



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – BELGIUM (FRENCH SPEAKING COMMUNITY)

1. ACCESS, PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

Key principles

1.1 Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children.

1.2 Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.




Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national policy and legislation that gives the right to all children, without exception, from at least 3 years onwards, to attend mainstream Early Childhood Education (ECE)?</p> <p>2. Is there support available to enable every child to attend ECE?</p> <p>3. Is there a period of compulsory ECE before school starts?</p> <p>4. Are arrangements in place for transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education for all children?</p> <p>5. Is inclusion stated as a goal of ECE provision?</p>	<p>In the French-speaking community of Belgium, also known as the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (FWB), every child has the right to enrol in and attend school from the age of two and a half, as stated in the circular resolution 5331 of 30 June 2015:</p> <p>‘The parents or legal guardians can register a child in pre-primary school at any time during the school year, provided they have reached the age of two and a half.’</p> <p>According to the same resolution, and to Article 8 of the Royal Decree of 20 August 1957 on the co-ordination of laws on primary education, parents also have the right to choose the school their children will attend: ‘The parents or legal guardians are free to send their children to the school of their choice and it is forbidden to impose a school upon them that is not their choice.’</p> <p>In schools run by FWB, basic education is free and available to everyone. Other institutions (run by cities, municipalities, religious communities or other bodies) must comply with certain rules which are set in decrees and circular resolutions. The non-payment of costs may not constitute refusal of registration, expulsion or any other punishment for the learner.</p> <p>In FWB, given that school attendance is free to children over 2.5 years old, a large number of children enrol and attend school (children under 2.5 pay to attend). Surveys have shown that 95% of children aged 5 attend school</p>





Guiding questions	Country response
<p>Is there a policy making ECE accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. Is there a policy that obliges mainstream publicly funded ECE to make adaptations so that all children can attend and participate? Please describe</p>	<p>daily.</p> <p>Schools in FWB serving children from less advantaged socio-cultural environments receive additional funding and these children play a major part in the calculations. According to chapter 34 of circular resolution 5331 of 30 June 2015, every learner counts as 1, with the exception of the following, who represent a ratio of 1.5. If the total of the following counted as 1.5 is not an integer, it is rounded to the next whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– learners attending a school attached to a centre run or recognised by ONE (National Children's Office), or those who are annexed to a home for children whose parents have no fixed residence, or those who are placed in a home for children by a court;– learners placed in a structure or host family by a youth court or a youth counsellor in Belgium, or a boarding school for children whose parents have no fixed residence which is run or recognised by ONE;– newly arrived learners (on their first day of enrolment in a school run or subsidised by FWB. <p>In FWB, the aims of pre-primary education (for children aged 2.5–4) are clearly defined in this extract from article 12 of the decree of 24 July 1997:</p> <p>‘Pre-primary education follows all the objectives laid down in Article 6 and is specifically designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– develop the child’s own self-awareness and self-expression, promoted through creative activities;– develop social skills;– develop cognitive, social, emotional and psychomotor learning;– identify children’s difficulties and disabilities and provide necessary rehabilitation. <p>If learning difficulties are detected through observations, individualised support and rehabilitation are implemented</p>



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	<p>within the institution, in partnership with PMS (psychological, medical and social attachés in schools) if relevant, and in the manner defined by the government.’</p> <p>Other types of assistance are also possible, based on specific requests from schools. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obtaining the funding for a nursery nurse (see, for example, Circular 5162, 18 February 2015); – Obtaining the help of extra officials such as childcare assistants (vocational rehabilitation programme, see Circular 5308, 22 June 2015); – Obtaining a partnership with a specialist teaching institution (Circular 5262 and 5263, May 2015); – Obtaining specific assistance connected to the learners’ socio-economic background (see the Decree of 30 April 2009).
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What percentage of children attend mainstream ECE provision at ages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years • 4 years • 5 years (if not primary) • 6 years (if not primary)? <p>2. What are the main factors preventing some children from accessing mainstream ECE?</p> <p>3. Are there children</p>	<p>As mentioned above, pre-primary education is very popular for cost reasons but also due to their quality of supervision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 95.9% of children under 3; – 96.4% of children under 4; – 95.7% of children under 5 (some 5 year old children have already registered in primary education, a few others attend special schools based on a proven disability, such as deafness, blindness, etc.) <p>(Statistics FWB, 2013).</p> <p>In FWB, parents who wish to can educate their children at home without attending recognised schools. These children must be reported and an evaluation test of acquired skills occurs at 8, 10, 12 and 14 years of age. These children are usually not enrolled in pre-primary education.</p> <p>The FWB also runs specialist education for children with specific disorders, such as moderate to severe intellectual</p>

