	

Source: ONE, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2013	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
École maternelle	43.0	95.9	96.4	95.7

Source: Communauté française, 2014.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	97.8	98.1	97.0	4.8	0.1
ISCED 1 *	(-)	0.0	1.0	93.0	97.8

* Data for Belgium (all communities, except the German-speaking Community)

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted April 2015).

Group size regulations

1:7 in *milieu d'accueil collectif*; 1:5 in *accueillantes d'enfants*; 1:20 in *école maternelle*.

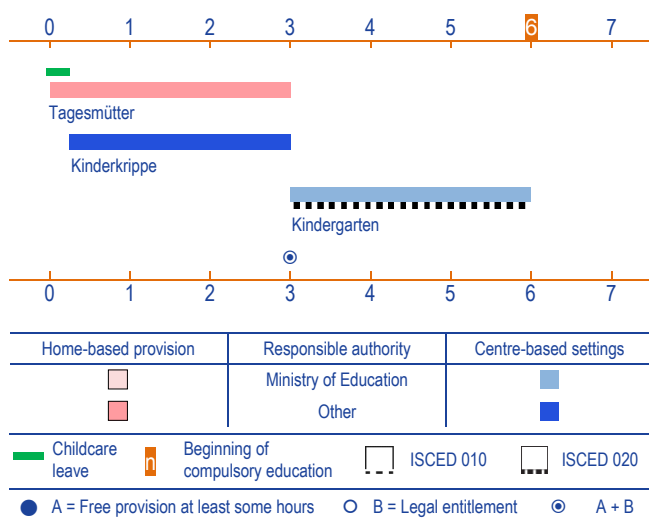
Current reforms

Achievement scales in oral language for *école maternelle* were adopted in September 2015.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.12843

Belgium – German-speaking Community

Diagram



Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children mostly attend regulated home-based care, which is provided by child-minders (*Tagesmütter*) who either work independently (*Selbstständige Tagesmütter*) or are affiliated to a specific child-minding Organisation (*Tagesmütterdienst – TMD*). There is also a centre-based setting known as *Kinderkrippe*. ECEC for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Family, Health and Social Affairs. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in *Kindergarten*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Primary education starts at age 6.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 3 years
Tagesmütter (Selbstständige Tagesmutter or, Tagesmütterdiens – TMD)	31.9
Kinderkrippe	2.2

Source: DKF, 2011.

Group size regulations

1:6 in *Kinderkrippe* and with *Tagesmütter*
1:19 in *Kindergarten*.

Current reforms

The new decrees for centre- and home-based ECEC for children under 3 years were adopted in 2014. The new legal texts replace the decree of 2007 and are an improvement of the old one. The decrees contain some new regulations and provide a legal framework for diverse childcare offers (day care services, day nurseries, mini-crèches and locations of extra-curricular care).

Educational guidelines

'Activity plan' for children aged 3 and over is specified. Although there are no educational guidelines at central level for under 3s, ECEC providers are required to draw up their own education and care plan in order to become accredited.

Fees

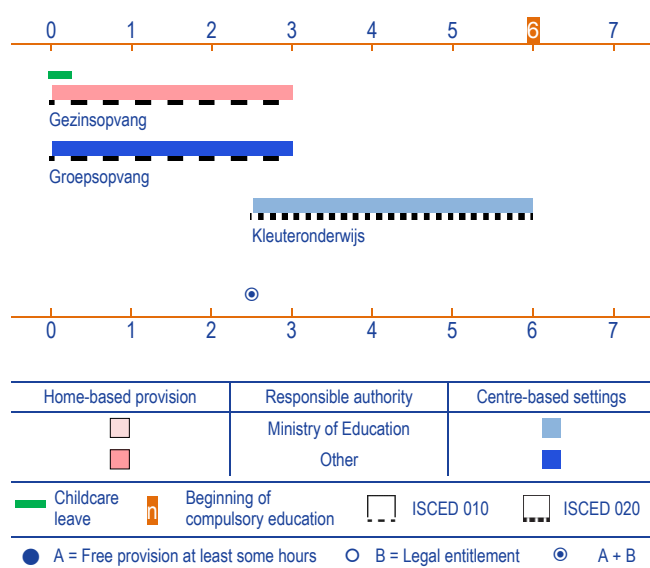
No change/no new data since 2012/13. Fees are regulated for children aged under 3 in public and publicly subsidised settings to min PPS 1.2 and max PPS 24.0 per day (food included), which makes approximately PPS 24.8 to 526 monthly. The same applies for centre- and home-based ECEC.

ECEC for children aged 3 and over in *Kindergarten* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.12843

Belgium – Flemish Community

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	Under 1 year	1 year-olds	2 year-olds
Gezinsopvang and groepsopvang	55.4	62.8	37.7

Source: Kind en Gezin, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0*	97.8	98.1	97.0	4.8	0.1
ISCED 1*	(-)	0.0	1.0	93.0	97.8

* Data for Belgium (all communities, except the German-speaking Community)

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted April 2015).

Group size regulations

The maximum number of children allowed per childcare professional in a centre-based childcare setting is 8, when only 1 childcare professional is present. When another childcare professional is present, 9 children at most can be cared for by each childcare professional.

Home-based childcare aims at providing care to 4 children on average. This number may increase at peak moments. The number is specified in the licence and can never be higher than 8.

Organisation

Early childhood education and care is divided into two main areas: formal child care for children from birth to 3 years that can be home-based (in a family setting – *gezinsopvang*) or centre-based (in group – *groepsopvang*), and pre-primary education (*kleuteronderwijs*) for children from age 2½. The first area falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Minister of Welfare, Health and Family and is administered by the agency *Kind en Gezin*. Pre-primary education for children over 2½ falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training. From age 2½, children are legally entitled to free pre-primary education. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

There is a pedagogical framework for child care of babies and toddlers in *gezinsopvang* and *groepsopvang*. A detailed curriculum and developmental objectives are specified for *kleuteronderwijs*.

Fees

Fees are regulated for children under the age of 2½ in public settings. In 2014, it was min. PPS 1.4 and max. PPS 24.6 per day. This amounts to approximately PPS 30 to 540 per month. ECEC for those aged 2½ and over in *Kleuteronderwijs* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

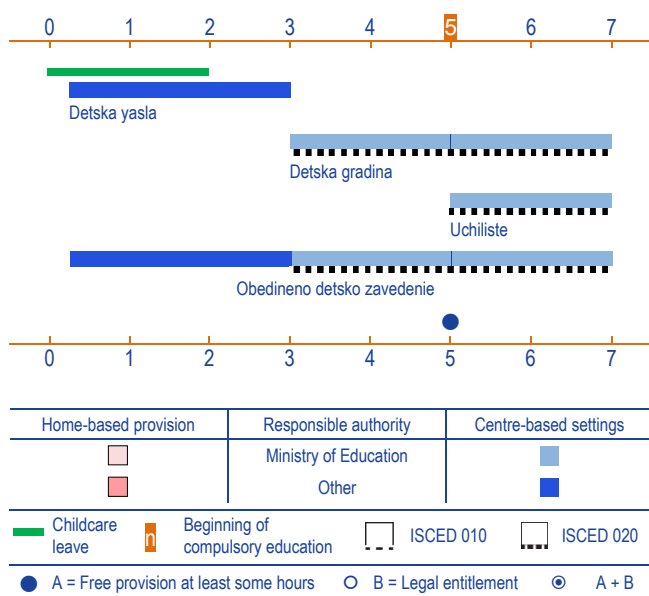
PPS 1 = EUR 1.12843

Current reforms

Since 1 April 2014, a new parliamentary act on the organisation of childcare for babies and toddlers has been implemented. This act introduces new regulations for child care settings for babies and toddlers. Accreditation and evaluation procedures are now the same for public and private settings in order to obtain a more uniform quality in every setting. A new and more uniform funding system linking subsidies with specific responsibilities has been introduced.

Bulgaria

Diagram



Organisation

Children aged between 3 months and 3 years may attend centre-based settings known as *detska yasla*. From age 3, early childhood education is available in *detska gradina*, where the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the education process.

The last two years of pre-primary education (i.e. between the ages 5 and 7) are compulsory and children may take them either in *detska gradina* or in primary school (*uchiliste*).

In addition to the separate settings for younger and older children, there are also unitary settings (*obedineni detski zavedenia*) intended for children aged between 10 months and 7 years. The provision in these settings is structured according to the above phases (i.e. up to 3 years, between 3 and 5 years, and between 5 and 7 years of age).

Primary education starts at age 7.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	72.5	79.5	87.1	87.3	1.0
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.1	7.7	96.1

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Educational guidelines

Available for children 3-7 year old.

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	8	16	16	22	22	22

The financing institutions can increase the number of children in the group up to 10 % of the specified number. According to the National Statistical Institute, in 2014/15, the average number of children in one group was 24.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. Fees in public ECEC range between PPS 27-67, with an average of PPS 44.8 per month (food included). Fees in private (self-financing) ECEC can reach PPS 464. No fees are charged in the last two years of pre-primary classes (age 5-6), including free educational material.

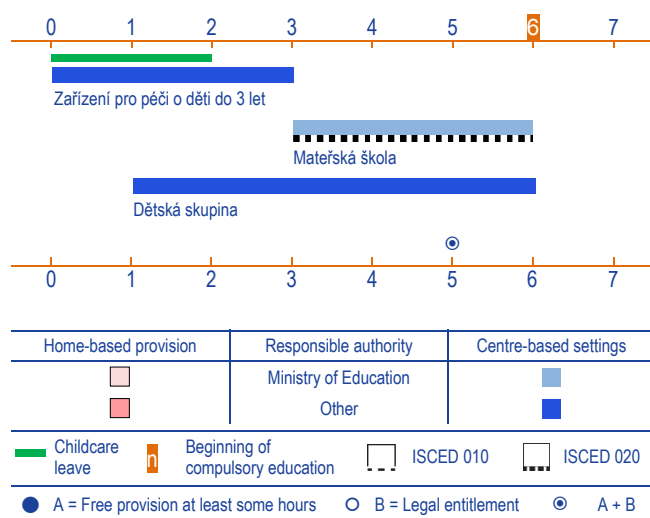
PPS 1 = BGN 0.898179

Current reforms

The new Public Education Act (Pre-primary and School Education Act) is in a process of adoption by the National Assembly.

Czech Republic

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013/14	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Mateřská škola	30.3	77.2	87.4	90.4

Source: MŠMT, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	58.7	82.3	90.1	51.0	1.7
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	48.2	97.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Regulations setting group size to maximum 24 exist only for 2-6 year old children in *mateřské školy*. An exception is often made to allow an increase in the number of children up to 28 children per group.

Fees

According to the data of the Czech School Inspectorate collected from a sample of schools, the average monthly fees in public *mateřské školy* are PPS 20 (plus PPS 38 food costs), in private *mateřské školy*, the fees reach PPS 234 (plus PPS 59 food). The last year of public *mateřské školy* is free. The fees in other facilities are not regulated and no data are available.

Organisation

Two-year childcare leave shown in the diagram includes maternity leave (70 % of earnings for 22 weeks) as well as parental leave with the highest monthly allowance (PPS 640 for 83 weeks). Parental leave with lower allowances up to 3 years of a child's age is often taken; participation rates of under-3s in ECEC are low.

The ECEC system comprises two main structures. Settings for children under 3 years of age (*zařízení pro péči o děti do 3 let*) fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and operate under the Trade Licensing Act and general legal regulations. These settings are normally centre-based but a small number of home-based settings exist. Nursery schools (*mateřské školy*), which fall under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, provide pre-primary education (ISCED 020) for children aged between 3 and 6. Nursery schools (*mateřské školy*) are mainly public, but also private and denominational. From age 5, children are legally entitled to free education in public *mateřské školy*.

A new legal form of the services for young children has been set up from November 2014 – a child group (*dětská skupina*), for children from one year of age until the start of compulsory schooling (6 years). Child groups can be established by employers for their employees and by various non-profit entities (e.g. municipalities, regions, higher education institutions, benevolent corporations).

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

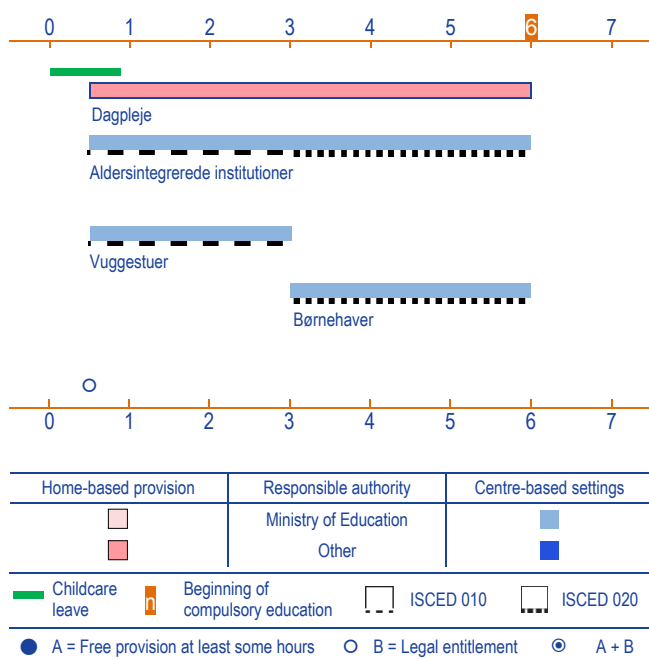
The central-level curriculum exists only for nursery schools (*mateřské školy*).

Current reforms

From 2015/16, the preparatory classes (*přípravné třídy*) established in the basic schools (*základní školy*, ISCED 1+2) will be available to all children who need to balance out their development.

Denmark

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference Year 2013	Under 1 year-olds	1-2 year-olds	3-5 year-olds
Aldersintegrerede institutioner and dagpleje	19.0	91.1	96.9

Source: Ministeriet for Børn, Undervisning og Ligestilling, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	97.2	97.7	95.8	8.5	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	2.4	90.5	99.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Centre-based settings not regulated.
1:5 in home-based *dagpleje*.

