



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – PORTUGAL

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 Portugal, pre-primary education serves children from 3 to 6 years old, when they transfer to compulsory primary education. The frequency of pre-primary education is optional, as the law acknowledges that the family has the primary role in childcare and education (Law no. 5/97 of 10 February). Even so, Law no. 65/2015 of 3 July, amending Law no. 85/2009 of 27 August, establishes the universality of pre-primary education for all children from the year they turn 4. The ruling which defines the guidelines to be followed in the organisation of children in classrooms and the opening hours for educational institutions is published annually. For the current school year, the Normative Order no. 7-B/2015 of 7 May states that priority placement is given to older children and those with identified special educational needs (in accordance with Decree-Law no. 3/2008 of 7 January).</p> <p>Up to the age of 3, early childhood care is provided in centre-based settings known as crèches. There is also a system of regulated home-based provision, aimed at children from 3 months to 3 years, which is provided by nannies (<i>amas</i>) who either work independently or as a part of a formal group known as a ‘family crèche’. Home-based and centre-based care for the youngest children is the responsibility of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security.</p> <p>From age 3, children are legally entitled to free early childhood education in a centre-based pre-primary setting</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><i>(jardim de infância)</i>. This provision is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In addition, there is also a travelling pre-primary education system (<i>educação pré-escolar itinerante</i>), aimed at children between 3 and 5 years of age living in rural areas. Primary education starts at age 6 (Eurydice, 2015).</p> <p>Private, non-profit, centre-based pre-school (3–6-year olds) and crèches (under 3-year olds) are also available, provided by the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security. Although this last provision is not free, parents may be entitled to a subsidy, depending on the family income.</p> <p>Inclusion of children who are eligible for additional support is guaranteed by two Decree Laws which are both based on the principles of the Salamanca Statement and on the bio-ecological perspective of human development (DL 3/2008 and DL 281/2009). To meet the special educational needs of children who attend pre-primary education, Decree-Law no. 3/2008 states educational measures aimed at making adaptations to allow all children to attend and participate, in order to achieve educational success and to receive preparation for the continuation of studies. These measures are embodied in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are applied whenever a child is eligible for specialist support to carry out the activities and experiences provided in the common curriculum that is being implemented in the child's group. Such measures also encompass adaptations in curriculum design to meet the needs of individual children that significantly move away from this common framework. The IEP is prepared jointly and mandatorily by the class teacher, the specialist teacher, the parents, and any other professionals that may be involved in the child's educational process.</p> <p>DL 281/2009 established a National Early Childhood Intervention System (NECIS), with shared responsibilities from the Ministries of Health, Education and Solidarity</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|--------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| | <p>and Social Security, with the collaboration of Private Institutions of Social Solidarity and in close collaboration with families. The NECIS aims to provide ECE to children between 0–6 years of age who are at risk of developmental delay or have established conditions and their families to ensure support in their inclusion. It integrates Local Intervention Teams (LIT) comprising professionals from different disciplines and from the three ministries that develop their activity in defined geographical areas.</p> <p>Although there is an overlap between these two Decree Laws, there are guidelines for the articulation of services.</p> <p>Based on the law there are groups of schools that have extra resources for learners that are blind or visually impaired, or deaf.</p> <p>There are no established arrangements for transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education, just broad guidelines. Such arrangements are organised by each school.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Practice at national level</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</p> | <table border="1" data-bbox="549 1234 1447 1451"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reference year 2013/14</th> <th>Under 1*</th> <th>1-year-olds*</th> <th>2-year-olds*</th> <th>3-year-olds*</th> <th>4-year-olds</th> <th>5-year-olds</th> <th>6-year-olds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>%</td> <td>19.8</td> <td>38.6</td> <td>47.4</td> <td>80.5</td> <td>90.6</td> <td>96.1</td> <td>6.