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<p>who attend special ECE settings? Please provide data if available.</p> <p>4. Describe arrangements for inter-service collaboration to enable children's attendance and participation?</p> <p>5. What proportion of children is formally identified as having additional needs at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years • 4 years • 5 years • 6 years 	<p>disabilities, personality disorders, physical disabilities, visual impairment or hearing impairments.</p>  <p>Figure 1. Special Education in Wallonia-Brussels Brochure, 2012</p> <p>There is a 20-page document which outlines this type of education, its organisation and structures. It can be found on the publications pages of the FWB education website.</p> <p>However, not many of these specialist schools have pre-primary classes and sometimes parents find it difficult to recognise or accept disability or prefer to keep their child in ordinary mainstream environment, and as such, most children attend mainstream schools. Teachers are then assisted by an inclusion system, through the forms of assistance mentioned above, by PMS services and by external specialists who work in schools.</p>  <p>Figure 2. At the School of Your Choice with a Disability</p> <p>www.x-fragile.be/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/a-l'école-de-ton-choix-avec-un-handicap.pdf</p>  <p>Figure 3. School Family: Treasures to Discover! Meetings between Parents and Teachers</p>

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	<p>Brochures such as the above are made available in public places to inform parents.</p> <p>Gifted children are also welcome in mainstream pre-primary schools, where teachers plan in order to meet their intellectual and social needs. Brochures for teachers are regularly published by various FWB agencies:</p>  <p>Figure 4. Teaching learners who do not master the language of instruction – Information brochure and learning sequences</p>  <p>Figure 5. Teaching high-potential learners – information leaflet</p>



2. WORKFORCE

Key principles

2.1. Well-qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role.

2.2. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership that creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and co-operation with parents.



Figure 6. Teaching Learners with Learning Disabilities

There are no statistics corresponding to the formal identification of children with disabilities in FWB; it is considered that any social, physical, mental, learning or developmental difficulties can be reduced through the work carried out in pre-primary education (see aforementioned tasks decree). If problems are diagnosed by PMS centres, they are categorised and listed to produce encrypted data.

In 2011–2012, 0.7% of pre-primary age children were enrolled in special education.

