



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – GERMANY

Important introductory remarks

The purpose of the IECE country questionnaire is to collect data on legislation, policy and practice at a national/federal level in the area of IECE. In the case of Germany, no centralised national policy or databases exist for IECE. This is due to the fact that education is under the jurisdiction of the Land or Länder, which are the sixteen different federal states in Germany. The Länder use various methods of organisation and approaches in the pedagogic promotion of children and juveniles with disabilities. The German government is endeavouring to ensure that inclusive learning becomes the norm in Germany. It is essential that the following particularities are taken into account when working with the data compiled in this report:

- Variety of sources: There is no comprehensive data set available which documents and compares IECE policies and statistics across the Länder. Therefore, this survey presents data from a variety of sources which relates to slightly different samples and different years of data collection.
- Various aspects of inclusion: Across the statistics, resources and projects reported here, the notion of what constitutes inclusion varies. While some data sets focus on children with disabilities, some initiatives and projects focus on language development, while the in-service training data focuses on inclusion in general.

These different aspects and data are reported here as they reflect the different strands and focuses of inclusive early childhood education. The particular aspects of inclusion addressed in a data set or a project are therefore stated throughout the questionnaire.

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.

In Germany, people with disabilities have the same rights as people without disabilities. No person may be disfavoured because of a disability. This is stipulated by the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (Article 3 of the Basic Law). Book VIII of the Social Code (Children and Youth) stipulates that the needs of



children with disabilities are to be respected and that they are to be enabled as far as possible to live life in their family environment. Children with disabilities are to participate in the planning and design of individual assistance in accordance with their age and development. Parents too are to be intensively involved. Furthermore, Books VIII and IX of the Social Code (rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities) explicitly strive to achieve a situation in which children with and without disability can grow up together.

Children with disabilities are to be promoted in their development from the outset and strengthened to experience the diversity of human life, experiencing it as a matter of course and a source of enrichment. A central role is played here by child day-care facilities (German Country Report UN–CRPD 2011, Article 7).

The Federation, the Länder and local authorities have completed a paradigm shift in the last ten years in policy on people with disabilities. Whilst the focus until the end of the 1990s was on the principle of state-provided welfare vis-à-vis people with disabilities, today they are to be supported as far as possible to participate in all areas of society in a self-determined fashion.

To enable this, Germany has a modern, well-performing system of participation which is being continuously refined with the entry into force of Book IX of the Social Code. It is not just the statutory schemes of the Federation and the Länder which play a role in this. Awareness-raising schemes and measures for ascertaining and implementing technological or social innovations from which people with disabilities can benefit have been and continue to be funded and guided by the Federation, the Länder and local authorities (Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties under Article 35 of the Convention, Germany 2013).