Organisation

The ECEC system consists of day-care centres (*daginstitutioner*), which fall under the responsibility of the Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality and can be established either as age-integrated settings for children between 26 weeks and 6 years (*aldersintegrerede institutioner*), or separate settings for younger and older children (*vuggestuer* and *børnehaver*, respectively). In addition to centre-based ECEC provision, there is also a system of regulated home-based provision (*dagpleje*) most of which is publicly funded, and caters for a relatively high number of young children. From 26 weeks, children are legally entitled to publicly subsidised ECEC provision. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Educational guidelines cover the entire ECEC age range, centre-based and home-based provision.

Fees

In Copenhagen municipality, home based *dagpleje* costs on average PPS 328 per month (food included). Fees in *daginstitutioner* depend on the child's age and are PPS 325 for children aged 0 to 2 years and PPS 234 for older children (Københavns Kommune, 2015a, 2015b).

The ECEC is predominantly public, only 5 % of *daginstitutioner* are private (publicly subsidised).

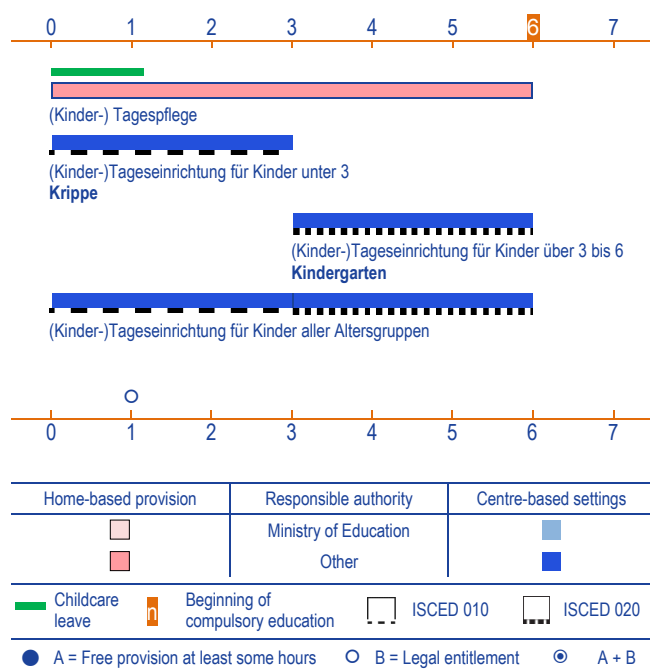
PPS 1 = DKK 10.2996

Current reforms

From 2015 to 2018, municipalities receive PPS 24 million annually from central budget to employ more educational staff in ECEC.

Germany

Diagram



Organisation

The ECEC system is highly decentralised and comprises several different types of setting. Childcare centres (*Tageseinrichtung*) provide for either younger or older children separately (in *Krippen* and *Kindergarten*, respectively) or operate as one setting for the entire ECEC phase. In addition to centre-based ECEC provision, there is also a system of regulated and publicly subsidised home-based care (*Tagespflege*), which mainly caters for the youngest children (between 0 and 3), but may also deliver part-time provision for older children. Prior to the beginning of primary education, some *Länder* provide pre-primary education (*Vorschuleinrichtung*). However, this provision only covers a very small proportion of children and is therefore not represented in the diagram. At the federal/national level, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible for ECEC in both home-based and centre-based provision. At *Länder* level, it can be either the ministry of family affairs or the ministry of education. Children are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised childcare place from age 1. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

The Common Framework for Early Education in Childcare Centres covers the entire ECEC age range, centre-based and home-based provision. The 16 curricular frameworks of the federal states (*Länder*) further specify and elaborate the overall ECEC goals, pedagogical practices and learning areas stated in the Common Framework.

Fees

On average, fees in 2011 amounted to PPS 187; with a minimum of PPS 23 and a maximum of PPS 815 (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2012). Some *Länder* have abolished fees payable by parents either for the last year in ECEC before school entry (Hessen, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia), for the last three years in kindergarten (Berlin), from age 2 (Rhineland-Palatinate), or from birth until school entry (Hamburg).

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
(Kinder-) Tagespflege	0.9	7.0	6.7	1.2	0.3	0.2
(Kinder-) Tageseinrichtung	2.0	27.6	53.0	88.0	95.4	95.1

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	90.8	95.8	96.9	33.4	0.7
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.4	63.7	98.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Regulations are set at *Länder* level. The Figure below shows the situation for the Rhineland-Palatinate, which can be considered as average.

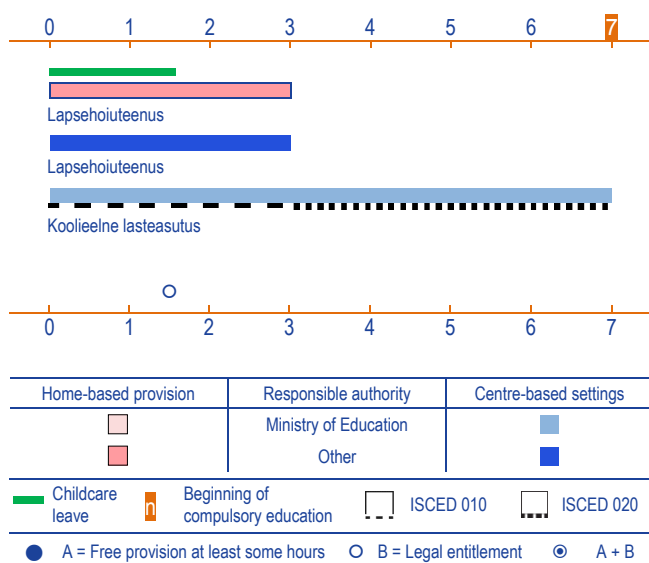
Maximum number of children per staff member group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	5	5	5	14	14	14
group	10	10	10	25	25	25

National regulation set maximum 5 children per home-based *Tagespflege*.

No current reforms

Estonia

Diagram



Organisation

The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend unitary child-care institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*). These fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. In addition, there is also a system of childcare services (*lapsehoiuteenus*) catering mainly for the youngest children (under 3 year olds) which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs. These services can be either centre- or home-based. According to the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act, all children aged between 18 months and 7 years are legally entitled to an ECEC place. However, local authorities are not always able to ensure that provision meets demand.

Primary education starts at age 7.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Koolieelne lasteasutus	26.2	72.4	88.9	91.4	91.8	93.3*

* Including 13.2% in ISCED 1.

Source: Statistics Estonia, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	88.2	88.0	90.7	77.8	1.8
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	13.6	94.1

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
nr	nr	7	7	10	10	10
group	nr	14	14	20	20	20

1:5 in home-based *lapsehoiuteenus*.

Educational guidelines

National curriculum covers the entire age range in centre-based unitary child-care institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*).

Fees

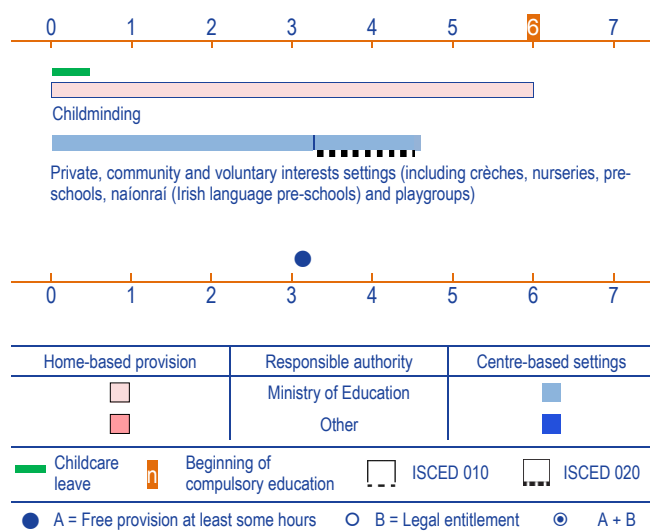
Fees in all ECEC settings are regulated and range from 0 to PPS 78, with an average PPS 35 monthly (food additionally PPS 2 per day, which makes PPS 82 monthly). The maximum fees cannot exceed 20 % of the minimum salary.

PPS 1 = EUR 0.739836

No current reforms

Ireland

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	41.1	58.2	1.5	(-)	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	38.6	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member:

- 1:3 for children under 1 year old;
- 1:5 for children 1 to 2.5 year-old;
- 1:11 for children from 2.5 till 6 years of age.
- 1:5 in home-based *childminding*.

Current reforms

From 2015, the Department of Education and Skills will be carrying out focussed inspections on the quality of educational provision in early childhood education settings participating in the Free Pre-school Year programme.

In 2014, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs established a national quality support service involving early years' specialists working proactively with services to mentor staff and improve the quality of their provision. This became operational in 2015.

Organisation

Ireland operates a split system of governance with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs responsible, in the main, for pre-primary education and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) responsible for primary education. The exception is the Early Start programme which is a DES pre-primary programme which caters for just under 2 % of children aged between 3 years and 2 months and 4 years and 7 months. There is a free pre-school year for the same age cohort which is delivered by a diverse range of private, community, or voluntary organisations in settings known as crèches, nurseries, pre-schools, *naíonraí* (Irish language pre-schools), playgroups and day care centres. Child minding or family day care is not regulated in Ireland. There is a system of voluntary notification but it's not statutory.

From age 4, children may be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools which are formally regarded as primary education (ISCED 1). While primary education states at age 4, schooling only becomes compulsory when children reach age 6.

Educational guidelines

The national Curriculum Framework (*Aistear*) for children aged 0-6 addresses all settings where children are present. There is an *Aistear-in-Action* toolkit developed through work with early years practitioners and a practice guide which show practical examples of how to use *Aistear* and *Síolta* (the national quality framework for early childhood education) to improve quality in settings.

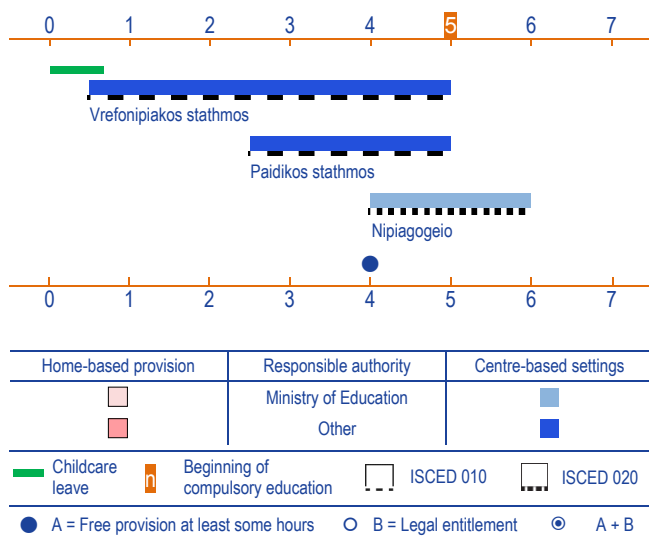
Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. ECEC for infants under 1 year old costs on average PPS 689 monthly, for older children it is PPS 662.

All children aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months can attend free pre-school year that can be delivered in centre- or home-based settings. Parents are expected to contribute to meals and any additional hours of provision.

Greece

Diagram



Organisation

From 6 months to 5 years, children can attend infant centres (*vrefonipiakos stathmos*). Between the ages of 2½ and 5, parents can opt for a place in a child centre (*paidikos stathmos*). Both types of centres must set up their rules of operation in compliance with the regulations specified in the decision currently in force issued by the Ministry of Interior. These rules of operation must then be approved by the relevant municipal council. From age 4, children can attend a pre-primary school (*nipiagogeio*), which is compulsory for those aged between 5 and 6. This type of provision falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	(-)	54.5	95.6	1.9	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	97.1	99.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	4	4	4	12.5	12.5	25

The data refers to *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* up until the age of 4. For children aged 5 it refers to public pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeio*). In private *nipiagogeio*, the number is set at 28. However, children of different ages carry different weightings, e.g. 1-year-olds correspond to 1.5.

Educational guidelines

There is a national curriculum for *nipiagogeio* that includes a proposed timetable and teaching materials, but allows flexibility in implementation according to local needs. Regulations for *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* (provided by the Ministry of Interior) include daily activities and learning objectives.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. Fees in public *vrefonipiakos stathmos* and *paidikos stathmos* range between PPS 58 and 140 per month (estimates from the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government), food included. In private sector, fees range between PPS 243 and PPS 778 monthly.

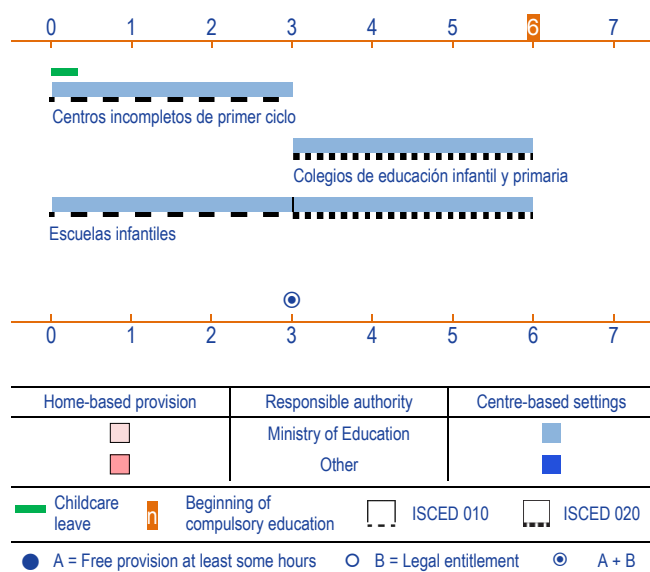
Pre-primary classes for 4 and 5 year-olds in *nipiagogeio* are free.

PPS 1 = EUR 0.856648

No current reforms

Spain

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011/12	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Escuelas Infantiles						
Centros incompletos de primer ciclo	9.7	31.8	49.8	(-)	(-)	(-)
Colegios de Educación Infantil y Primaria	(-)	(-)	(-)	95.2	97.0	97.7

Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	95.2	97.0	97.6	0.9	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.2	96.5	97.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	8	14	20	25	25	25

As group sizes for children under 3 are not regulated at central level, data refer to the most common regulations among the Autonomous Communities.

Current reforms

The II National Strategic Plan of Childhood and Adolescence 2013-2016 aims to improve the quality of provision for under 3 year olds, while for 3-5 year olds it aims to focus attention to children with disabilities.