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<p>Legislation and policy</p> <p>1. What level of qualification is required to work in ECE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. What regulation is there for staff-child ratios in ECE?</p> <p>3. What provision is there for additional staffing to support children with diverse and additional needs?</p>	<p>General staff governing framework:</p> <p>In pre-primary classes caring for children 2.5 to 6 years of age, two types of staff are present: teachers (pre-primary teaching bachelor’s degree) and childcare assistants.</p> <p>Pre-primary teachers must pass the ‘pre-primary’ section of the higher level Teacher Education degree. This is a full-time, 3-year degree. The degree includes theoretical and practical training periods.</p> <p>Childcare assistants are made up of staff with widely varying backgrounds, some with childcare training and some with no related qualifications. The assistants provide support to the class teacher, more often in classes for younger children or classes with high numbers of children. The presence of these assistants is therefore very variable.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response																										
<p>4. Does the initial training of staff include understanding and supporting children with diverse and additional needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>5. Does initial training include preparation for working in partnership with families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>6. Is there a policy for in-service training? Does it cover inclusive education skills?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? 	<p>In addition, staff from Psycho, Medical and Social Centres (PMS) work with educational teams. The PMS are composed of multidisciplinary teams (psychological advisers, paramedics, social workers, etc.) who join forces to achieve the centre’s aims. Their work is confidential and does not involve any financial intervention.</p> <p>In mainstream education the number of teachers in a school is related to the number of mainstream learners enrolled in the institution. This figure is calculated at different times of the year to allow for any staff adjustment that is required.</p> <p>Table 1 shows the number of teachers allocated according to the number of children enrolled.</p> <p>Table 1. Enseignement.be: Decree ‘Missions’ Teacher Ratios – Special Education</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="560 1032 1426 2049"> <thead> <tr> <th>Number of children enrolled</th> <th>Number of teachers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Up to 19</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20–25</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26–39</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40–45</td> <td>2.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46–63</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>64–70</td> <td>3.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>71–86</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>87–94</td> <td>4.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>95–109</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>110–119</td> <td>5.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>120–130</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>131–141</td> <td>6.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Number of children enrolled	Number of teachers	Up to 19	1	20–25	1.5	26–39	2	40–45	2.5	46–63	3	64–70	3.5	71–86	4	87–94	4.5	95–109	5	110–119	5.5	120–130	6	131–141	6.5
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	142–153	7																											
	and so on for each 10 learners	Etc.																											
	<p>It is important to remember that children undergoing specific types of treatment may be enrolled in special schools (although at pre-primary age, inclusion in mainstream education is prioritised).</p> <p>In these schools there are ‘paramedics and complete psychological and social education teams, in order to allow children to continue to follow the curriculum according to their needs and potential. Specialist basic education is organised by type and level of maturity, based on learners’ needs.’</p> <p>Table 2 lists the eight types of education.</p> <p>Table 2. Education types</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="560 1106 1422 1989"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Pre-primary level</th> <th>For children with</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>No</td> <td>mild learning disabilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>moderate to severe learning disabilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>behavioural disorders</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>cerebral palsy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>learners who are in hospital or recovering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>visual impairments</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>hearing impairments</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>No</td> <td>learning disorders</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The care of children enrolled in special education is</p>		Type	Pre-primary level	For children with	1	No	mild learning disabilities	2	Yes	moderate to severe learning disabilities	3	Yes	behavioural disorders	4	Yes	cerebral palsy	5	Yes	learners who are in hospital or recovering	6	Yes	visual impairments	7	Yes	hearing impairments	8	No	learning disorders
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	<p>governed by other standards that allow more learner support services.</p> <p>By using an allocation method similar to that used in mainstream education, special education facilities ensure sufficient staff ratios which are adapted to the specific needs of the children attending the school.</p> <p>As stated in the FWB decree, the following are the guide numbers of staff per number of children, according to the education types listed above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– education types 1 and 8: 9 staff for up to 49 learners, 10 staff for 50 learners or more;– education types 2, 3 and 4: 6 staff for up to 34 learners, 7 staff for 35 learners or more;– education type 5, in specific schools for sick children: 9 staff for up to 49 learners, 10 staff for 50 learners or more;– education type 5, in hospitals or recognised medical institutions: 6 staff for up to 34 learners, 7 staff for 35 learners or more;– education types 6 and 7: 5 staff for up to 34 learners, 6 staff for 35 learners or more. <p>www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28737_022.pdf</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=25191&navi=404</p> <p>The inclusion of children with special needs:</p> <p>As stated in question 1, in FWB there are different options available to children with special educational needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– inclusion of children with special needs within mainstream pre-primary education: <p>‘Inclusion enables learners with special needs enrolled in primary or secondary special education to temporarily (for parts of a year), permanently (for the entire year), partially (some courses) or totally (all courses) take part in mainstream classes.’</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>Specialists participate in the classes that receive the children with special needs. The framework is governed by specific standards and is increasingly popular with schools, learners and families.</p> <p>Inclusion in mainstream education is facilitated by support from the specialist educators (primary school teacher, speech therapist, etc.). It is based on a protocol that unites the psychological, medical and social departments and both educational institutions, as well as parents and learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– registration of children with severe physical or learning disabilities who need specific attention or specialist equipment in special education: <p>As detailed above, these kinds of specialist institutions work with young children with hearing loss, visual impairments, significant physical disabilities, emotional or personality disorders, moderate or severe intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>A multidisciplinary team (teacher, speech therapist, physiotherapist, nurse, etc.) is allocated to children who need it. An individual education plan (IEP) is implemented by the team to ensure the best conditions for children’s learning and development.</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/download.php?do_id=9288&do_check=</p> <p>Initial teacher training:</p> <p>Initial teacher training is relatively short in Belgium, consisting of 3 years of higher education. The organisation and objectives of training are widely described in the governing decree and available on the website enseignement.be.</p> <p>www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/25501_003.pdf</p> <p>Student teachers are required to develop 13 major skills during their training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Maintain up-to-date knowledge of human sciences