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</p>	<p>1. Since 1996, children aged from 3 to 6 have a legal right to a childcare place (UN–CRPD Initial Reports of State Parties Germany 2011).</p> <p>Since 1 August 2013, all children who have reached their first birthday have a legal right to a place in childcare and thereby unlimited access to education, nurturing and care in a nursery or day-care centre, as laid down in Book VIII of the Social Code (SGB VIII), § 24, paragraphs 2 and 3. For some decades now, children in nurseries and day-care centres have been cared for in groups, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. Moreover, since 2005 this has been established in law, in Book VIII of the</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>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? 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>Social Code.</p> <p>2. As an example of support to enable every child to attend ECE, the recent federal programme ‘<i>Sprach-Kitas – ECE Centres Promoting Language Development</i>’ (2016–2019) provides support to 3,500 ECE centres to promote children’s language development at an early age and to reach out more effectively to more marginalised groups. As a reaction to the increased number of asylum seekers, early language and literacy programmes, like ‘<i>Lesestart</i>’, are made available for refugees below the age of 5 (BMBF 2015 b).</p> <p>3. There is no period of compulsory education before the start of primary education.</p> <p>4. There is a national guideline entitled ‘<i>Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen</i>’ (Beschluss der Jugend- und Kultusministerkonferenz 2004) describing the importance of transitions in education. The various educational plans of the Länder (the so-called ‘<i>Bildungs- und Erziehungspläne</i>’) are based on this national guideline. Depending on the particular Land the educational plans can address children aged 0–6, 3–6, or 0–10. Support for children with disabilities and their families as the children transition to ECE or to school is offered by early childhood intervention services.</p> <p>5. All state promotion and assistance schemes are orientated in line with the inclusion perspective, which does not accept any marginalisation. Gender, language, status and segregation barriers are reduced and the circumstances of children and juveniles with disabilities are taken into account in all planning and decision-making processes (disability mainstreaming) (German Country Report UN–CRPD 2011, Article 7).</p> <p>6. Children and juveniles with disabilities can, depending on the type of their disability, receive inclusion assistance benefits in Germany, in accordance with section 53 Book XII of the Social Code or section 35a Book VIII of the Social</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>Code in order to promote their self-determination and equal participation in society and to avoid or alleviate disadvantages (German Country Report UN–CRPD 2011, Article 7).</p> <p>Currently around 87% of children between the age of 3 and 8 who receive inclusion assistance attend an inclusive day-care centre. Correspondingly, the number of inclusive childcare centres rose from 13,414 centres in 2007 to 17,048 centres in 2012. The number of centres for children with disabilities fell accordingly, from 346 to 318 in the same time period. Around a third of all childcare centres across Germany – approximately 52,000 – are inclusive (German Country Review, Initial Reports of State Parties, BMAS, Germany 2014).</p>
<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 who attend special ECE settings? Please provide data if</p>	<p>1. In 2013, 29% of children younger than three years of age attended ECE provision, with a considerable difference between East (82% attendance) and West (42% attendance) Germany. The attendance rate for children aged 3–6 is very high across Germany, with 95% of children aged 4–6 attending ECE provision (<i>Bildungsbericht 2014, German language version, p. 55</i>).</p> <p>2. The provision of ECE places differs considerably among the Länder and municipalities. Density is higher in metropolitan areas and in the eastern Länder (BMFSF 2015). Children from households with a migrant background attend ECE far less often than the average child, and their participation rates are worsening rather than improving. There is a clear need to intensify actions such as implementing measures to promote (migrant) children’s language development and to reach out more effectively to more marginalised groups (European Commission Education and Training Monitor 2015, Germany, page 4).</p> <p>3. In 2014, 76% of children with special needs attended mainstream ECE with inclusive settings and 24 % of children with SEN attended various special ECE settings.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>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>The percentage varies from one Land to the other, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Bavaria: 46.1% inclusive settings, 53.9% SEN settings (school or kindergarten attached to special schools);– Lower Saxony: 55.8% inclusive settings, 43.8% SEN settings (special day-care centres);– North Rhine Westphalia: 83.8% inclusive settings, 9.2% SEN settings (school or kindergarten), 6.9% SEN settings (special day-care centres);– Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Hessen: 100% inclusive settings. <p><i>(Länderreport frühkindliche Bildungssysteme 2015 Bertelsmannstiftung).</i></p> <p>4. Concerning children with special educational needs, most of the day-care centres collaborate with early childhood institutions that offer support provision for children, as well as counselling for staff.</p> <p>5. The percentages of children who received inclusion assistance in day-care centres in 2013 were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 3 years: 1.7%;– 4 years: 2.9%;– 5 years: 3.7%;– 6 years: 5.4%. <p><i>(National Education Report 2014, page 176).</i></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 cooperation with parents.

The Länder are very strict in their regulation of ECE staff. Only staff with qualifications which have been officially recognised (*staatlich anerkannt*) by the federal state are able to work in ECE.