⇒

Organisation

Pre-primary education is divided into two cycles (0-2 and 3-6 years), which can be provided either in separate settings (*centros incompletos de primer ciclo* and *colegios de educación infantil y primaria*, respectively) or in combined settings for both cycles (*escuelas infantiles*). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport defines the general framework for the entire ECEC. The Departments of Education of the Autonomous Communities are responsible for the running of pre-primary education in their territories and local authorities also play a large role in the first cycle of ECEC (0-2 year olds). The two cycles differ in terms of the qualifications required for the personnel responsible for the educational attention of pupils.

From age 3, children are legally entitled to free pre-primary education. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

The general principles and goals of pre-primary education policy are established at the central level for the whole stage 0-6 years. The education authorities of the Autonomous Communities are in charge of the curriculum for 0-2 year olds. However, for the second cycle (3-6 years) there is a national core curriculum that the Autonomous Communities complete and further specify for their territories.

Fees

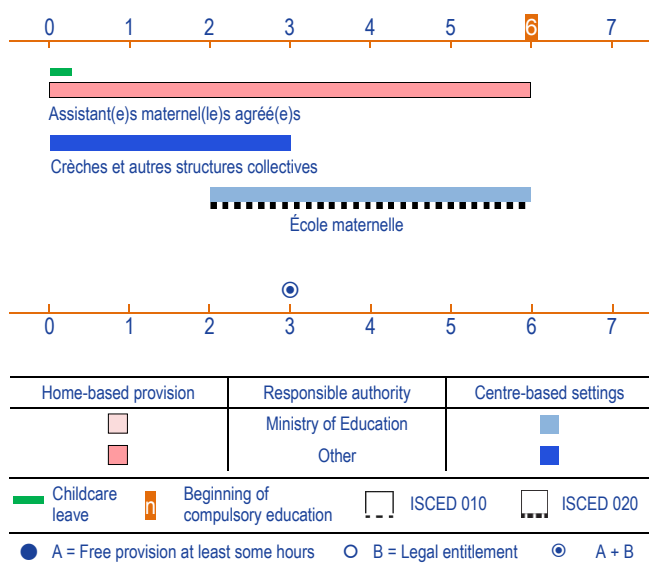
No change/no new data since 2012/13. For the under-3s, fees are regulated in public settings which are attended by 52 % of children. The maximum fees are capped at PPS 351 (food not included). ECEC for 3-6 year olds is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

PPS 1 = EUR 0.909627

⇒ The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2013-2016 added 'risk of social exclusion' to criteria for the allocation of places in ECEC settings for 0-2 year olds.

France

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	Under 3
Assistant(e)s maternel(le)s agréé(e)s	31.6
Crèches et autres structures collectives	16.5
Écoles maternelles	3.8
Total	53.9

Source: Observatoire national de la petite enfance, 2014.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	99.9	100.0	99.7	1.3	0.3
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	0.9	98.8	99.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Crèches et autres structures collectives:

1:5 total staff for children that do not walk

1:8 total staff for children that walk

0.5:25 educational staff

1:6 in home-based

assistant(e)s maternel(le)s agréé(e)s.

Organisation

The ECEC system includes various types of provision, especially for the youngest children. Provision for the youngest consists of centre-based *crèches* and other group settings (e.g. *jardins d'éveil*, *classes passerelles*, etc.), which are complemented by regulated home-based provision. From age 3, all children are legally entitled to free pre-primary schools (*écoles maternelles*) which are coordinated by the Ministry of Education. As of 2013/14, pre-primary schools (*écoles maternelles*) ensure free access already from age 2 in socially disadvantaged areas. Other children from the age of 2 may be enrolled in pre-primary schools if they are developmentally ready and there are places available.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Provided only for *écoles maternelles*.

Fees

Family contributions for home-based childcare are calculated according to the family income in relation to the minimum wage (SMIC, which is currently set at PPS 1 295). Families earning 1 SMIC pay PPS 50 monthly. Families earning 1.5 SMIC contribute PPS 75, etc.

The fees in centre-based *crèches* are PPS 89-337.

Public *école maternelle* is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision in the *halte-garderie*. Less than a third enrol in fee-paying (although subsidised) private schools.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.12555

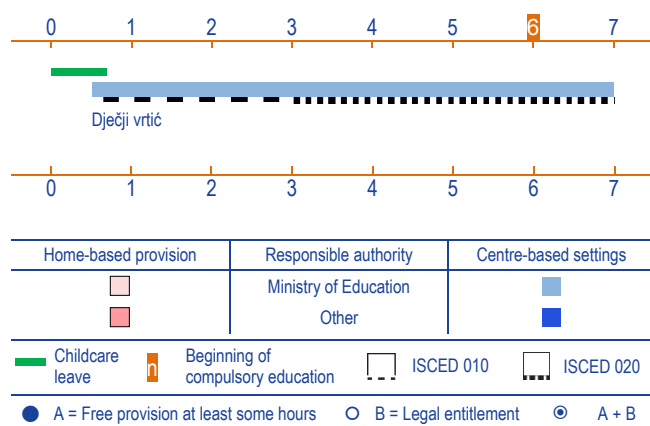
Current reforms

Rules for childcare leave have changed since 2014, offering more incentives for shared parental leave between partners.

Free access for socially disadvantaged 2 year olds currently aims to achieve 30 % of participation rates in high needs area, with an objective of 50 % by 2017.

Croatia

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Total	0.5	19.0	29.0	52.0	59.0	62.0	73.0

Source: CROSTAT, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	52.0	58.1	63.3	70.5	1.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	22.4	97.2

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	5	8	12	14	18	23

Current reforms

In January 2015, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports published the new National Curriculum for Early and Pre-primary Education. This document supplements with operational details the National Framework Curriculum for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education (accepted in 2011).

Organisation

There is a unitary system of ECEC providing education and care for children from 6 months to 7 years. ECEC is delivered in centre-based settings known as *dječji vrtić*, which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. In addition to the *dječji vrtić* represented in the diagram, children can also participate in playgroups (*igraonica*), which are hosted by various organisations whose primary activity is not ECEC (e.g. libraries, hospitals, sports clubs, cultural institutions or welfare organisations). These settings must be accredited by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and their provision focuses on various short-duration programmes. The system of regulated home-based provision is currently being phased in.

Since 2014/15, all children are obliged to participate in pre-primary programme for one year prior to starting school.

Start of primary education (ISCED 1) depends on child's birthday. Children born in January-March start primary school in calendar year in which they turn 6, the rest when they are 7 years old.

Educational guidelines

Cover the entire ECEC phase.

Fees

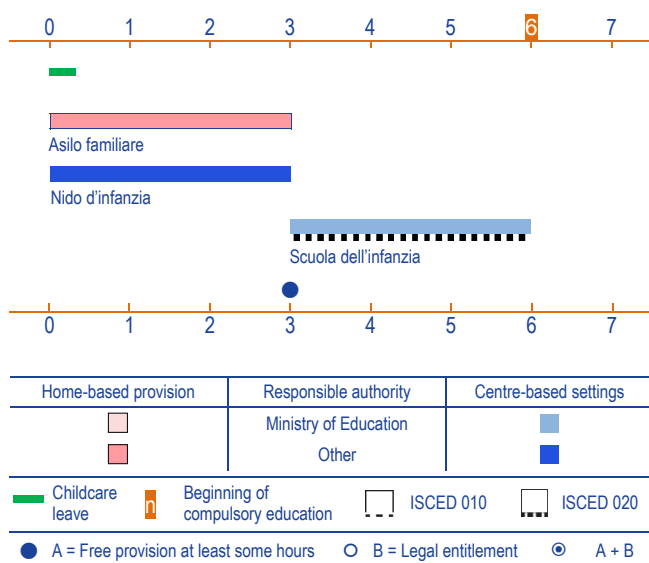
No change/no new data since 2012/13. Fees are determined by each local authority so they vary significantly. However, at national level, the approximate upper limit of the monthly fee in public kindergartens is PPS 121 (food included).

The last year of ECEC (pre-primary programme) is free.

PPS 1 = HRK 4.91681

Italy

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	95.1	98.8	91.4	1.4	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	8.2	99.6	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted April 2015).

Group size regulations

Not regulated centrally, only maximum group size is set to 26 in *scuole dell'infanzia*.

Organisation

The system of early childhood education and care includes settings for children between 0 and 3 years known as *nido d'infanzia* and settings for children between 3 and 6 years (*scuola dell'infanzia*). The latter settings fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, while the provision for younger children is highly decentralized and managed by regional and local authorities, according to their own regulations. Alongside centre-based provision (*nido d'infanzia*), other forms of provisions for younger children, such as home-based provisions (*asilo familiare*) and play centres (*spazio gioco*) are becoming increasingly common. The educational services for younger children are not regulated centrally and are not evenly available across the whole country. In order to meet the demand of families some infant schools (*scuole dell'infanzia*) are given the opportunity to accommodate children aged 2 to 3 in a special 'spring section' (*sezione primavera*). Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

There are no educational guidelines for children under 3, but the national standards exist for children aged 3 and over. With due regard to the autonomy of educational institutions, these standards are set at central level as the reference framework for the curriculum planning entrusted to schools.

Fees

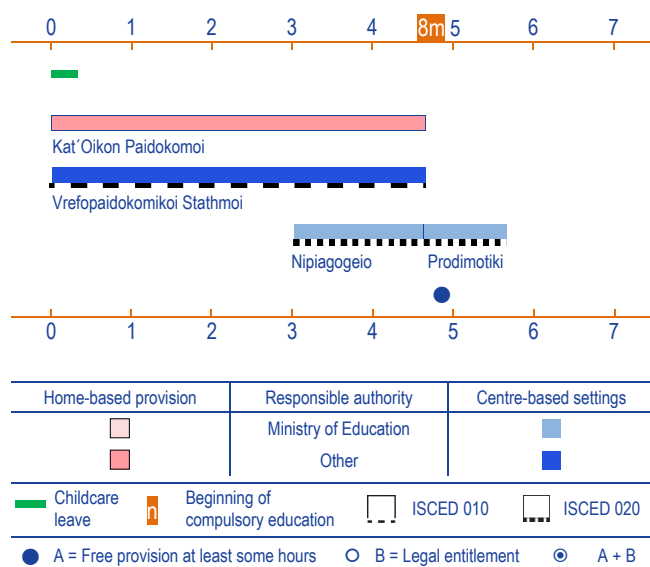
Parents pay fees for ECEC for the under-3s, but no data is available on the level of these fees. ECEC for children aged 3 and over is free in public settings, but no data is available for private settings.

Current reforms

The parliament has approved a law on the reform of the national system of education and training (No. 107 of 13 July 2015) according to which a unitary system of ECEC services will be implemented within 18 months.

Cyprus

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	41.8	72.0	94.7	3.0	0.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.6	96.1	99.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	nr	6	16	25	25	25

Note: *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi* for under 3-year olds, *nipiagogia* and *prodimotiki* for 3 year olds and over.

In *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, for ages 3 and 4, the maximum number of children is 24 and 28 per staff member.

1:6 in home-based *kat'Oikon Paidokomoi*.

No current reforms

Organisation

Children aged between 0 and 4 years 8 months may attend day nurseries (*vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*) or home-based care (*kat'Oikon Paidokomoi*). These operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. From age 3, children may also attend kindergartens (*nipiagogia*), which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This means that children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 8 months may attend either a kindergarten or a day care centre. Pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*), which take place in *nipiagogia*, are compulsory and free for children aged between 4 years and 8 months and 5 years and 8 months. Primary education starts at age 5 years and 8 months.

Educational guidelines

There is a national curriculum for children from 3 years of age, attending *nipiagogia* and *prodimotiki*.

Fees

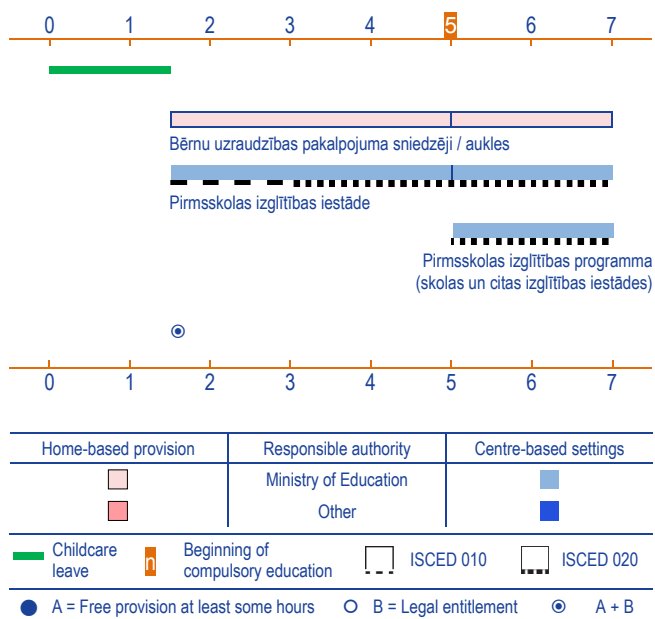
No change/no new data since 2012/13. Monthly fees in private (self-financing) *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 81 % of children are enrolled, range between PPS 174 and 407. In publicly subsidised private *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 17 % of children are enrolled, fees range between PPS 70 and 198. In public *vrefopaidokomikoi stathmoi*, where 2 % of children are enrolled, fees range between PPS 111 and 233.

The average monthly fees in public *nipiagogeio*, where 51 % of children are enrolled, are PPS 49. In private publicly subsidised *nipiagogeio*, where 24 % of children are enrolled, the average fees are PPS 93, and in private (self-financing) *nipiagogeio* (attended by 25 % of children), the fees are PPS 303.

Pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*) are free in public settings. 18 % of children attend private (self-financing) pre-primary classes (*prodimotiki*), where the average monthly fees amount to PPS 303.

Latvia

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013/14	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde	13.7	64.4	85.9	89.6	95	91.7

Source: Ministry of Education and Science.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	79.5	87.3	95.9	92.5	7.8
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	4.9	89.1

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Not regulated.

Educational guidelines

In all age groups of ECEC, children have to follow a programme defined by the Guidelines for Pre-school Education (*pirmsskolas izglītības vadlīnijas*). A child-minder, who may receive the Guidelines-based methodological support from *pirmsskolas izglītības iestāde*, has to support acquisition of pre-school education programme in a child's family.