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>to allow accurate interpretation of class and school situations and to better adapt education practice to the needs of individual children;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Maintain effective partnerships with the institution, colleagues and parents;– Be informed about their role within the school system and pursue the profession as defined by legal reference texts;– Master the disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge that justifies the educational activity;– Master teaching discipline which guides pedagogical action;– Demonstrate the importance of culture to awaken learners' interest in the cultural world;– Develop relational skills related to the requirements of the profession;– Measure the ethical issues related to daily practice;– Work as a member of the school team;– Develop, test, evaluate and regulate teaching methods;– Maintain a critical and autonomous relationship with past and future scientific knowledge;– Plan, manage and evaluate learning situations;– Reflect on their practice and organise continuing training. <p>These 13 skills indicate the knowledge that student teachers must master and their complexities. These skills and the need for professional practice are at the heart of the decree.</p> <p>Article 9 states that pedagogical knowledge is acquired through various learning activities (courses), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– general pedagogy;



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – evaluation of learning; – critical study of major educational trends; – psychology of learning; – differentiation and detection of learning difficulties and their remediation. <p>These points show the importance placed on the management of children’s individual and specific needs in initial teacher training.</p> <p>Article 13 states that in mainstream pre-primary teacher training, an optional, 15-hour special education information module can be arranged, consisting of information on the organisation and functioning of special education and educational concepts tailored to learners with special needs. Students in mainstream pre-primary and primary settings use this knowledge in their special education placements.</p> <p>Collaboration with families is at the heart of the second ‘high competence’ skill defined by the decree. Article 4 states that training will include 120 hours devoted to the appropriation of socio-affective and relational knowledge. Educational activities in this training area enable students to use necessary skills to implement a positive educational community around the child (for example, psychology of relationships and communication, approach theory and the practice of cultural diversity).</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What proportion of staff has the required qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. Please describe any proposed changes to</p>	<p>The implementation of described frameworks:</p> <p>In FWB all pre-primary teaching staff have the required qualification, which is the first condition of employment.</p> <p>The frameworks are implemented and respected.</p> <p>FWB Inspection Services and the various authorities which run schools ensure the implementation of standards and specific regulations. System checks are carried out in each school to ensure the proper management of registration records and the presence of children.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>the required qualifications.</p> <p>3. Describe the role of leaders of ECE settings in ensuring inclusive practice?</p> <p>4. Provide any data on staff–child ratio.</p> <p>5. Please describe the range of specialist support that is available and how it is organised?</p> <p>6. How do regular and support staff collaborate in IECE settings?</p> <p>7. Describe the role of support assistants in the ECE setting?</p>	<p>A reform of initial teacher training:</p> <p>As part of the Declaration of Community Policy 2009–2014, the Government has committed to undertake a reform of initial teacher training, based on opinions and needs expressed by stakeholders. Ultimately, given the requirements of the trade, this overhaul will involve lengthening the duration of study to 5 years, a gradual strengthening of teacher training, integrating new processes and greater collaboration with employed teachers.</p> <p>The guidance note on initial teacher education states: ‘The weaknesses of our education system are well known and, for several years, far-reaching reforms have emerged (school success, assignments, school contracts, driving education, etc.) to build quality education for all. So far, none of these reforms has integrated the issue of initial teacher training, despite it being an essential part of any process of qualitative improvement of our school system. Rethinking initial teacher training is essential in the quest for excellence and a better quality of education for all.’</p> <p>The text also specifies that ‘The initial teacher training reform should be considered in three complementary and interdependent areas. These must be pursued simultaneously and inseparably, even if they are planned and implemented at different times:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. There must be a gradual strengthening of the initial training of all teachers and the continual training of trainers to improve standards;2. There must be an update or redefinition of the content of initial training in terms of teaching careers so that they contribute more to the development of a just, democratic and free school for all, and take better notice of the social and institutional context, the concrete conditions of everyday work in schools and training institutions;3. Initial training must be guided towards a new




Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>organisational structure, revolving around initial teacher education and the further education of trainers, in line with the structure of the education system and reforming the higher educational landscape.'</p> <p>This complete revision of initial teacher training is intended to respond to and support the specific needs of each child. The site is vast and complex, but a redesign is in progress:</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26829&navi=3430&rank_page=26829</p>

3. CURRICULUM



Key principles

3.1. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values and approaches that enable children to reach their full potential in a holistic way.