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Portugal mainland</p> <p>Sources: Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) – DGEEC; Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security (MSESS) – GEP</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 1619 1447 1877"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reference year 2012</th> <th>3-year-olds</th> <th>4-year-olds</th> <th>5-year-olds</th> <th>6-year-olds</th> <th>7-year-olds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>% in ISCED 0</td> <td>78.4</td> <td>91.6</td> <td>97.9</td> <td>4.7</td> <td>(–)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% in ISCED 1</td> <td>(–)</td> <td>(–)</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>96.3</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted May 2015)</p> <p>Participation rates (Eurydice, 2015)</p> | Reference year 2013/14 | Under 1* | 1-year-olds* | 2-year-olds* | 3-year-olds* | 4-year-olds | 5-year-olds | 6-year-olds | % | 19.8 | 38.6 | 47.4 | 80.5 | 90.6 | 96.1 | 6.0 | Reference year 2012 | 3-year-olds | 4-year-olds | 5-year-olds | 6-year-olds | 7-year-olds | % in ISCED 0 | 78.4 | 91.6 | 97.9 | 4.7 | (–) | % in ISCED 1 | (–) | (–) | 0.4 | 96.3 | 100 |
| Reference year 2013/14 | Under 1* | 1-year-olds* | 2-year-olds* | 3-year-olds* | 4-year-olds | 5-year-olds | 6-year-olds | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % | 19.8 | 38.6 | 47.4 | 80.5 | 90.6 | 96.1 | 6.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reference year 2012 | 3-year-olds | 4-year-olds | 5-year-olds | 6-year-olds | 7-year-olds | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % in ISCED 0 | 78.4 | 91.6 | 97.9 | 4.7 | (–) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % in ISCED 1 | (–) | (–) | 0.4 | 96.3 | 100 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|---|--|
| <p>accessing mainstream ECE?</p> <p>3. Are there children 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>In regions with high population density, pre-primary education does not cover all children. On the other hand, there are very isolated areas far inland, where distances to the nearest schools are a barrier preventing some children from accessing ECE.</p> <p>No special education segregated settings are available for pre-primary aged children; all children attend mainstream educational settings.</p> <p>Inter-service collaboration among professionals from the Ministries of Health, Education, and Solidarity and Social Security is mandated by DL 281/2009 and by guidelines issued by the NECIS for the articulation between this DL and DL 3/2008.</p> <p>The 2013–2014 data indicates that 0.9% of children attending pre-primary education required additional measures.</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.

| 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 include preparation for working in partnership with families:</p> | <p>For pre-primary teachers, bachelor's (<i>Licenciatura</i>) or master's level is required.</p> <p>Operating assistants currently have to have completed the 12 years of compulsory education.</p> <p>The regulations for staff-child ratios require 1 teacher per 25 children and 1 assistant per 2/3 groups.</p> <p>Groups with children with additional needs have 1 assistant and support from a specialist teacher.</p> <p>Furthermore, in pre-primary classrooms which include children with special educational needs, the number of children should be reduced to 20; pre-primary classrooms may not include more than two children with special educational needs (Normative Dispatch no. 7-B/2015).</p> <p>Initial teacher training includes a generic and introductory approach to issues related to inclusion, as well as understanding and supporting children with diverse characteristics and additional needs and working with families.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education, teacher training centres, professional education associations and universities promote training for pre-primary teachers in several areas, some of which focus on responses to different and additional needs.</p> <p>The National Early Childhood Intervention System (NECIS) also promotes training on ECI for professionals from different disciplines (health, education and social services) which are integrated in the Early Childhood Intervention</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|---|---|
| <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>Teams.</p> <p>Teachers' associations provide in-service training for operational assistants. Schools and local authorities can promote training addressed to these professionals, according to their needs.</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 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</p> | <p>All teachers have the required qualifications.</p> <p>Operating assistants have to have completed the 12 years of compulsory education. In some cases, operating assistants have attended professional childcare courses.</p> <p>The school head teachers can propose and support in-service training.</p> <p>The National Education Council issued a recommendation (Recommendation No. 3/2011) on the education of 0–3-year olds that addresses various aspects for improving the quality of care and education for this age group.</p> <p>In a recent study (ME, 2014) in 474 pre-primary classrooms in Portugal, 42.2% had between 21 and 25 children and only 2.5% had more than 25 children in the classroom. Globally, more than half of the teachers (57.2%) have support from another adult during the time they are directly with the children. In public pre-schools, 63.9% of the teachers are never alone with the children. It is in private non-profit pre-schools that a higher percentage of classrooms (71.9%) report that teachers are alone with the children for at least one hour. In the total sample teachers are, on average, alone with the children for 2.16 hours, with a minimum of 1 hour and a maximum of 8 hours.</p> <p>There were children formally identified as having special educational needs in 180 classrooms, with an average of 1.64 children per classroom receiving additional support,</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|--|--|