PPS conversion from EUR not available

Organisation

Children from age 1.5 to 7 can attend unitary settings (*pirmsskolas izglītības iestādes*). In addition, subsidized home-based provision (*bērnu uzraudzības pakalpojuma sniedzēji / aukles*) is available since September 2013. The Ministry for Education and Science is responsible for the register of providers and methodological support (content). The Ministry of Welfare supervises and controls providers' compliance with the regulations.

All children are legally entitled to place in ECEC from the age of 1.5. Education is compulsory from age 5, although primary education (ISCED 1) only starts when children reach age 7. ECEC programme (*pirmsskolas izglītības programma*) for 5 and 6 year-old children may be organized also in home-based provision (receiving methodological support) and in separate groups at schools or other education institutions (*skolas un citas izglītības iestādes*).

Fees

Fees are not charged in public ECEC settings, however parents have to pay for children's meals (provided three times per day, which cost ca. EUR 44 per month). Some municipalities provide free meals for all children and some provide free meals for children from low income families. Some charges may be made for additional services, for instance, foreign language teaching for children.

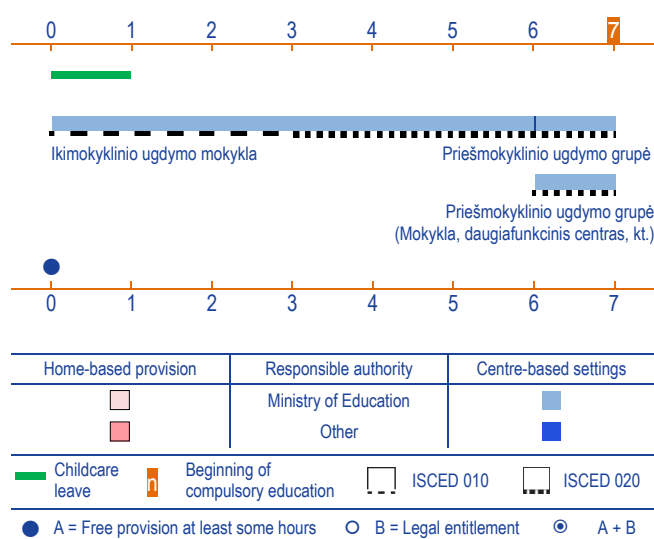
If no places are available in public ECEC institutions, average costs for private providers are directly covered by the state. For centre-based provision, EUR 228 is covered monthly in Riga, and EUR 185 elsewhere. Monthly support for full-time child-minding services is EUR 142.

Current reforms

From January 2016, local governments which still do not provide enough public ECEC places will cover the expenses for child's enrolment in a private setting.

Lithuania

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014/15	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Ikimokyklinio ugdymo mokykla	0.1	8.7	47.7	63.6	69.1	69.9	62.9
Mokykla, daugiafunkcinis centras, kt.	(-)	1.1	6.8	12.3	15.4	17.7	35.1
Total	0.1	9.8	54.5	75.9	84.5	87.6	97.0

Source: Statistics Lithuania, Education Management Information System 2014/2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	71.4	75.0	77.0	96.4	2.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	6.3	99.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted April 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	3	10	15	20	20	20

Current reforms

The Government agreed to introduce compulsory last year of ECEC from 1 September 2016, but the law amendments are yet to be approved by the Parliament.

Organisation

The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend unitary pre-primary settings (*ikimokyklinio ugdymo mokykla*, also commonly referred as *lopšelis-darželis, vaikų darželis*) until the beginning of compulsory primary education at age 7. During the year that precedes the beginning of compulsory education, virtually all children participate in pre-primary groups (*priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupės*), which take place either in ECEC settings (*ikimokyklinio ugdymo mokykla*) or in schools (*mokykla*). In areas with low numbers of children, the entire phase of ECEC can be provided in schools, multi-functional centres (*daugiafunkcinis centras*) or other establishments.

ECEC falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. Local authorities co-fund and implement ECEC programmes.

Educational guidelines

Every setting develops its own curricula (preschool program) for 0-5 year olds on the basis of the Outline of Criteria for Preschool Education Curriculum. There are detailed recommendations on how to prepare such curricula. In 2014, new guidelines for educators were prepared. They describe children achievements, essential skills and values, and outline steps of educational development. Moreover, for the last year of ECEC (for 6 year olds), there is a detailed general pre-primary curriculum.

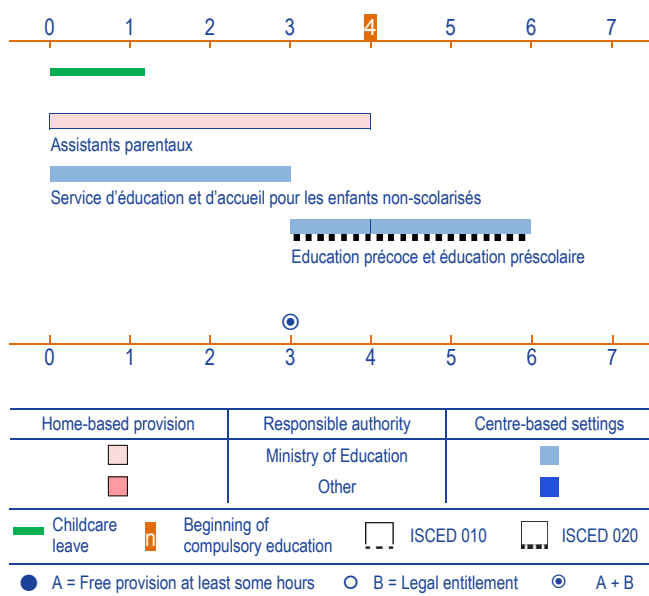
Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. There are no monthly fees in the public settings that enrol the majority of children (99 %); parents pay only for meals (monthly PPS 95 for under-3s; PPS 104 for 3 year olds and over). In some municipalities, a small additional fee for education materials is collected.

Monthly fees in publicly subsidised private ECEC can reach PPS 849.

Luxembourg

Diagram



Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children may attend centre-based provision known as *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*, which is delivered in *crèches* or *foyer de jour*. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based care delivered by child-minders (*assistants parentaux*). Between the ages of 3 and 4, children are legally entitled to free ECEC provision (*éducation précoce*) and from age 4, pre-primary education (*éducation préscolaire*) becomes compulsory. Both *éducation précoce* and *éducation préscolaire* are delivered in school settings. In addition to the provision presented in the diagram, parents of older children (aged 3 and above) can also benefit from a part-time offer of non-formal education services (*service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants scolarisés*) complementing the provision to which children are entitled.

Since December 2013, all types of home-based and centre-based ECEC provision have been attributed to the Ministry for Education, Children and Youth.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	73.1	97.9	92.6	4.6	0.1
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	5.2	93.1	97.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés:

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	6	6	8	8	11	11
group	12	12	15	15	15	15

Regarding *éducation précoce and éducation préscolaire*, regulations exist only for age 3 (10 children per staff member and 20 children maximum in a group).

1:5 in home-based *assistants parentaux*.

Educational guidelines

Are defined for over 3 year olds in centre-based settings (*éducation précoce et éducation préscolaire*).

Current reforms

Educational guidelines for all ECEC sectors (age 0-3/4) are in the process of being validated.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. Monthly fees for home based *assistants parentaux* can reach up to PPS 570 (food not included). There is no public or publicly subsidised home-based provision, but parents using ECEC receive subsidies via vouchers.

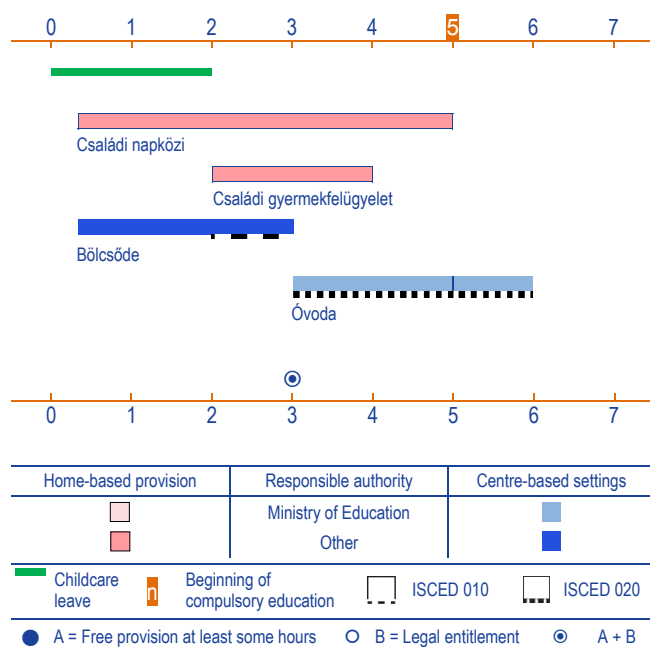
Monthly fees for private (self-financing) *service d'éducation et d'accueil pour les enfants non-scolarisés*, which enrolls 62 % of children, range between PPS 313 and 1 222. In public and publicly subsidised services, the fees range between PPS 40 and 949.

ECEC in *éducation précoce* is free from age 3, but parents contribute to the cost of meals and to the additional hours of non-formal education.

PPS 1 = EUR 1.22794

Hungary

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/13	under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
Családi napközi*	0.03	0.8	2.9	1.5		0.4		(-)
Bölcsőde*	0.1	3.7	23.2	13.3		(-)	(-)	(-)
Óvoda**	(-)	(-)	8.4	75.3	93.1	96.2	68.8	3.1

Note: In addition, 0.6 per cent of the entire population of 2-year-olds is in *egységes óvoda és bölcsőde*. There are no data on *családi gyermekfelügyelet*.

Sources: * KSH, 2013; ** Köznevelés- statisztikai adatgyűjtés 2012/13.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	74.3	93.8	95.1	71.1	3.4
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	22.9	94.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	12	12	14	25	25	25

1:3 in home-based *családi gyermekfelügyelet* and 1:5 in home-based *családi napközi*.

Organisation

Centre-based provision includes nurseries aimed at children from 20 weeks to 3 years (*bölcsődék*) and kindergartens for children between 3 and 6 years (*óvodák*). *Bölcsőde* falls under the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Social Affairs, while *óvoda* is regarded as a part of the educational sector and falls under the State Secretariat for Education (both secretariats are a part of the Ministry of Human Capacities). In addition, there are also two systems of home-based care (*családi gyermekfelügyelet* and *családi napközi*), which mainly differ in terms of age groups covered and staff-child ratios. From age 3, children are legally entitled to free ECEC provision in *óvoda*. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, unitary settings (*egységes óvoda és bölcsőde*) operate in low-populated areas (however they do not accept children younger than 2 years). Education is compulsory from age 5, i.e. one year prior to primary education, which starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Two separate National Core Programmes for children under- and over 3 years old are available, on the basis of which each ECEC setting develops their own curricula.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. Monthly fees are regulated. In *bölcsőde*, fees and meals cannot exceed 25 % of net family income per person. In home-based ECEC, the limit is drawn at 50 % of net family income per person. Some municipalities offer free ECEC from 4 months and charge only for meals.

There are no fees in public *óvoda*, although parents pay for children's meals. Monthly fees in publicly subsidised private settings (attended by 2.7 % of children) are approximately PPS 409 (food not included).

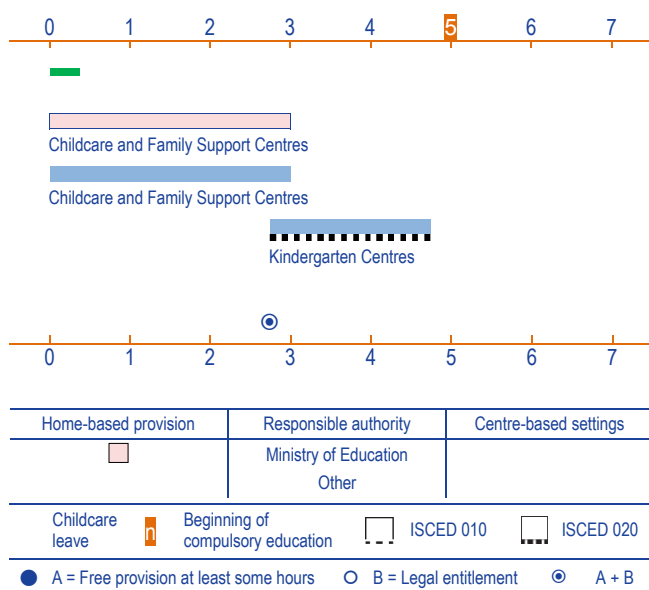
PPS 1 = HUF 171.006

Current reforms

From 1 September 2015, kindergarten attendance is compulsory from age 3 instead of the current age 5.

Malta

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2011	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds
Childcare and Family Support Centres	0.99	10.6	25.7	(-)	(-)

Source: DSWS, 2011.

(%) Reference year 2012/13	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds
Kindergarten Centres	(-)	(-)	(-)	98.0	100.0

Source: Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012/2013.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	98.7	100.0	0.8	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	0.0	99.8	100.0	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

In centre-based ECEC:

Maximum number of children per staff member group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	3	5	6	15	20	na
	nr	nr	nr	15	20	na

1:6 in home-based *childcare and family support centres*.

Current reforms

From 2015/16, the required level of qualification for staff working in kindergarten centres is raised to Bachelor's degree level with four years of study. ⇒

Organisation

Children up to age 3 can attend home-based or centre-based *Childcare and Family Support Centres*. *Kindergarten Centres* are aimed at children from 2 years and 9 months to 4 years and 9 months. All children are legally entitled to this type of provision, which is free in state and church establishments.

Alongside the settings represented in the diagram, parents can also use after-school care services for children aged between 3 and 16 years.

All types of ECEC provision falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Education and Employment.

Children are enrolled in primary education during the year they reach their fifth birthday, so some children may only be 4 years 9 months old when they begin compulsory education.

Educational guidelines

National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities (for children under 3 years old) include good practice guidelines for programme of activities. A National Curriculum Framework for All 2012 covers education for children 3 years and older (till age 16).