Guiding questions	Country response
<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>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</p>	<p>There are different types of qualification which are officially recognised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – university level qualification with a specialist degree in early childhood (held by 5% of staff); – vocational school level qualification with five years of training (training at <i>Fachschule</i>, leading to a '<i>staatlich anerkannte Erzieherin</i>' qualification, held by 70% of ECE staff); – vocational school level qualification with three years of training (<i>Berufsfachschule</i>, held by 13% of ECE staff). <p>(Autorengruppe Fachschulbarometer 2014, page 14).</p> <p>The specifics of the <i>Erzieherin</i> qualification vary to some extent across the Länder, but in general, qualifications for <i>Erzieherin</i> take place at <i>Fachschulen fuer Sozialpädagogik</i> and follow a national framework (as agreed by KMK 2013). Training at <i>Fachschulen</i> includes at least 2,400 hours of school lessons and at least 2,300 hours of practical training (Viernickel, 2013, page 42). Understanding and supporting children with diverse and additional needs is included in most of the initial trainings but the role and importance differs across the Länder.</p> <p>University training dedicated specifically to early childhood education has only been available since 2004.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>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>Since then, academic studies of ECE have seen considerable development, with 53 university offering 67 ECE bachelor programmes in 2013. However, the degree programmes vary considerably in their thematic priorities and in the way the studies are organised (e.g. whether they are offered full-time or part-time and whether they cater specifically to students with prior work experience in ECE). Furthermore, there is no consistently used degree title for graduates of different ECE degree programmes. All bachelor programmes in ECE address issues of inclusive pedagogy in their curricula, with 42 programmes including it as a major field of study (<i>Fachkräftebarometer, 2014</i>).</p> <p>However, university-level qualification with a specialist degree in early childhood is still rare. Nationwide, the proportion of early childhood educators with a relevant university degree (e.g. in social pedagogy) has risen slightly since 2010, from 3.8% to 4.6%. The share of university graduates varies widely at the Länder level, ranging from 9.8% in Bremen to just 2.1% in Saarland. In 2013, only 5% of the overall workforce and 15% of the childcare centre managers held a university degree.</p> <p>Lifelong learning is recognised as a central feature to ensure the pedagogical quality of ECE staff, even after the required qualifications have been obtained. ECE staff are required by the guidelines to remain aware of relevant developments, to enrol in in-service training and to be aware of developments in professional literature (European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies 2013, page 32).</p> <p>As mentioned before, training, qualification and employment of ECE staff in Germany is under the jurisdiction of the Länder. For example, the Educational Plan for children aged 0–10 in the Land Hesse (<i>Hessischer Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan</i>) has addressed inclusive pedagogy as a key factor since 2016. In order to disseminate the key components of this educational programme, an in-service training programme for key</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>players in ECE is in place. The Land Hesse subsidises training costs.</p> <p>Due to variations such as this, there is no national policy to regulate in-service training for ECE staff and no compulsory national curriculum for in-service training. Neither is there a centralised national database analysing attendance rates and training topics for in-service training of ECE staff. What can be reported on the national level are three developments, which are likely to be interlinked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Germany’s 2009 ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities means that more attention is given to inclusive early childhood education;– A 2010 analysis of in-service training programmes for ECE staff found that only 1.1% of training was specifically dedicated to topics such as participation (Baumeister & Grieser, 2011). By contrast, a 2015 cluster analysis of 4,000 training courses for ECE staff at 47 different training institutions showed a rise in the frequency of inclusive topics. In this analysis, training with a focus on inclusion was among the top ten training topics, occupying the 9th position out of 35 in the overall frequency table (DJI, 2015). However, these two analyses can only describe how frequently in-service training with an inclusive focus are offered in training programmes, while data on actual staff attendance rates for inclusive training is not available.– Since 2009, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has been funding a national initiative (WiFF) aiming to support the professional development of early childhood professionals. One of the key activities for WiFF is to improve in-service training for ECE staff by compiling and publishing state-of-the-art training manuals. Since 2011, WiFF has published three training manuals dedicated to specific aspects of inclusive ECE care and is