3.2. A curriculum that requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p>Legislation and policy</p> <p>1. Is there a national ECE curriculum for <i>all</i> children?</p> <p>2. Does it include skills and competences to be achieved by children?</p> <p>3. Describe how the curriculum facilitates inclusion?</p> <p>4. Is the use of new technologies included in the curriculum?</p> <p>5. Is the curriculum adaptable to meet the needs of all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in the adaptation of the curriculum to individual children?</p> <p>7. Is there awareness of the impact of labelling on children's participation</p>	<p>Article 12 of the decree of 24 July 1997 specifies the kindergarten aims.</p> <p>In addition, the FWB defines the core skills, the basic skills for all networks, schools and classes to acquire. 'Approved unanimously by the democratic parties in the Parliament of the French Community, the Socles are the basic contract between the school and society.'</p>  <p>Figure 7. Core skills</p> <p>This document outlines the definition of competence in the three main stages of compulsory education: entry to the second primary year, the 3rd to the 6th year of primary school and the first two years of secondary education. Some skills must be certified by the end of the first stage.</p> <p>To further implement the guidelines, 'all schools must follow the curriculum approved by the Minister.'</p> <p>The curricula are repositories 'of mandatory or optional learning situations and content and methodological guidance that defines the organisation required to achieve the competencies set by the government for a year, a degree or a cycle.'</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=25279&navi=297</p>



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	<p>To foster coherent, effective team work, the FWB publishes many educational tools for teachers. Some examples:</p>  <p>Figure 8. Growing up in kindergarten</p> <p>This document (20 pages), published for the first time in 1999, was revised and updated in 2007 by a group of inspectors. As the name suggests, this publication is for all members of teaching staff in nursery education.</p>  <p>Figure 9. Psycho-motor living in kindergarten, 2009</p> <p>This document (40 pages) is a continuation of <i>Growing up in kindergarten</i>. It was produced by a group of inspectors and addresses all members of teaching staff in nursery education.</p> <p>Starting to write in kindergarten, 2014</p> <p>A 136-page document written at the end of the subsidised educational research by the Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium especially for teachers of third kindergarten classes. After a theoretical introduction, the brochure offers a collection of activities to be conducted in the classroom as well as games that can be used by parents and families.</p> <p>Starting mathematics in kindergarten – Support for Classroom Practice, 2012</p> <p>A 150-page document for teachers of third kindergarten classes. After a theoretical introduction, the brochure offers a collection of activities to be conducted in the classroom as well as games that can be used by parents and families.</p> <p>FWB develops an IEP (Individual Education Plan) specific to each child who requires from specific treatment (inclusive</p>



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	<p>or specialist education).</p> <p>In its brochure entitled Special education in Wallonia-Brussels, the FWB states: ‘The IEP combines educational, paramedical, social and psychological factors and lists specific objectives for the learner. This document is specific to each learner and is developed by the Class Council, assisted by the agency responsible for the guidance of learners. The IEP is adjusted at each assessment of the learner’s progress and results throughout their education.’</p> <p>In special education, four degrees of maturity were determined. ‘These levels correspond to the stages of development of the learner. The transition from one level of maturity to another is related to the acquisition of specific skills and can be done at any time of the school year.’</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/download.php?do_id=9288&do_check=</p> <p>These degrees of maturity allow teaching staff to identify priority areas of work required. They are ‘for all types of education, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– the teaching of type 2 levels of pre-primary learning, awareness of school learning, control and development of learning and functional use of learning;– the type of education 2: levels of acquisition of autonomy and socialisation, levels of pre-primary learning, awakening early school learning (initiation) and deepening.’ <p>Curriculum adaptation for individual needs:</p> <p>The work of the IEP is interesting in that it considers the specific needs of each child. The multidisciplinary, longitudinal nature of this individual programme combines multiple aspects of children’s needs. It is also a useful tool for dialogue with families.</p> <p>Within mainstream education, the learner’s record</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>(produced by the educational team which follows the child's education) should be an individualised tool for monitoring children's learning.</p> <p>Collaboration with CPMS is indispensable in the management of each specific need. Dialogue with families is at the heart of the meetings that allow the construction of the IEP.</p> <p>Innovative methods to serve all learners:</p> <p>For many years, the FWB (in collaboration with universities) has highlighted educational mechanisms that stigmatise the most vulnerable children in school and cause inactivity or repetition.</p> <p>There are moves across the FWB to emphasise the importance of changing the teacher's position to fight against school failures. With this aim, the <i>Décolâge</i> community is available to staff teams and invites children and all adults involved in building children's futures to engage in a dynamic promotion of the potential of every learner, in order to lead all to success.</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26594&navi=3336</p> <p>Educational teams, head teachers, members of the General Inspection Service, education consultants, directors and agents of CPMS, teacher trainers, members of the administration, political actors and civil society are all committed to a process of positive dynamism.</p> <p>As stated in its brochure, <i>Décolâge</i> wants to represent 'inclusive dynamics.'</p> <p>'It focuses its attention and action on the learner's needs. Through a positive approach to the learner's potential, <i>Décolâge</i> determines a natural management of heterogeneous classes. The teacher's 'power of action' is an essential dimension in the search for credible alternatives in order to reduce class retention and repetition. In close collaboration with PMS, <i>Décolâge</i> centres should allow and support access to professional power by offering</p>




Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>information and practical resources, and also by promoting mechanisms for collaboration and co-operation at multiple levels of the education system.’ From: www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26594</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of children from age 3 years? 2. What arrangements are there for the screening of children’s functioning? 3. Is children's engagement and participation in ECE activities monitored? 4. How do ECE settings reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children? 5. How do staff adapt (prepare and present) the curriculum and the learning activities to make them accessible to all children? 6. How are parents involved in this process? 7. How are children 	<p>Education indicators have long indicated a disproportionate growth in class repetition and retention rates. These trends mainly concerned primary education and as such, kindergartens were also highly likely to be included.</p> <p>The FWB is aware of this major problem that stigmatises weaker learners. It has subsidised research on grade retention in kindergarten and proved ineffective. The research team from the University of Liège state in their latest review article that, ‘every year in the French Community of Belgium, about one in twenty learners start primary school a year late after being held back in kindergarten, yet nursery education is not compulsory. According to those who make decisions to retain children, they are often considered immature, and as such would be better prepared for entry into primary education a year later. As part of an education policy that focuses on promoting school success, the legitimacy of this practice and its actual ins and outs is questionable. As for repetition, it is necessary to question the effectiveness of retaining children in kindergarten, analyse the phenomenon and examine how it is possible to sensitise teachers.’ (<i>Maintien et redoublement en début de scolarité</i>, Chenu, F., Dupont, V., Lejong, M., Staelens, V. & Grisay, A. Département Éducation et Formation Université de Liège: www.enseignement.be/download.php?do_id=9101&do_ch_eck).</p> <p>The Enseignement.be site contains many articles and tools in this regard. These unfair practices are finally being confronted, but it will be difficult as the habits and the ‘culture of failure’ are strongly anchored.</p> <p>A survey of teachers in the FWB states that ‘of over 719 teachers from kindergarten 3rd, only 11 declare themselves clearly opposed to the practice of retention. Others believe</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>themselves involved in this process?</p> <p>8. How is ICT used to overcome barriers to participation and learning?</p> <p>9. What provisions are there for meeting children's additional needs?</p> <p>10. How is the environment adapted to the needs of all children?</p>	<p>that keeping a child in the third year of kindergarten is normal and well-intentioned.'</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26691</p> <p>The Federation states the reasons for the ineffectiveness of repetition: 'repetition does not specifically target the difficulties of the learner and therefore encourages the conditions that lead to failure. In addition, the problems of learners who repeat are not identified and as such their failures tend to be blamed on external causes, such as parental separation, moving house, etc. It is therefore difficult to improve and the repetition of a year is not only an inefficient and inappropriate solution with limited effect on short-term learning, but is essentially a counter-productive practice in terms of its impact on self-confidence and increased medium and long-term risk of dropping out of school. This was firmly confirmed in the most reliable studies on retention and teaching based on repetition.' www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26691</p> <p>Regarding the repetition rate, it is important to emphasise that in FWB, research shows that certain characteristics tip the balance in retention and repetition, leading to the conclusion that everyone is not equal with respect to retention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– boys are kept back more often than girls;– children born late in the calendar year are retained more often than others;– children from low socio-economic backgrounds are retained more than others. <p>The influence of socio-economic environment can be enhanced by what is called an aggregation effect: being disadvantaged among the disadvantaged increases the risk of being retained. A child from a working environment is more likely to be retained if he lives Hainaut (where there is a high concentration of learners like him) than if he lives in Luxembourg. The same effect is observed on the scale of implantation or establishment.'</p>



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	<p>All the factors that increase the risk of being retained combine and it is possible to calculate the risk in relation to the retention rate at around 4% of the entire population.</p> <p>According to some data, a boy born at the end of the calendar year and among the 25% of learners living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods has a 9% risk of being retained. If, in addition, it is not European, lives Hainaut and attends a small school, the risk increases to 19%. In contrast, a girl born in January, February or March, among the 25% of learners living in the most affluent neighbourhoods only encounters a risk of 0.5% of being retained.' www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26691</p> <p>Aware of the challenges, policies and education officials are working on many steps and innovative features, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– work, tools and training conducted within the <i>Décolâge</i> community for the implementation of inclusive education;– an overhaul of initial teacher training;– a reform of the basic education ‘Pact for Education Excellence’;– the construction of ‘Pass Inclusion’;– collaboration with the King Baudouin Foundation in the development of recommendations for the overhaul of initial teacher education and in the community <i>Décolâge</i> setting.  <p>Figure 10. Pre-primary education: a chance to seize</p> <p>The initial training of pre-primary teachers is a crucial lever</p>