Fees

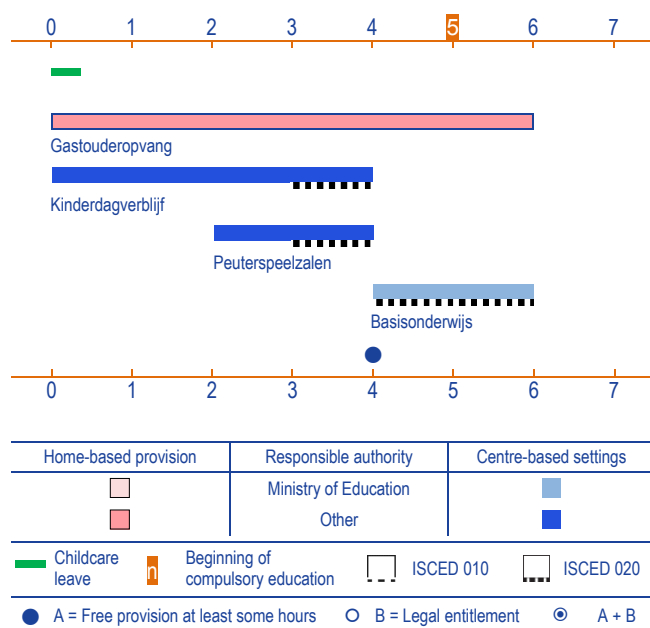
Children of parents who are both in employment and/or in education do not pay any fees for centre-based *Childcare and Family Support Centres*. Other categories of parents benefit from a tax rebate on the payment of fees.

Public *Kindergarten Centres* (attended by 70 % of children) are free of charge for all and even offer one glass of milk per child daily and one free portion of fruit or vegetables per week. After school services are paid.

⇒ This is in accordance with the agreement signed between the Government of Malta and the Malta Union of Teachers in 2010.

The Netherlands

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	83.4	99.6	99.6	(-)	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	99.8	99.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	4	5	6	8	*	*
group	12	16	16	16	*	*

* school autonomy.

1:6 in home-based *Gastouderopvang* for 4-6 year olds. The norm is gradually reduced if children under 4; under 2 or under 1 are present.

Fees

Parents whose children attend a private centre-based day-care setting or home-based provision receive a refund through the tax system.

Local authorities and/or playgroups determine the parental fee for the publically funded playgroups and the targeted early childhood education programmes.

There is no parental fee for pre-primary programs in school which starts on a voluntary basis at the age of 4 (*basisonderwijs*).

Organisation

Up until the age of 4, children can attend full-day centre-based private provision (*kinderdagverblijf*) or regulated home-based care delivered by child-minders (*gastouderopvang*). Next to the private day-care sector, children between the ages 2 and 4 can attend publically funded playgroups (*peuterspeelzalen*). The playgroups mostly offer half-day ECEC.

Children from a disadvantaged background aged 2½ to 4 are offered support through targeted early childhood education programs (*voorschoolse educatie*), which reach around 45 000 children. These programmes can be provided in both private child day-care (*kinderdagverblijf*) and publically funded playgroups (*peuterspeelzalen*).

The last two years of pre-primary education (age 4 to 6) are offered in school settings (*basisonderwijs*). Primary education (ISCED 1) starts at age 6, education is compulsory from age 5, but almost all children start when they are 4. Children in *basisonderwijs* can also attend supplementary paid ECEC (*buitenschoolse opvang*) afterwards.

The Netherlands stress the importance of accessibility and freedom of choice for parents for ECEC provision. Universal entitlement and progress towards this goal are not supported as they do not match the Netherlands ECEC system. In the Netherlands, the ECEC system combines a demand-driven structure for children aged 0-4 and supply-side arrangements for all children aged four and up and for children ages 2.5-4 from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Educational guidelines

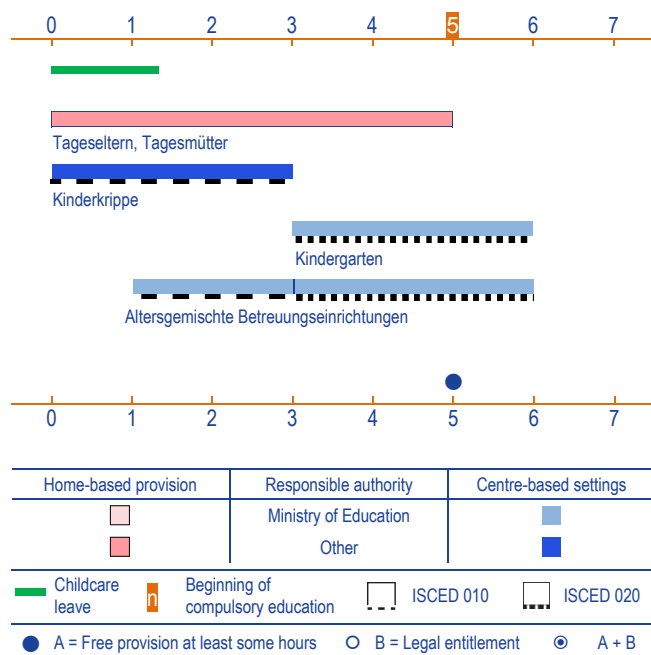
Based on a national pedagogical plan, each ECEC setting for under 4 year olds is obliged to develop its own curriculum. In *basisonderwijs*, core objectives for 4 and 5 year olds exist (*vroegschoolse educatie*).

Current reforms

The national government is aiming at quality improvement in the private centre-based day-care settings and the publically funded playgroups. Measures are taken to harmonize the two types of ECEC in terms of requirements, financial support for parents and to improve the transition between ECEC and primary school.

Austria

Diagram



Organisation

Up to the age of 3, early childhood care is provided in centre-based settings *Kinderkrippen*. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based care (*Tageseltern/Tagesmütter*). From age 3 (and sometimes even slightly earlier), children may attend *Kindergarten*. One year prior to the beginning of primary education (ISCED 1), attendance at *Kindergarten* is compulsory and free of charge. In addition to these main structures, approximately 13% of children attend mixed-age groups (*Altersgemischte Betreuungseinrichtungen*) for children from 1 to 6 years, which are mostly provided in *Kindertagesstätten*.

The central authorities involved in ECEC provision include the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, which are responsible for designing and co-financing ECEC policies. The system is, however, highly decentralised.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013/14	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Kinderkrippe	1.0	13.2	18.7	1.1	0.2	0.3
Kindergarten	(-)	0.4	17.4	70.4	86.2	87.5
Altersgemischte Einrichtungen	0.9	5.9	10.7	11.0	7.8	8.0
Total	1.9	19.5	46.8	82.5	94.2	95.8

Source: Statistik Austria, 2014.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	65.0	90.9	96.5	38.2	1.7
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.1	58.6	96.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	5	7.5	7.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
group	10	15	15	25	25	25

1:5 in home-based *Tageseltern/Tagesmütter*.

Educational guidelines

Nationwide Framework Curriculum for ECEC Services covers the entire ECEC age range in centre-based settings. There are also curriculum supplements for language promotion and for the last year in ECEC.

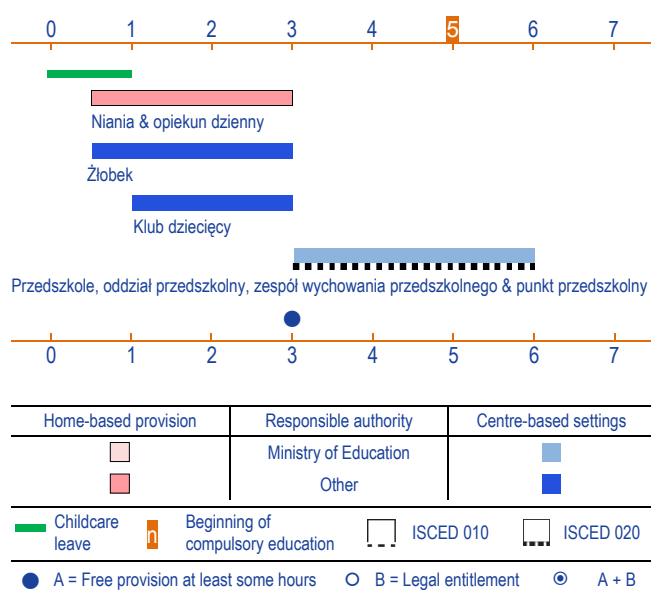
Fees

Data not available.

No current reforms

Poland

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	Under 3
Żłobek & klub dziecięcy	7.1

Source: The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2014/15	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Przedszkole	6.4	57.7	69.1	64.6	27.7
Oddział przedszkolny	0.4	3.0	6.0	28.3	21.4
Zespół wychowania przedszkolnego & punkt przedszkolny	0.6	3.1	4.0	1.1	0.2
Total	7.3	63.9	79.1	94.0	49.4

Source: SIO, Ministry of National Education, school year 2014/2015.

Note: Indicators for children aged 6 are calculated on the basis of half of the population of 6-year olds as the other half (born January-June 2008) has already started compulsory education in primary school.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	51.1	65.5	93.6	76.2	2.0
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	19.0	94.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted September 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	nr	nr	nr	25	25	25

1:5 for home-based *niania* and *opiekun dzienny*. 1:3 if one child is under 1 year.

Organisation

ECEC in Poland is divided into two stages. ECEC for children under 3 is supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, while pre-primary education for children over 3 years old falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education.

Children aged under 3 years may attend *żłobek* and *klub dziecięcy*. *Żłobek* is available for 10 hours daily for children aged 20 weeks to 3 years, while *klub dziecięcy* is available mostly for 5 hours daily and do not accept children younger than 1 year. For under 3s, legislation provides for home-based provision (*niania* and *opiekun dzienny*) but currently few are registered.

Children aged 3-5 years may be enrolled in *przedszkole* and in pre-school class (*oddział przedszkolny*) in primary schools. In order to tackle the shortage of ECEC places, part-time provision (minimum 3 hours daily, 12 hours a week) for 3-5 year olds may also be offered in settings called *zespół wychowania przedszkolnego* and *punkt przedszkolny*. One year of pre-primary education is compulsory for 5-year olds.

Educational guidelines

The core curriculum is defined for children 3 years and older.

Fees

No new data in *żłobek* since 2012/13. Monthly fees (food included) in public *żłobek* are PPS 93, and PPS 208 in publicly subsidised private *żłobek*. *Przedszkole* is free of charge for minimum 5 hours a day, but parents are expected to contribute to the costs of meals and to any additional hours of provision at a maximum of PPS 0.41 per hour.

PPS 1 = PLN 2.42882

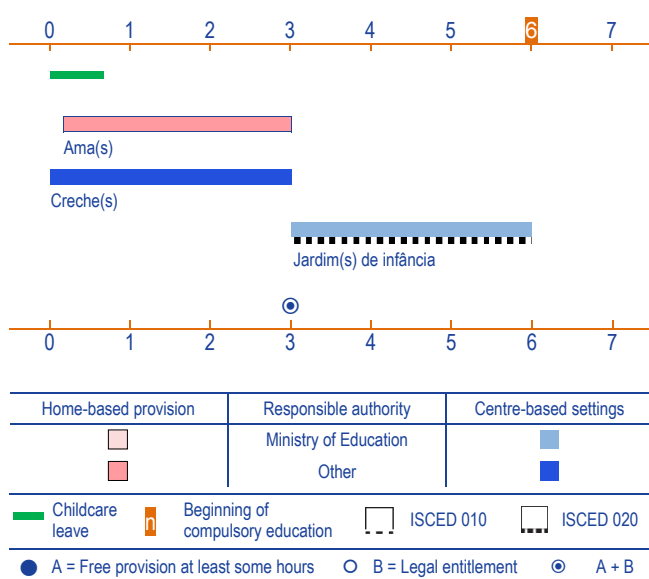
Current reforms

In 2015, all 6-year-olds are obliged to start primary education. As from 2015, all 4 year-olds are legally entitled to pre-primary education, and from 2017 all 3 year olds will be legally entitled.

Preparation to use modern foreign language has recently been added to the core curriculum for pre-primary education. Compulsory language lessons have been introduced in 2015 for all 5-years-old children and from September 2017 will be extended to all children over 3 years old.

Portugal

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013/14	Under 1*	1 year-olds*	2 year-olds*	3 year-olds*	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
	19.8	38.6	47.4	80.5	90.6	96.1	6.0

* Portugal mainland.

Sources: Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) – DGEEC; Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security (MSESS) – GEP.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	78.4	91.6	97.9	4.7	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.4	96.3	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	5	7	9	7.5	12.5	12.5

1:4 in home-based *amas*.

Current reforms

The legal framework of nannies (*amas*) has been changed allowing publicly non-subsidized services and the provision of services done directly with parents. The activity of the nannies in the private market can be pursued only after authorization from the competent authorities (subject to fulfilment of certain requirements, including specific training). ⇒

Organisation

Up to the age of 3, early childhood care is provided in centre-based settings known as *crèches*. There is also a system of regulated home-based provision, aimed at children from 3 months to 3 years, which is ensured by nannies (*amas*) who either work independently or as a part of formal groups known as 'family *crèches*'. Home-based and centre-based care for the youngest children falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security.

From age 3, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in a *jardim de infância*. This area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there is also a travelling pre-school education system (*educação pré-escolar itinerante*), aimed at children between 3 and 5 years living in rural areas. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Curriculum guidelines are available for children between 3 and 6 years.

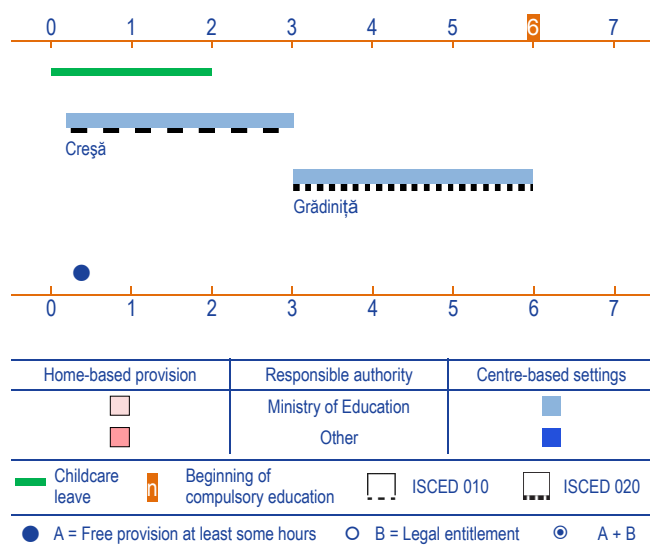
Fees

No information is available on fees for *amas* and *crèches*. No fees are charged for 5 hours daily in *jardim de infância*, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision.