| <p>settings?</p> <p>7. Describe the role of support assistants in the ECE setting?</p> | <p>however this number ranged from 1 to 7 children per classroom.</p> <p>The law requires 1 assistant per 2/3 groups. Groups with children with additional needs have 1 assistant and a specialist teacher or ECI professional and group size should be reduced to 20 (<i>Despacho normativo</i> no. 7-B/2015)</p> <p>The schools have support from an ECI professional from EI teams (DL 281/2009) or from specialist teachers (DL 3/2009). These professionals give support to eligible children and are supposed to co-operate with class teachers in planning and implementing specific strategies for children with special needs, as well as in designing activities for all children. School psychologists assigned to groups of schools also collaborate with both teachers. The professionals from the multidisciplinary ECI teams (DL 281/2009), other than the main service provider, may provide extra support in discussion with teachers, whenever needed.</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><i>Legislation and policy</i></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>For pre-primary children aged 3–6 there are Pre-school Curricular Guidelines established by the Ministry of Education in 1997 (ME; Despatch no. 5220/97, 4 August), and brochures specifying domains of intervention for each developmental area present in the Despatch, as well as materials and procedures for intervention. For this age group the Ministry of Education also establishes Educational Aims to be achieved by children, for each of the areas presented in the Pre-school Curricular Guidelines (ME; Despatch no. 5220/97, 4 August).</p> <p>For children aged 0–3 in centre-based, private, non-profit settings the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security follows the norms of a Manual for Quality in organising both the educational environment and practices. The Ministry is developing guidelines for this age group.</p> <p>The Pre-school Curricular Guidelines (ME; Despatch no. 5220/97, 4 August) specify the need for developing processes for adapting the learning process for children with special needs.</p> <p>Such adaptations consist of special equipment, adaptations in materials, special conditions of enrolment (priority in any pre-school that better suits the child and family, independent of residence), adaptation of group characteristics (e.g. group size), extra pedagogical support and special education procedures (assured by the two Decree Laws specified above – DL 3/2008 and DL 281/2009). Such measures are to be individualised and one child can benefit from several measures</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|--|--|
| | <p>simultaneously.</p> <p>According to these two legislations, parents are to be involved in the educational programme and must sign the individual education plan (IEP).</p> <p>The use of labelling is an issue that has not received much consensus among professionals in different areas and is often used quite early in children’s lives, mainly by child mental health services. These services tend to prescribe specific and multiple therapies to families, which function outside the pre-primary classroom instead of relying on the inclusive framework of support denoted in the two above mentioned Decree Laws.</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of 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</p> | <p>Teachers assess children’s learning. In a recent survey on the state of pre-school quality implemented by a research group from the University of Porto as a request from the Ministry of Education, teachers report that they perform these evaluations regularly and mainly with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the Pre-school Curricular Guidelines (ME; Despach no. 5220/97, 4 August); – the Educational Aims defined by the Ministry of Education; – 3 other documents issued by the Ministry of Education which concern management of the curricular guidelines and professional performance. <p>Assessment is carried out mainly through observation and worksheets completed quite regularly by the children (ME, 2014).</p> <p>Based on such assessments, teachers may refer children to screening by the multidisciplinary Early Childhood Intervention teams (DL 281/2009) or by the Special Education department of the group of schools (DL 3/2008). In both cases, parents must be notified and provide their consent. During the assessment process, parents are involved in various degrees, informing about both their needs and their children’s needs. Involving</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|---|---|