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>currently preparing three more.</p> <p>No data is available to describe the importance, frequency of or attendance rate for inclusive in-service training across the Länder.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Baumeister, Katharina/Grieser, Anna (2011): <i>Berufsbegleitende Fort- und Weiterbildung frühpädagogischer Fachkräfte – Analyse der Programmangebote. Weiterbildungsinitiative Frühpädagogische Fachkräfte. WiFF Studien, Band 10. München;</i> – DJI (2015). <i>Top-Themen in der frühpädagogischen Weiterbildung</i>, available online.
<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 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</p>	<p>1. The most common qualification for ECE professionals is five year training at a specialist college, leading to the qualification of ‘<i>Staatlich anerkannte Erzieherin</i>’. Two thirds of all staff hold such a qualification. Further data on the educational level of ECE staff can be found at <i>Fachkräftebarometer 2014</i>, page 31.</p> <p>2. –</p> <p>3. Each German Land has regulations specifying the formal qualifications required of ECE directors. In some states, these qualifications also depend on the size of the ECE centre, measured by the number of children enrolled; sometimes new directors are required to have several years of relevant experience. In Bavaria, for example, candidates must show evidence that they have completed a training course for ECE directors. Responses to a questionnaire about state-wide regulations governing working hours for ECE directors revealed a much more diverse picture. Only eight states specify how many hours per week the job entails. Moreover, states differ in the parameters used to determine how much time ECE directors devote to their duties. Hamburg, for example, funds a certain weekly allotment of leadership hours per</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>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>child. In Lower Saxony, leadership hours are based on the number of groups, while in Brandenburg and Saxony, leadership hours depend on the number of full-time pedagogical staff (Bertelsmann State by State Report 2013, page 29).</p> <p>4. Nationwide, the median staffing formula for <i>Kindergartengruppen</i> (kindergarten groups) for children from age 3 to school in ECE facilities is 1:9.1. The regional comparison shows that the median situation in <i>Kindergartengruppen</i> is significantly more favourable in the western Länder (1:8.6) than in the eastern Länder (1:11.8).</p> <p>Similarly, the median staffing formula for <i>Kindergartengruppen</i> varies widely from Land to Land, ranging from 1:13.6 in Mecklenburg–Vorpommern to 1:7.3 in Bremen. However, this overview shows that ECE centres vary widely across Germany in terms of their human resources as well as their overall structural conditions (Bertelsmann State by State Report 2013, page 24).</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.

There is a joint framework in the Länder for early education for children in day-care centres (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen, Beschluss der Jugendministerkonferenz und der Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004*) which represents a general agreement about educational objectives in early childhood education.

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</p>	<p>The basic principles outlined in the general agreement of the Länder are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – teaching and encouraging children how to learn (skills of learning); – involving children in decisions (participation); – intercultural education; – gender-consciousness; – special support for children at risk and children with impairments (SEN); – special support for gifted children. <p>The areas of education focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communication skills; – developing and strengthening personal resource; – mathematics and natural sciences; – musical education and media; – body, health and movement; – nature and socio-cultural environment. <p>The educational principles describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the role of the professionals;



Guiding questions	Country response
the impact of labelling on children's participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the role of the parents;– the group as social field and the role of peers;– the functioning of rooms and outside area;– community work and co-operation;– the role of transition. <p>Based on these guidelines, the Länder developed more detailed and specific curriculum guidelines at the Land level (<i>Bildungs- und Erziehungspläne</i>) to intensify educational efforts for children in day-care centres and to ensure closer collaboration with primary education. The focus is on the acquisition of basic skills and on developing and reinforcing personal resources. To support these efforts, offers to promote the active involvement of parents in day-care are being extended and concepts developed to intensify the collaboration between school, parents and youth welfare services. A further goal is to improve the training of <i>Erzieherinnen</i> and <i>Erzieher</i> (teachers) (European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies 2013, page 29).</p> <p>In the Land Hesse, for example, the education and development programme (<i>Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan</i>), a cross-institutional plan for children aged 0–10, describes particular areas in which education and development are understood as the outcomes of a commonly formulated (co-constructive), active process. The programme provides a guideline for the child's learning environment from birth to the end of primary education, which includes the family, day-care centre, nursery school, primary school, family education centre, organisations, etc. (https://bep.hessen.de/irj/BEP_Internet).</p>
Practice at national level 1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of	Guidelines for assessment and its use in pedagogical settings are anchored in the education and development programmes of the Länder and provide language development surveys, screenings and observation tools. They focus on developmental difficulties as well as