⇒ The Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education (3-5 year olds) are currently being revised. The Ministry of Education and Science in partnership with the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security is preparing a set of pedagogic guidelines for *crèches* (under 3 year olds). These two documents will be available in 2015/16 aiming to provide an integrated educational approach for the entire phase of ECEC.

Romania

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	68.1	82.4	88.6	79.9	6.5
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	20.7	93.3

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	4	5	6	17	17	17
group	7	7	15	20	20	20

Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children are provided early childhood care in centre-based settings known as *creșă*. From age 3 years (sometimes even from age 2) up to 6 years, children may attend a centre-based *grădiniță*. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research is entirely responsible for the ECEC of children aged 3 and over in *grădiniță*. However, for children under 3 years, it shares responsibility with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Early Learning and Development Standards cover the entire ECEC age range. In addition, detailed curricula are available for 3-5 year olds.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. No fees are charged in public ECEC institutions; however parents have to pay for children's meals, which cost max PPS 58 in *creșă* and between PPS 80 and 124 in *grădiniță*. Children from low income families may receive free meals.

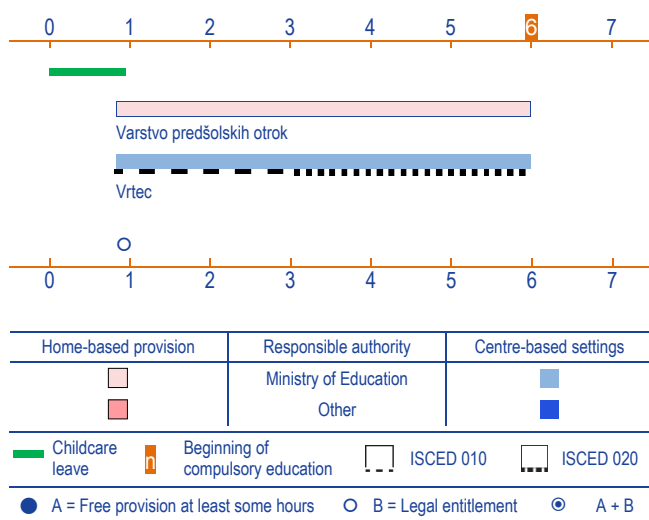
Parents of the 2.5 % of children that attend private (self-financing) *grădiniță* pay between PPS 124 and PPS 1107.

PPS 1 = RON 2.25896

No current reforms

Slovenia

Diagram



Organisation

There is a unitary ECEC system providing education and care to children from 11 months to age 6 (when children must enter compulsory primary education). ECEC is delivered in centre-based settings known as *vrtec*, which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. In addition, there is also a system of regulated home-based provision (*varstvo predšolskih otrok*), which is aimed at the same age-range of children. However, the latter system only involves a very small proportion of children. From age 11 months, children are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised ECEC place. However, local authorities are not always able to satisfy the demand for places for younger children.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012/13	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Varstvo predšolskih otrok *	0.7	0.5	0.1	<0.1	<0.1

Source: MIZS, 2012/13.

(%) Reference year 2014/15	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 or more years
Vrtec	42.8	69.0	82.8	89.3	91.8	6.5

Source: Republic of Slovenia Statistical Office, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	84.9	89.4	92.5	5.8	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	93.1	97.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	6	6	6	8.5	11	11
group	12	12	12	17	22	22

Depending on their circumstances, municipalities may raise the maximum number of children per group by 2. In 2014/15, 99.8 % of groups/classes had 2 additional children.

1:6 in home-based *varstvo predšolskih otrok*.

Educational guidelines

The Kindergarten Curriculum covers the entire ECEC age range in public centre-based settings (*vrtec*). It is implemented in all public and some private *vrtec*.

The curriculum is based on the developmental-process approach that takes into account individual traits and development of each child as a more important goal than achieving prescribed results. It stipulates general objectives as well as specific objectives in the activity areas: locomotion, language, natural environment, society, arts and mathematics. The curriculum provides pre-school teachers with autonomy in selecting specific objectives, contents and methods of work.

Fees

The average monthly fees for *vrtec* are PPS 182 for under-3s and PPS 138 for older children. The fees can reach up to PPS 660.

4.4 % of children attend ECEC for free.

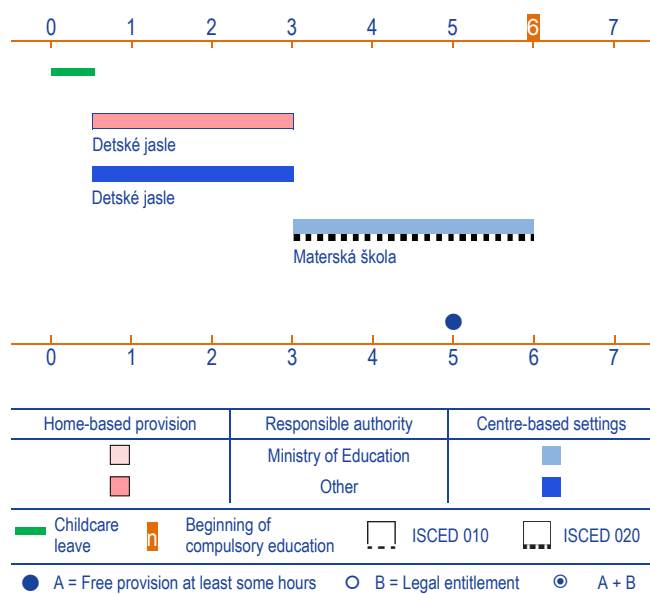
There is no new data regarding home-based provision. In 2012/13, the monthly fees in private *varstvo predšolskih otrok* were PPS 372.

PPS 1 = EUR 0.805577

No current reforms

Slovakia

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds+
Materská škola	(-)	13.4	60.1	75.1	80.4	35.6

Source: CVTI SR a ŠÚ SR. Data prepared June 2015.

Category '6 year-olds+' include children aged 7 years and more.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	62.5	72.8	81.3	40.2	3.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.1	50.4	91.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	nr	nr	10	20	21	22
group	nr	nr	10	20	21	22

PPS 1 = EUR 0.679369

Organisation

Up to the age of 3, children may attend centre- or home-based *detské jasle*. Between 3 and 6 years, children attend centre-based *materské školy*, which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR. If the space capacity permits, 2 year old children might be exceptionally accepted in *materská škola*.

In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, there are also settings known as mother-/child-centres (*materské/detské centrá*) intended for the youngest children (up to age 3) together with their parents. These are usually run by parents' associations and are not publicly subsidised.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

State educational programme covers *materské školy*.

Fees

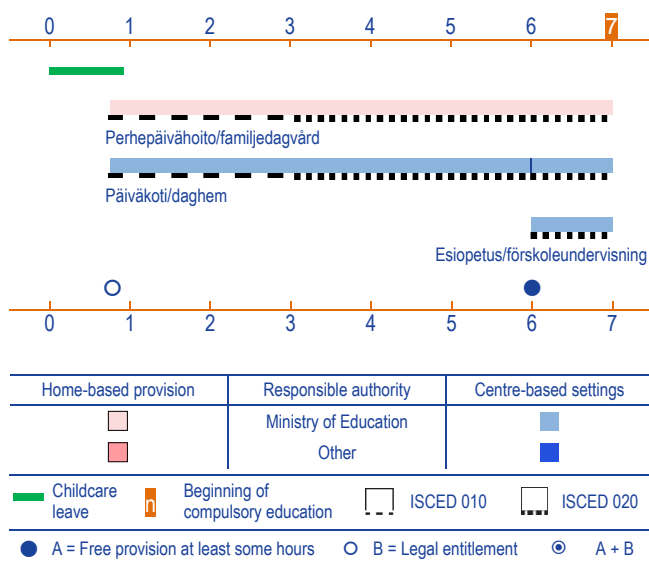
No information is available on fees for *detské jasle*. The monthly fees in the public *materská škola* in which 95 % of children are enrolled are set by the founder and are on average PPS 29 (food not included). The last year of ECEC is free, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals.

Current reforms

A new State Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education in *materské školy* entered into force on 1 September 2015. In the academic year 2015/16, the new state educational programme will be implemented on a voluntary basis. It will be applied in all *materské školy* from 1 September 2016.

Finland

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Total	0.8	28.7	52.1	68.2	73.9	78.4	98.8

Source: THL, 2014.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	50.9	59.3	68.2	97.7	1.5
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	0.5	96.1

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	4	4	4	7	7	7

In home-based *perhepäivähoito/ familjedagvård*, 1:4 children under age 6. Additionally, part-time care for one child aged 6 or more can be provided.

Current reforms

Participation in pre-primary education or corresponding activities is mandatory as from August 2015. The new national core curriculum for pre-primary education was adopted in December 2014. Local curricula based on the new core curriculum will be implemented by August 2016. A revised Act on Early Childhood Education and Care was adopted in spring 2015. The legislative change will, inter alia, introduce a national core curriculum that will replace the earlier curriculum guidelines in ECEC.

Organisation

Children are legally entitled to a publicly subsidised ECEC place from the end of the parental leave period (9 months). ECEC falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The majority of children who participate in ECEC attend day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*), aimed for children under 7 years old. A relatively significant proportion of children attend regulated home-based provision (*perhepäivähoito/familjedagvård*). However, the share of home-based ECEC is decreasing. In 2003, 30 % of children in ECEC were in home-based provision. Ten years later the proportion had dropped to 15 %.

During the year that precedes the beginning of compulsory education, virtually all children participate in pre-primary education, which is organised either in day-care centres (*päiväkoti/daghem*) or in schools providing basic education (*perusopetus/grundläggande utbildning*).

In addition to the ECEC provision represented in the diagram, many local authorities also offer ECEC services open to all in playgrounds and in 'open day-care centres'. The church and non-governmental organisations also provide early childhood education and care open to all.

Basic education (ISCED 1) starts in August of the year in which the child turns 7.

Educational guidelines

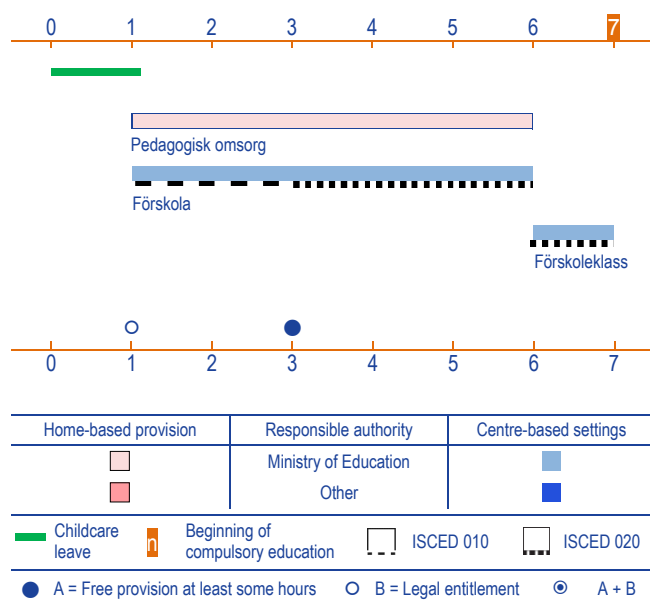
National curriculum guidelines cover the entire ECEC age range, centre-based and home-based provision. Moreover, there is a separate national core curriculum for pre-primary education.

Fees

The same regulations apply for home- and centre-based ECEC. Maximum monthly fees including meals are capped at PPS 229 in public ECEC. The half-day provision of pre-primary education – *esiopetus/förskoleundervisning* – during the last year of ECEC is free of charge. The majority of children in pre-primary education also attend supplementary paid ECEC afterwards. A free meal is provided on every day of pre-primary education.

Sweden

Diagram



Participation rates

(%)	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds
Förskola*	49.2	88.9	93.3	94.7	94.6	1.5
Pedagogisk omsorg*	1.7	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.5	(-)
Förskoleklass**	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	0.8	95.5
Total	50.9	91.9	96.2	97.5	97.1	97.0

* Reference year: 2013; ** Reference year: 2013/14.

Source: Skolverket, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	92.6	94.2	95.3	97.0	1.4
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	1.2	98.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Not regulated.

No current reforms

Organisation

The ECEC system consists of unitary centres (*förskola*), aimed at children aged between 1 and 6 years. Between 6 and 7, children can attend pre-primary classes (*förskoleklass*). *Förskoleklass* is usually closely associated with the school the pupils will attend. All the above provision falls under the responsibility of the National Agency for Education. In addition, there is also a system known as pedagogical care (*pedagogisk omsorg*), which is run by registered child minders and can be organised in various ways (i.e. either within childminders' homes or elsewhere). Pedagogical care is governed by the Education Act. In addition to the provision represented in the diagram, many local authorities also offer ECEC services in open pre-schools (*öppen förskola*), where parents (or childminders) come along with their children whenever they wish. From age 1, children are entitled to publicly subsidised ECEC provision and from age 3, they are entitled to provision that is free of charge. Children whose parents are working or studying have the right to a publicly subsidised place in an after-school recreation centre (*fritidshem*).

Primary education starts at age 7.