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	<p>for action to make kindergartens a great tool for inclusion and in the fight against school failure it potentially represents. www.kbs-frb.be/fr/Activities/Publications/2016/20160209ND</p> <p>Beyond the encouraged educational measures, in the Decree of 3 June 2015 the government approved a programme which provides important new measures for stakeholders in the education system.</p> <p>It was decided that ‘authorisation of retention may be granted only for exceptional reasons in a manner determined by the government and in the opinion of the head teacher and relevant PMS centre.’</p> <p>If permission is denied, parents can still apply for retention in 3rd kindergarten with the agreement of the organising authority in subsidised education, or the school head in formal education, but, in this case, the child is not considered in the calculation of management or operating grants. www.joellemilquet.be/2015/06/nouvelles-mesures-du-decret-programme-du-3-juin-2015/</p>



4. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Key principles

4.1. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

4.2. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

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<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What standards are in place for ensuring the quality of ECE at national level?</p> <p>2. Describe the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of ECE provision?</p> <p>3. How is the participation of all children reflected in the national quality standards for ECE?</p> <p>4. How does national policy identify and address inequalities in participation in ECE?</p> <p>5. How does research inform policy and practice in ECE?</p>	<p>The school system is run by FWB. This is an unusual model, as in many countries there are both state and private education. Since 1959 in Belgium, and subsequently in FWB, private schools receive the same subsidy as schools run by the Ministry. These schools must meet certain criteria that are evaluated by the inspectorate in order to receive subsidies.</p> <p>In 2013, 7.3% of children enrolled in kindergarten attended a school run by FWB, 52.7% attended an offshoot of a school run by the town administration and 40% attended free schools run by groups of people who do not depend on an administration, such as denominational schools (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) or other non-religious schools (Freinet school, Decroly, etc.). The state has left the management of basic schools to the organising authorities.</p> <p>The schools that are not organised by the FWB have to meet the conditions of the law of 29 May 1959, Article 24 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – adopt a recognised structure; – respect a programme that meets legal requirements; – comply with the directives of the Missions Decree of 24 July 1997; – have teaching materials and school equipment to meet pedagogical needs; – submit to the control of inspections.



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>Although FWB evaluates through inspections, it ensures quality education in kindergartens.</p> <p>Regarding the inspection, the Decree of 3 August 1977 specifies that the inspection services are responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– assessment and control of the level of studies skills, Socles;– establishing continuity in the provision of good learning;– the practice of formative assessment and differentiation;– the application of programmes;– respect for free education;– verifying and assessing the consistency of practices (including evaluations of practices)– verifying and assessing the quality of teaching materials and school equipment;– evaluating the needs and decisions made by the school or mid-career training agents;– the implementation of differentiated pedagogical aspects of mentoring projects (for disadvantaged public schools);– denouncing possible segregation mechanisms. <p>Schools have a duty to write programmes that are in line with the skills bases (Decree of 26 April 1999, downloadable at enseignement.be). Most schools that are not run by the FWB have, over time, grouped into networks that have written programmes for their institutions.</p> <p>Various major programmes co-exist today in FWB (see enseignement.be approved programmes) which have high quality content supplied by evaluated schools which is approved by the authorities.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response						
	<p>If a school is deemed insufficient, its organising authority (city, FWB, private group, etc.) alters its resources. Sometimes this is to invest in the schools, in teacher training, equipment, etc. and sometimes it is to demand more professionalism, to revise class loads, to seek help from its network to solve a relational, educational or leadership problem. The inspection which gave a reserved or negative opinion about the quality of education carries out a monitoring visit in the following months. If the school – and therefore the organising authority – has not made the required changes and improvements, it is deprived of operating grants.</p> <p><i>En FWB, les services d’inspection sont assurés par des enseignants ayant fonctionné dans les niveaux et spécialités qu’ils inspectent et ayant obtenu le grade d’inspecteur par la réussite d’épreuves organisées par l’administration centrale.</i></p> <p>The FWB provides political information to parents and public through brochures published regularly.</p> <p>The vast majority of children attend nursery school from 2½ years of age and FWB provides for increased observation plans throughout the year: the 11th school day after the autumn holidays, the 11th school day after the winter holidays, the 11th school day after the February/March holidays and the 11th school day after spring break.</p> <p>The number of children entrusted to a teacher strongly supports the establishment of a quality education, to allow a focus on individual development:</p> <p>Table 3. Number of employees per learner</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="592 1783 1398 2018"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="592 1783 995 1861">Learners</th> <th data-bbox="995 1783 1398 1861">Employees</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="592 1861 995 1939">6–19</td> <td data-bbox="995 1861 1398 1939">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="592 1939 995 2018">20–25</td> <td data-bbox="995 1939 1398 2018">1.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Learners	Employees	6–19	1	20–25	1.5
Learners	Employees						
6–19	1						
20–25	1.5						