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>children from age 3 years?</p> <p>2. What arrangements are there for the screening of children's functioning?</p> <p>3. Is children's engagement and participation in ECE activities monitored?</p> <p>4. How do ECE settings reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children?</p> <p>5. How do staff adapt (prepare and present) the curriculum and the learning activities to make them accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>7. How are children 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</p>	<p>competencies, encouragement and participation (e.g. 'Learning Stories' by Margaret Carr).</p> <p>A frequently used tool is the German version of 'Index for Inclusion. Developing play, learning and participation in early years and childcare', published by Gewerkschaft Erziehung and Wissenschaft. (http://www.montag-stiftungen.de/jugend-und-gesellschaft/projekte-jugend-gesellschaft/projektbereich-inklusion.html).</p> <p>Practice at Länder level: Since 1999, all three- to six-year-old children in Hesse are able to attend ECE institutions close to their home and institutions which used to separate children with special needs no longer exist. Two important pieces of Hessian policy underpin and support this on-going change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hesse has developed a 'framework of inclusion' (<i>Rahmenvereinbarung Integration</i>) which describes the responsibilities of various public roles. In terms of provision, there are two key factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More staff resources: For each child with a diagnosed need for extra support an additional 15 hours of staff resources are available; ○ Smaller groups of children: Group sizes are decreased from 25 to 20 children. <p>Additional advisory services (<i>Heilpädagogische Fachberatung</i>) have been set up and integrated into the overall support offered by the early childhood intervention services. They provide support to ECE institutions working with children with special needs and to the children's families and communities. The 2014 update of the framework of inclusion has furthermore determined that all children with disabilities (from birth to school entry) have a right to inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Hessian education plan for children aged 0–10 (<i>Hessischer Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan</i>) addresses



Guiding questions	Country response
environment adapted to the needs of all children?	<p>inclusive pedagogy as a key factor. In doing so, it follows the UN Convention for people with disabilities, stressing the positive potential of diversity and its various aspects. The plan contains a number of measures to promote inclusive pedagogy. For example, it specifies the scope and tasks of the specialist institutions providing early childhood intervention (<i>Fruehfoerderung</i>). Moreover, the Hessian education plan describes how these institutions co-ordinate their support with other organisations and support children during educational transitions.</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.

Guiding questions	Country response
<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>Paragraph 22a of the German Code of Social Law (<i>Sozialgesetzbuch SGB VIII</i>) describes the duties of public sector institutions responsible for child and youth services. It states that child and youth services need to ensure a high quality of support in ECE by formulating and implementing pedagogical concepts and by evaluating the pedagogical work of ECE institutions.</p> <p>A major tool for educational monitoring in Germany is the national education reports, which provide concise information about the current situation in the German education system (e.g. in 2014 they focused on the situation for people with disabilities). The reports are addressed to different target groups in educational policy, administration and practice in science and training and the public. The reports are designed based on an educational concept whose goals are reflected in three areas: individual self-direction, social participation and equal opportunities and human resources (National Education Report 2014, Preface).</p> <p>There are also a number of studies funded partially by the government (e.g. Viernickel, Susanne, Fuchs-Rechlin, Kirsten, et al. (2015): <i>Qualität für alle. Wissenschaftlich begründete Standards für die Kindertagesbetreuung</i>. Freiburg: Herder).</p> <p>The rapid expansion of ECE places in Germany triggered an intensive dialogue on the quality of provision between ECE stakeholders, researchers and staff (National Education Report 2014). For example, experts have been asking for nationwide staff-child ratios, nationally binding</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	quality standards and improved training for ECE staff. High quality ECE is a particular necessity for disadvantaged groups if they are to have a chance to catch up early on. Therefore, the Bund (federal government) and the Länder adopted a joint approach to address these issues, establishing nine principles to underpin common ECE quality standards and sound financing strategies (BMFSFJ/JFMK <i>Communiqué Frühe Bildung weiterentwickeln und sichern</i> 2014). (European Commission. Education and Training Monitor 2015, Germany, page 4).
<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>	–



5. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Key principles

5.1. Stakeholders in the ECE system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

5.2. Legislation, regulation and/or funding supports progress towards a universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised or funded ECE, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.