Educational guidelines

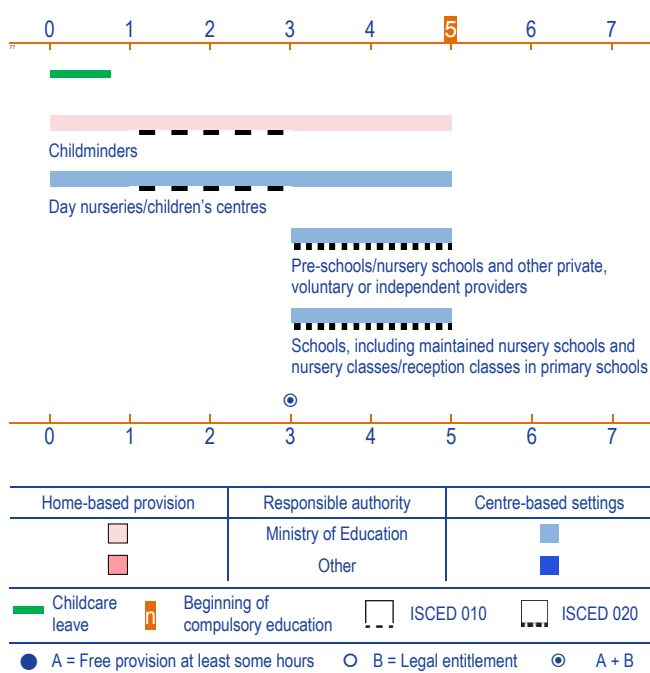
The curriculum for *förskola* is a binding ordinance and sets out fundamental values and tasks, national goals and guidelines. *Pedagogisk omsorg* is guided by the curriculum.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector; the maximum monthly fee is capped to PPS 108 (food included). From age 3, children are legally entitled to a minimum 525 hours of ECEC free of charge (*allmän förskola*) per year. In practice, this means that monthly fees for a full-time place are proportionally lower than for under 3s. *Förskoleklass* is free of charge.

United Kingdom – England

Diagram



Participation rates

Percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-old children benefitting from funded early education places by type of provider.

(%) Reference year 2014/15	3 year-olds	4 year-olds
Private and voluntary providers	58	19
Independent schools	2	2
Maintained nursery schools	4	2
Nursery classes in primary schools	30	13
Infant classes in primary schools	(-)	61
State-funded secondary schools	(-)	1
All providers	94	99

Source: Department for Education, 2015.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0*	93.0	60.4	0.7	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1*	(-)	36.9	96.1	98.2	99.4

* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	3	3	4	13	13	na
group	nr	nr	nr	nr	30	na

1:6 in home-based childminders.

The staff/child ratio depends on the level of qualification held by staff.

Organisation

From birth to age 5 (when compulsory education begins), the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a single framework of standards for learning, development and care for both school and childcare providers.

From age 3, children are legally entitled to 15 hours of free ECEC provision per week. Free provision is also offered to the most disadvantaged 2 year-olds (around 40 % of the age group). Settings include registered childminders (ages vary) and private and voluntary settings (ages vary) as well as publicly funded schools (from age 3 in nursery schools and classes).

From age 4, children are entitled to a full-time place at primary school (reception class).

Primary education (Year 1) starts at age 5.

Educational guidelines

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers children from birth to 5 in both centre-based and home-based provision.

Fees

For full-time ECEC with a childminder, monthly fees range from PPS 757 to 1 024 in different regions. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement (see the section on Organisation above), fees for 25 additional hours range from PPS 476 to 651.

For full-time nursery, fees range from PPS 833 to 1 052. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement, fees range from PPS 498 to 643.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.925663

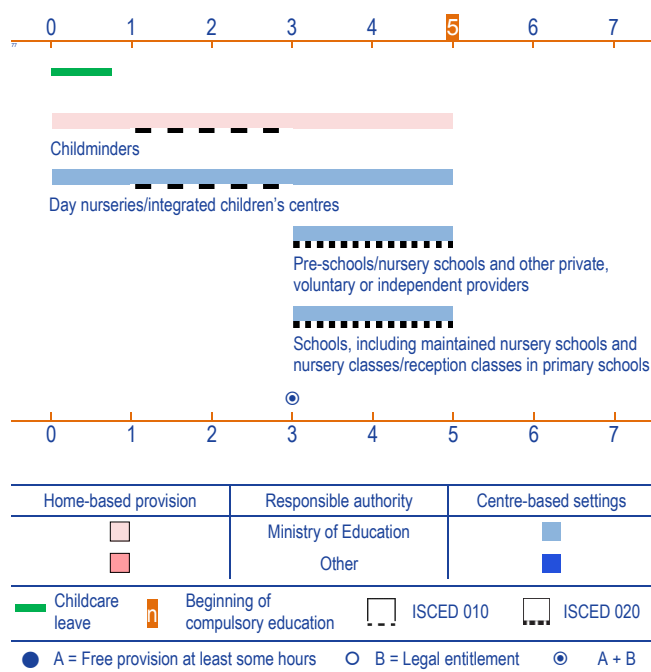
Current reforms

The Childcare Bill will, subject to Parliamentary approval, extend the free entitlement to 30 hours per week from September 2017 for all 3- and 4-year-olds with working parents.

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) gives providers additional funding of PPS 324 for every 3- and 4-year-old from a low income family from April 2015.

United Kingdom – Wales

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	93.0	60.4	0.7	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	36.9	96.1	98.2	99.4

* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	3	3	4	8	8	na
	12	12	12	26	30	na

1:6 in home-based childminders.

The staff/child ratio depends on the level of qualification held by staff.

Organisation

From birth to age 5 (when compulsory education begins), children may attend settings, including registered childminders (ages vary), private and voluntary settings (ages vary) as well as publicly funded schools (from age 3 in nursery schools and classes).

From age 3, children are legally entitled to 10 hours of free ECEC provision per week. The Flying Start programme provides the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds with free ECEC for 12.5 hours per week.

From age 4, children may attend primary school (reception class) full time.

Primary education (Year 1) starts at age 5.

Educational guidelines

The Foundation Phase Framework is the curriculum for all 3- to 7-year-olds in Wales, in both centre- and home-based provision and covers the first two years of primary as well as pre-primary education.

Fees

For full-time ECEC with a childminder, average monthly fees are PPS 708. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement (see the section on Organisation above), average fees for the 30 additional hours are PPS 531.

For full-time nursery, average fees are PPS 775. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement, fees for the 30 additional hours are PPS 576.

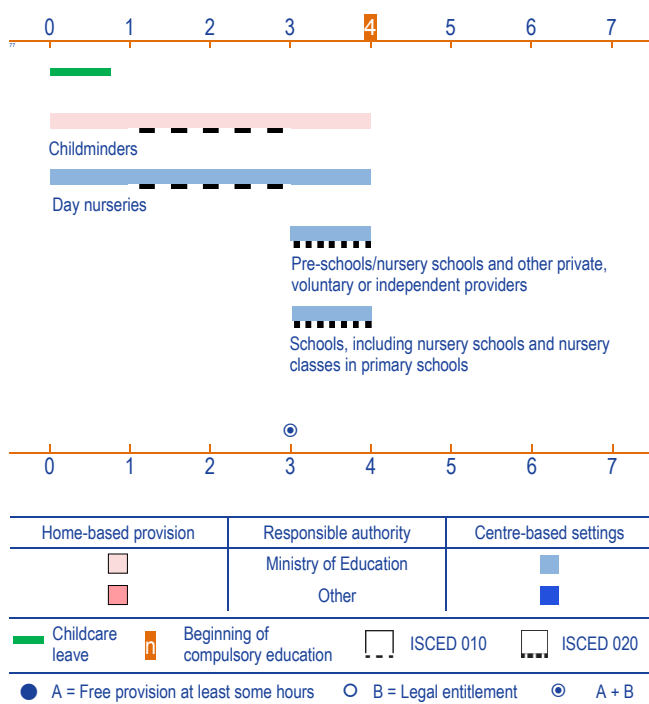
PPS 1 = GBP 0.925663

Current reforms

In September 2014, the Welsh Government issued a draft ten-year plan for the early years, childcare and play workforce in Wales. The Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant (EYPDG) gives providers additional funding of £ 300 for every 3- and 4-year-old from a low income family from 2015/16.

United Kingdom – Northern Ireland

Diagram



Organisation

From birth to age of 4 (when compulsory education begins), children may attend a range of settings including nursery schools; nursery classes and units in primary schools; and voluntary and privately run playgroups. The Department of Education sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 4 in all types of ECEC provision.

In its Programme for Government 2011-15, the Northern Ireland Executive made a policy commitment to provide at least one year of free pre-school education (i.e. for 3-year-olds). This is generally available, though not a legal entitlement in the strictest sense. All of the ECEC providers shown in the diagram may provide this allocation.

The Sure Start programme provides access to free ECEC (no amount of time is specified) for the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds.

Primary education (Year 1) starts at age 4.

Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	93.0	60.4	0.7	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	36.9	96.1	98.2	99.4

* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	3	3	4	8	na	na
group	26	26	26	26	na	na

1:6 in home-based childminders.

Educational guidelines

The Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education covers both centre-based and home-based provision from age 3.

Fees

For full-time ECEC with a childminder, average monthly fees are PPS 627. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement (see the section above on Organisation), the average fees for the 27.5 additional hours are PPS 431.

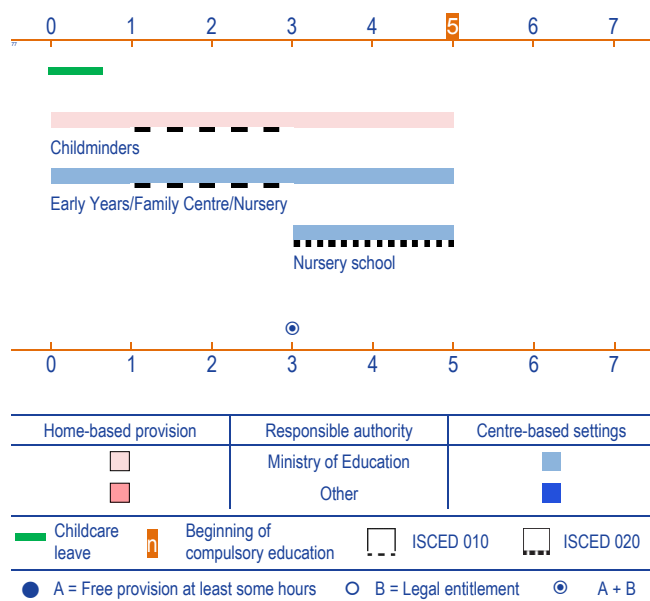
For full-time nursery, average monthly fees are PPS 586. For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement the average fees for the additional 27.5 hours are PPS 403.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.925663

No current reforms

United Kingdom – Scotland

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013	Under 1	1 year-old	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Childminders	1.6	6.6	7.3	5.8		
Early Years/Family Centre	0.5	1.6	3.9	2.4		
Nursery schools/nursery classes	3.0	15.3	40.3	38.5		
Total	5.1	23.3	51.5	46.7		

Source: Care Inspectorate, 2013.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0 *	93.0	60.4	0.7	0.0	(-)
ISCED 1 *	(-)	36.9	96.1	98.2	99.4

* Data for the United Kingdom (all parts).

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	3	3	5	8	8	na

1:6 in home-based childminders.

Current reforms

From August 2015, the entitlement is further expanded to a wider group of 2-year-olds based on current free school meal eligibility – representing around 27 % of all 2 year olds.

Organisation

Up to the age of 5 (when compulsory primary education begins), children can attend *early years*, *family centres* or *nurseries*, or they can be looked after by childminders. All ECEC settings have to consider policies and guidance implemented through independent bodies responsible for regulating ECEC settings (Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council), these bodies are accountable to Ministers and through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government also issues guidance to local authorities in relation to provision of free early learning and childcare.

In addition to the settings represented in the diagram, there are also various additional ECEC structures, including *playgroups*, *crèches*, *out-of-school clubs* and *holiday play schemes*.

Primary education starts at age 5.

Educational guidelines

Various formal documents set out educational guidelines. They cover the entire ECEC age range, centre-based and home-based provision.

Fees

Children aged 3 and over (as well as 2 year old children who are looked after, under a kinship care order or whose parents qualify for certain benefits) are entitled to 600 hours free ECEC a year, which is usually delivered over the 38 weeks of the school term (this equals to approximately 16 hours a week for 38 weeks). This entitlement can be used in any of the ECEC providers shown in the diagram, either within local authority provision or private/voluntary settings which local authorities enter into partnership with.

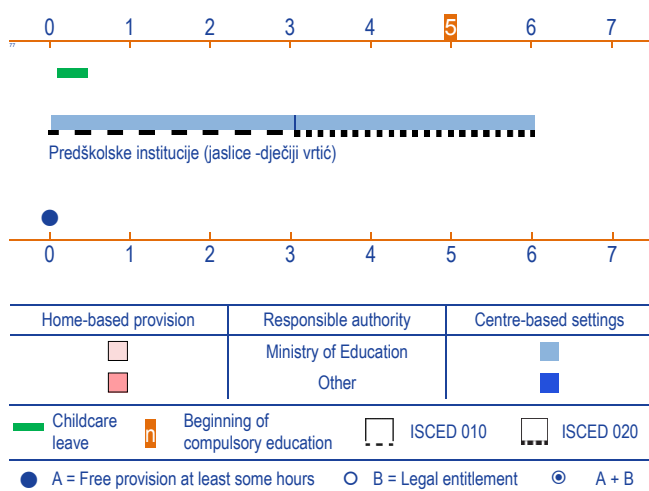
Average monthly fees for full-time ECEC by childminders are PPS 718 (food included). For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement, the fees decrease to PPS 455 for 24 additional hours of ECEC.

Average monthly fees for full-time *early years/family centre* or *nursery school* are PPS 796 (food included). For children aged 3 and over using the free entitlement, the fees decrease to PPS 479 for 24 additional hours of ECEC.

PPS 1 = GBP 0.925663

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Diagram



Participation rates

Total participation rate combining all ECEC age groups is approximately 14 %.

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
staff member	15	15	15	15	28	28
group	15	15	15	15	28	28

The actual staff: child ratio is 1:14 (Agency for statistics of B&H, 2014/15).

Organisation

ECEC system provides education and care for children from birth to 6 years. Usually, ECEC institutions (*predškolske institucije*) combine *jaslice* for under 3 year olds and *dječiji vrtić* for children from the age of 3 until their enrolment in primary school. However, some *predškolske institucije* have only groups for older children (3-6 year olds).

The ECEC falls under the overall responsibility of 12 responsible ministries of education from entity Republic of Srpska, 10 cantons in Federation of BiH and Department of Education in Brčko District.

The last year of ECEC is compulsory. Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Cover the entire ECEC age range.