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	26–39	2
	40–45	2.5
	46–63	3
	64–70	3.5
	71–86	4
	87–94	4.5
	95–109	5
	110–119	5.5
	120–130	6
	131–141	6.5
	142–153	7
	154–165	7.5
	166–176	8
	177–188	8.5
	189–201	9
	202–212	9.5
	213–223	10
	224–234	10.5
and so on for each 10 learners	Etc.	
<p>Despite the fact that nearly all children attend school from two and a half years of age, the FWB is committed to ensuring that the poorest of them regularly attend school. Teachers, head teachers and psychological, medical and</p>		



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	<p>social services work together with the aim of convincing those parents that are reluctant to bring their children to school.</p> <p>There are also times where more coercive intervention is needed in severe cases where the child is believed to be in danger, but education is not mandatory before 6 years of age.</p> <p>There is a kind of partnership between the Ministry and universities through the Steering Committee. The latter may request studies are carried out at any university and it can publish documents produced by researchers. It organises training involving researchers, in place of the research or development assessments commonly produced by inspectors, network representatives, academics, etc.</p> <p>www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24768 or www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24727&navi=862</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. How do staff monitor and evaluate the participation and learning of all children?</p> <p>2. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>3. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p>	<p>As noted above, nursery inspection evaluates levels offered in each class and in each school. The inspection also advises the classroom teacher, the teaching staff and management in the school and the organising authority on the general management of facilities.</p> <p>Within the school itself, the management is responsible for the quality of teaching and can therefore assess, advise and direct the teacher or teaching team.</p> <p>In the FWB there is not an official document for assessing a child and so the teacher has to address this problem in the classroom by observing each child at work or play. Observation is individualised and relates to knowledge and know-how, in terms of learning, attention span, socialisation of power, self-image, etc. When a child appears to have difficulties in an area of development (motor, intellectual, social, emotional, etc.) teachers can appeal for help from the PMS (www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24659).</p> <p>Each school system also has educational advisers that can</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>assess and advise teachers, management or schools at the request of the authorities.</p> <p>If a child is noticed to have difficulties, parents are first notified by the teacher, then by management if the problem persists and, if necessary, by the heads of PMS (psychologists).</p> <p>The issue of evaluation is addressed by the person most knowledgeable about the child and as such is the most likely to observe the different facets of the child's personality and assess the child's progress and evolution in time.</p> <p>Professionalism and competence are recognised. By law, the child has the right to grow and learn at their own pace. 'Every educational institution allows each learner to progress at their own pace, practicing formative assessment and differentiated instruction' (Article 15 of the 'Missions' decree of 24 July 1997). Teachers have a duty to make every effort to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 'develop awareness of the child's own potential and promote self-expression through creative activities;– develop socialisation;– develop cognitive, social, emotional and psycho-motor learning;– identify children with difficulties and disabilities and make necessary amendments.' <p>('Missions' decree supra, article 12).</p> <p>In FWB, schools have complete freedom of teaching methods. The only evaluation time organised by the FWB is at two key moments in primary school. Skills levels define the skills to be assessed. Teachers, educational teams and PO are responsible for putting practices in place and the results they achieve.</p> <p>A document for teachers and parents entitled <i>Growing up in kindergarten</i> describes the world of kindergarten (2 and a half to 4 years of age) and shows the freedom of action</p>



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	which must be used by the teacher, whose primary mission is to adapt to the needs of the children in the class in order to advance each one (www.enseignement.be/index.php?do_check=&do_id=1351&page=23827).

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