Early childhood education is not a part of the state school system.

The public funding arrangements for the education system are the result of decision-making processes in the political and administrative system. The political and administrative hierarchy in the Federal Republic of Germany is made up of three levels:

- Federation;
- Länder;
- local authorities (*Kommunen*), i.e. districts, municipalities with the status of a district and municipalities forming part of districts.

Decisions on the funding of education are made at all three levels, but the Länder and the local authorities provide over 90% of public expenditure. Based on the internationally applied (ISCED) breakdown for education systems, of the overall education expenditure in Germany, pre-primary education accounted for 15.3 billion euros (Länder: 5.5 billion euros, local authorities: 6.9 billion euros, the private sector 3 billion euros) (The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013–14, Funding).

Both public and private day-care providers exist. Most private day-care providers are non-profit organisations, so-called 'independent providers' (*freie Träger*). They fall under the 'Association of Independent Welfare' (*Verband der freien Wohlfahrtspflege*), composed of the 6 major welfare services:

- Caritas (welfare association of the Catholic church);
- Diakonie (welfare association of the Protestant church);
- Red Cross;
- Workers Welfare Association (*Arbeiter Wohlfahrt*);
- Welfare Association of the Jews in Germany (*Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland*);



- Welfare Association of the ‘Parität’ (*Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*, this includes parents associations, for example).

Private for-profit day-care services also exist, as well as an increasing number of day-care services offered by companies (European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies 2013, page 25).

Attendance at day-care centres is not, as a rule, free of charge. To cover some of the costs, parental contributions are levied. They may vary from Land to Land as well as from local authority to local authority and can depend on parents’ financial circumstances, the number of children in a family or the number of family members. On application, financial contributions may be waived in part or in total if parents cannot afford to pay them. These would then be assumed by the local youth welfare office. In some Länder, no contributions are levied for a child’s final year in day-care. In Rhineland-Palatinate and in Berlin, the last three years of day-care for children prior to starting school are non-contributory. Families of children with disabilities can be supported in the framework of services promoting the participation of people with disabilities (The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013–14, Funding).

Guiding questions	Country response
<p>Legislation and policy</p> <p>1. Under which ministry(ies) / department(s) are ECE provisions regulated and funded?</p> <p>2. How is intersectorial (health, social and education) collaboration promoted among all stakeholders in ECE?</p> <p>3. How is free or affordable provision guaranteed to all children age 3 years and over?</p> <p>4. What additional economic measures are</p>	<p>ECE provisions are regulated and funded under the ministries for <i>Arbeit und Soziales</i> in the Federation and the Länder.</p> <p>Publicly maintained day-care centres for children (maintained by the local authorities) as well as day-care centres maintained by independent providers are financed by the local authority (<i>Kommune</i>), by the Land (subsidies to cover personnel and material costs, etc.) and through parental contributions.</p> <p>Bertelsmann Country Report <i>Frühkindliche Bildungssysteme (kurz) 2015, S. 9 – Tabelle Abb. 3</i> states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All federal states guarantee childcare to children aged one year. – In addition to the entitlement to child day-care, there are services to help integrate children and adolescents with disabilities. Depending on the child’s needs, they provide social assistance (in the case of an actual or imminent mental or physical