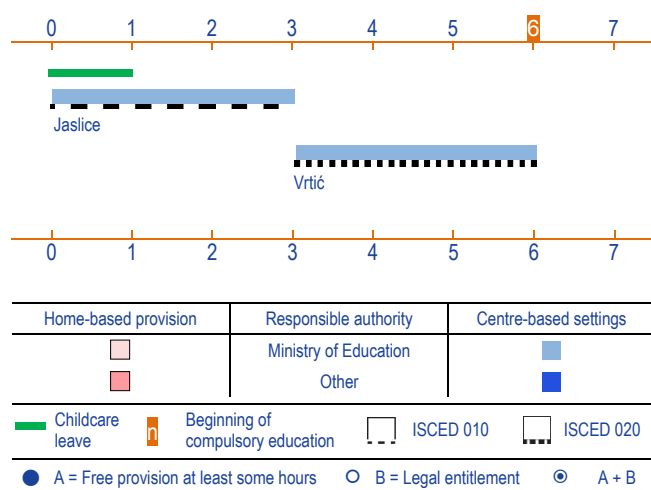
Fees

No fees are charged in public ECEC institutions; however, parents have to pay for children's meals. Children from low income families may receive free meals.

No current reforms

Montenegro

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	Under 2 year olds	2 year- olds	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds	6 year- olds
Total	0.8	17.2	34.8	46.4	52.1	61.4

Source: Ministry of Education 2014.

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member and group	Under 1	1 year- olds	2 year- olds	3 year- olds	4 year- olds	5 year- olds
	8	12	14	14	20	24

Organisation

ECEC is delivered in centre-based settings known as *jaslice* and *vrtić*, which are both part of the education system and fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. *Jaslice* delivers education and upbringing of children up to the age of 3; *vrtić* caters for children from the age of 3 until their enrolment in primary school. ECEC is offered in full-day, half-day or three hour per day educational programmes.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Cover the entire ECEC age range. There are separate curricula for children in *jaslice* (under 3 year olds), for children in *vrtić* (3-6 year olds), and for children aged between 5-6 years that prepares them for primary school.

Fees

PPS 80 per month (food not included).

PPS 1 = EUR 0.499265

Current reforms

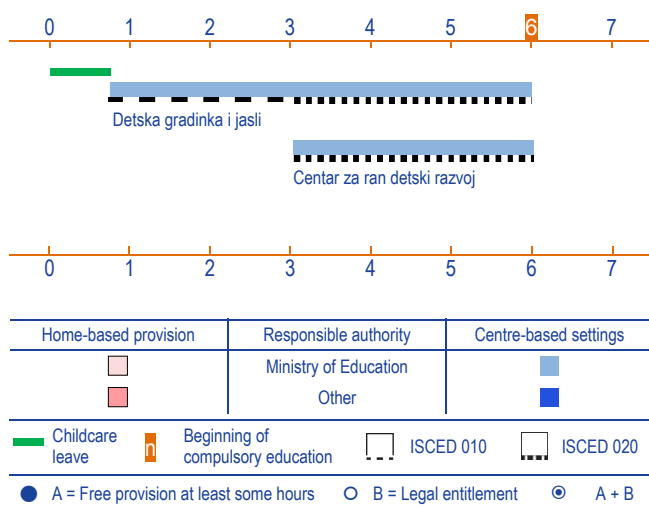
The leading principle of the Strategy on Early and Preschool Education and Care ⁽²⁾ (2010-2015) is to provide all children in Montenegro, from their birth to enrolment in primary school, with high quality services aimed at early development and learning, so they would reach their full potential and become active and productive members of society. Aiming to increase access to ECEC, five new facilities were opened in 2013. A special attention is paid to inclusion of children with special educational needs, as outlined in the Strategy for Inclusive Education in Montenegro ⁽³⁾ (2014-2018).

⁽²⁾ <http://www.mpin.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=62424&rTy pe=2&file=Strategija%20i%20pred%C5%A1kolsog%20vaspitanja%20i%20obrazovan ja%20.doc>

⁽³⁾ <http://www.zzs.gov.me/naslovna/inkluyivno>

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	3-6 year olds
Detska gradinka i jasli	19.4
Centar za ran detski razvoj	12.2
Total	31.6

Source: internal records of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (status on 30 September 2014).

(%) Ref. year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	24.4	24.5	29.1	10.2	0.1
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	9.0	94.9	95.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
group	3-4	4-5	6-8	7-9	9-10	nr
	6-8	8-10	12-15	15-18	18-20	20-25

Current reforms

On 27 April 2015, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has adopted the Amendment of the Regulation for the Standards and Norms for the Implementation of the Services in the ECEC Institutions, published on 5 May 2015. The new regulation defines norms regarding premises and infrastructure; provision of furniture, equipment for physical exercises, kitchen and sanitary equipment; as well as norms and nutrition specification for the meals.

Organisation

ECEC, as part of the overall education system of the Republic of Macedonia, has the goal of providing care and education to children from the age of 8 months until they enter primary education.

Most children attend unitary settings (*detska gradinka i jasli*), available for children from 8 months to 6 years. Older children (3-6 year olds) can also attend Centres for Early Childhood Development (*centar za ran detski razvoj*).

The educational part of the activities falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, whereas the care and organisation of the work of the preschool institutions falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the municipalities. The experts from the Bureau for Development of Education are also included in the work of the commissions responsible for the creation of the educational programmes (guidelines) for the preschool institutions.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

Programme for Early Learning based on the Standards for Early Learning and Development present the expectations of children for the entire phase of ECEC.

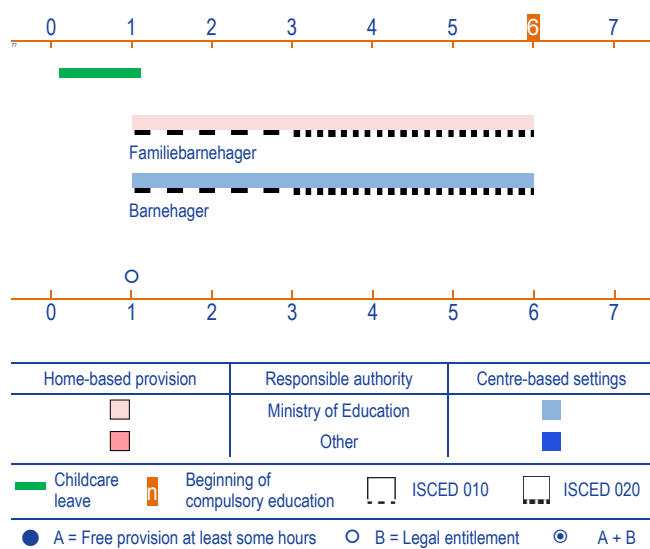
Fees

The monthly fee for full time provision is PPS 59. The fee is reduced in cases of absences.

PPS 1 = MKD 25.3901

Norway

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2014	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
Barnehager	3.3	65.2	88.7	94.6	96.3	97.0
Familiebarnehager	0.3	3.3	2.6	0.9	0.7	0.6

Source: calculations based on BASIL and SSB, 2014/15.

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	95.1	97.2	97.3	0.7	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	(-)	99.8	99.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per staff member	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	9	9	9	18	18	18

Regulations do not refer to group size, but only to the number of children per pedagogical staff working in *barnehager*. In addition, assistants also work in ECEC, but regulations do not take them into account. Statistical evidence shows that the average ratio of kindergarten teachers and assistants to children is 4.9 (BASIL, 2012/13).

1:5 in home-based *familiebarnehager*.

Organisation

The majority of children attend unitary centres (*barnehager*), which are under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. In addition, there are also family kindergartens (*familiebarnehager*) that provide early childhood education and care in a home-based environment. Both centre-based and home-based ECEC is regulated by the Kindergarten Act. Alongside the provision represented in the diagram, there are also open kindergartens (*åpne barnehager*), which are regulated, to a limited degree, by the above act and are intended for children who for some reason do not use ordinary kindergarten provision. From age 1, children are legally entitled to publicly subsidised provision.

Primary education starts at age 6.

Educational guidelines

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergarten, as well as various guidance booklets on specific themes (e.g. multiculturalism, children's agency and participation) cover the entire ECEC age range, centre-based and home-based provision.

Fees

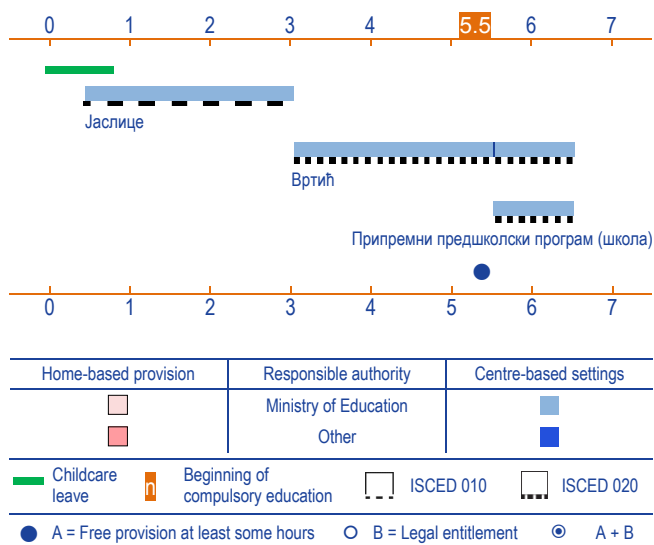
The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector. The maximum monthly fee is capped to PPS 214 (food costs are decided at local level). This corresponds to the most commonly paid fee.

PPS 1 = NOK 12.0486

No current reforms

Serbia

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2013	Under 3	4 year-olds	3 to 7 year-olds	ППП
Total	15.9	49.7	58.1	92.7

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

Group size regulations

Maximum number of children per group	Under 1	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	7	12	16	20	24	26

Fees

The monthly price for ECEC participation is around PPS 239, but it is subsidized by the state, so the fee for parents ranges from PPS 11 to PPS 178, depending on the family income and other factors. Pre-school preparatory programme (ППП) is free for children who participate in it by 4 hours per day, while full day participation is subject to an additional fee – PPS 143 or less, according to the family situation.

PPS 1 = RSD 54.3923

Organisation

ECEC is intended for children from 6 months to 6½ years of age, when they start their primary education. ECEC consists of three levels, determined by the age of children: *јаслице* (nursery) for children from 6 months to 3 years of age, *вртић* (kindergarten) for children from 3 to 5½ years of age and a *припремни предшколски програм (ППП)* (pre-school preparatory programme), which takes place either in ECEC settings (*вртић*) or in schools (*школа*).

Nursery and kindergarten are optional and subject to parents' decision. The programme consists of general half-day or whole-day long educational activities and optional specialized programmes, as determined by the interests of children and their parents, ECEC institutional capacities and resources provided by local authorities.

Pre-school preparatory programme is mandatory for all children. It lasts at least nine months, 4 hours per day. Children admitted to this programme must not be younger than 5½ or older than 6½ years of age at the beginning of the school year they are about to attend.

The entire phase of ECEC falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

Educational guidelines

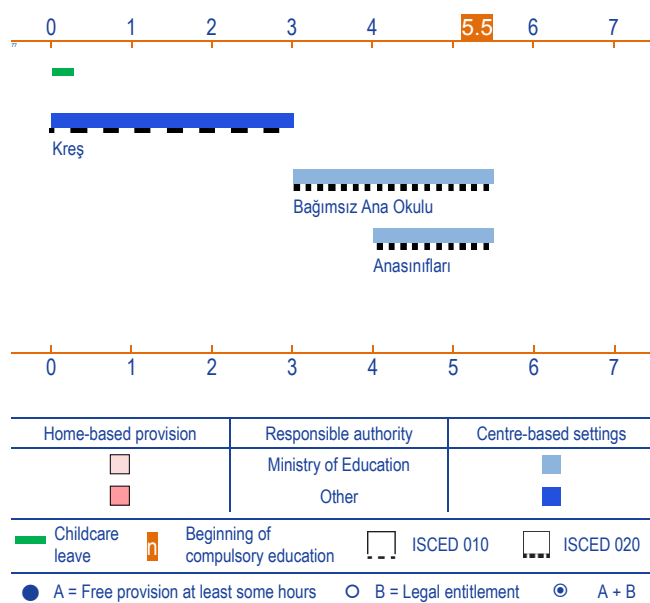
The Regulations on pre-primary programme fundamentals provide directions for the organization of educational programmes and methods of work with children for the entire phase of ECEC.

Alternative ECEC methods, such as Waldorf and Montessori, are available in private ECEC institutions, while teachers in public institutions may use these methods as part of their programmes.

No current reforms

Turkey

Diagram



Participation rates

(%) Reference year 2012	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds	6 year-olds	7 year-olds
ISCED 0	4.6	19.2	69.5	(-)	(-)
ISCED 1	(-)	(-)	0.0	96.1	100.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015).

In the beginning of the 2014/15 school year, the enrolment rate of 5-year olds in ISCED 0 and ISCED 1 was 61.7 % (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2015).

Group size regulations

Only group size for 3-6 year olds is regulated and set at maximum 20 children.

Organisation

Up to age 3, children can attend crèche and day-care centres (*Kreş*), which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. From age 3 to 5½ years, children attend *Bağımsız Ana Okulu*. In addition, children aged between 4 and 5½ can also attend pre-primary classes (*Anasınıfları*) in primary schools. Both *Bağımsız Ana Okulu* and *Anasınıfları* fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education – the General Directorate of Basic Education.

Primary education starts at age 5½.

Educational guidelines

The Education Program for 0-36 months-old children and The Pre-School Education Program for 3-6 years old are present.

Fees

No change/no new data since 2012/13. The same regulations apply for the entire ECEC sector; the minimum monthly fee is PPS 10, while maximum fee is capped to PPS 205 (food included).

PPS 1 = TRY 1.46236

No current reforms

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Early Childhood Education and Care Systems in Europe: National Information Sheets – 2014/15

The national information sheets provide a concise overview of the key features of early childhood education and care systems in Europe.

All the EU Member States as well as most other countries participating in the Eurydice network are covered. The reference year is 2014/15.

For each country, a diagram shows the main elements of the organisation of the national system in early childhood education and care with a short description of the main types of provision. There is also information on access issues such as age range for place guarantee and participation rates and fees, on quality issues such as group size regulations and education guidelines, and on current reforms.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>.