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>available for children with additional needs and their families to access mainstream ECE?</p> <p>5. How is additional funding allocated?</p>	<p>disability, in line with Book XII of the Social Code, §§ 53, 54) or child and youth services (in the case of an actual or imminent psychological health problem, in line with Book VIII of the Social Code, § 35a). For children with disabilities from birth to school age there are more than 1,000 institutions nationwide offering early childhood intervention provisions (<i>Frühförderstellen</i>). Co-operation with child day-care centres plays an important role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Furthermore, child and youth services include various services and benefits for families, irrespective of whether a child has a disability or not. These include, in particular, the child-raising benefits and support services as laid down in Book VIII of the Social Code, §§ 27 ff, which comprise a range of different offerings for parents who need support in raising their children (German Country Review, Initial Reports of State Parties, BMAS, Germany 2014).
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. How far does the standard of ECE provision vary across regions and localities?</p> <p>2. How effective is collaboration between the ECE and health, social and other relevant agencies for children and families?</p> <p>3. What proportion of children (3 years to primary education) make use of additional funding?</p>	<p>There is a large variation between the standards of ECE provision across regions and localities.</p> <p>Resources are currently available from different sources (social, educational and medical systems). With regard to how social and educational systems interact concerning measures for the education and support of people with disabilities, a lack of co-ordinated strategies can be stated. The differences in responsibilities and approaches may have a negative impact on the approval and allocation of resources. Allocations of resources related to individuals and systemic allocations need to be clearly co-ordinated (National Education Plan 2014, page 22).</p> <p>Parents of children with disabilities and disabled associations repeatedly point out the case of early promotion to competence and funding problems between the competent rehabilitation institutions (health insurance funds and social assistance institutions) in the</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
4. How well does additional funding support inclusive education?	<p>implementation of early promotion benefits.</p> <p>A fundamental reorganisation of the social assistance systems for children and juveniles in Germany, in which the municipal national associations and the Federal Association of the Regional Social Assistance Agencies are involved, is being discussed in an inter-conference Federation-Länder working party. To ensure support and care for children and juveniles, the German assistance system is also to be reorganised in the framework of this discussion with regard to children and juveniles with disabilities. In doing so, the distribution of responsibility for the support of children and juveniles with mental disability (child and youth assistance) or mental and/or physical disability (social assistance) is to be particularly reviewed. In terms of perspective, it is a matter of overcoming the variations in the distribution of responsibilities and combining inclusive assistance for children and juveniles with disabilities under the umbrella of Social Code VIII (child and youth assistance) in a consensus between the Federation, the Länder and the local authorities (Grand Solution Book VIII of the Social Code) (German Country Report UN–CRPD 2011, Article 7).</p> <p>Please also refer to 1. Access, Procedures and Participation – Practice at national level, 5. What proportion of children is formally identified as having additional needs?.</p>



FURTHER COMMENTS

German inclusion researcher Annedore Prengel looks at the institutional inclusion rates of all children in ECE and finds an ambivalent pattern: 'Early childhood institutions take up the following groups of children: More than 70% of children with disabilities; 90% of children from migrant families, children of all social strata including a considerable (although not empirically described) percentage of children from underprivileged social strata; boys and girls. In doing so ECE largely provides the very institutional pre-conditions necessary for everyday inclusive pedagogic work, and more so than other areas of the educational system. It is the relatively small number of children not participating in ECE who are threatened by separation or exclusion in their early childhood; this refers partly to children from high-risk social-cultural backgrounds and to those 30% of children with disabilities in specialised institutions who are not in contact with children without disabilities.' (Prengel, 2014, page 14).

Prengel, Annedore (2014): *Inklusion in der Frühpädagogik. Bildungstheoretische, empirische und pädagogische Grundlagen. Weiterbildungsinitiative Frühpädagogische Fachkräfte. WiFF Expertisen, Band 5, 2., überarbeitete Auflage. München.*

The National Educational Report sets out some challenges for policy-makers in the field of early childhood education and care. As early childhood education and care has been expanded, questions about quality have largely been left unanswered, for example, regarding the appropriate staff ratios for young age groups or regarding the most suitable age structure of childcare groups to provide the best education and care. Attention is also to be paid to the striking regional and local differences in the provision and organisation (including available hours) of early childhood education and care.

Another field of action is required in the problems of cross-cutting concepts of education, namely concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities at all levels and in all sectors of the education system. In addition to the institutional issues concerning education for people with disabilities, issues concerning the quality of the educational programmes being developed must be taken into account (German Educational Report 2014, page 24). In early November 2014, the Bund and the Länder adopted a joint approach to address these issues, establishing nine principles to underpin common ECE quality standards and sound funding strategies. The first interim report is scheduled for the end of 2016 (BMFSFJ/JFMK *Communiqué Frühe Bildung weiterentwickeln und sichern* 2014) (European Commission: Education and Training Monitor 2015, Germany, page 4).