| <p>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 environment adapted to the needs of all children?</p> | <p>parents in a more participatory way in the assessment-intervention process is not yet a generalised practice, although this is improving (see Pinto et al., 2012).</p> <p>Child engagement and participation is not generally a direct focus of assessment. There were some action-research projects by a group in the University of Porto, which developed tools for such a monitoring process – it is hoped that these tools will be published soon, for general use.</p> <p>Adaptation of curricula and daily activities is implemented by the class teacher in collaboration with the support professional (teacher, therapist, etc.), as these professionals are expected to implement their intervention in the mainstream classroom by embedding strategies within their daily activities.</p> <p>To meet the special educational needs of children who attend pre-primary education, Decree-Law no. 3/2008 states educational measures which aim to make adaptations so that all children can attend and participate, in order to achieve educational success and to receive preparation for the continuation of studies. These measures must be embodied in an individual education plan (IEP). They are applied whenever a child is eligible for specialised support to carry out the activities and experiences provided in the mainstream curriculum of the group to which the child belongs. Such measures also encompass adaptations in the curriculum design to meet the need of individual children that significantly move away from this common framework. The IEP is prepared jointly and mandatorily by the pre-school teacher responsible for the classroom, the specialist teacher, the parents and other professionals that may be involved in the child's educational process.</p> <p>DL 281/2009 established a National Early Childhood Intervention System (NECIS), with shared responsibilities from the Ministries of Health, Education, and Solidarity and Social Security, with the collaboration of Private</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|-------------------|--|
| | <p>Institutions of Social Solidarity and in close collaboration with families. The NECIS aims to provide ECI to families with children between 0–6 years of age who are at risk of developmental delay or with established conditions and ensures support for the inclusion of these children. It integrates Local Intervention Teams (LIT) comprising professionals from different disciplines from the three ministries that develop their activity in defined geographical areas.</p> <p>Based on the law there are groups of schools that have extra resources for learners that are either blind or visually impaired, or deaf.</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>As already mentioned there is a set of guidelines and legal documents specifying quality indicators and guidelines for ECE practices. Moreover, the ME produces brochures and promotes meetings and seminars with the professionals in order to facilitate the sharing of practices.</p> <p>Pre-primary curriculum guidelines, legislation on special education and ECI recommend the participation of children and their families and call for inclusive environments and meaningful learning.</p> <p>In order to overcome some difficulties in accessing ECE, the ME also promotes itinerant pre-primary education aimed at children between 3 and 5 years of age living in rural areas.</p> <p>Head teachers are responsible for monitoring and contributing to the organisation of different responses necessary for effective inclusion of children.</p> <p>The General Inspectorate for Education is responsible for controlling the pedagogical and technical operation of pre-primary education.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education asked for the co-operation of the University of Porto in implementing a study on the quality of pre-primary education. Within this collaboration two reports were produced, one with general national data and one with more detailed case studies (ME, 2014).</p> <p>The ME divulges projects and innovative practices that can be consulted by school professionals on its website.</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national</i></p> | <p>It is possible to assess the participation of children</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|---|--|
| <p>level</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>through portfolios of their activities and specific tools that are constructed by each school, inspired by the ME guidelines and legal documents. In the abovementioned study (ME, 2014) teachers report the Pre-school Curricular Guidelines, established by the Ministry of Education (ME; Dispatch no. 5220/97, 4 August), as one of the main references in organising children’s assessment, followed by the Educational Aims established by the Ministry of Education to be achieved by children for each of the areas presented in the Pre-school Curricular Guidelines (ME; Dispatch no. 5220/97, 4 August). Other documents are also used as reference in children’s assessment, such as Circular no. 4 on Assessment, Circular no. 17 on Curriculum Management and the Profile of Professional Performance. The most frequent strategies, reported by teachers as being used weekly for children’s assessment, are, in decreasing order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – children’s creations (82.2%); – conversations with children (70.6%); – registering of observations (67.5%); – worksheets (64.2%); – photos (43.6%); – portfolios (35%). <p>Checklists built and/or adapted by the teacher are used by 83% of teachers with varying frequency; annually to quarterly by some (37.9%) and monthly to weekly by others (33.5%). A considerable proportion of teachers never use the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – questionnaires to education partners (64.3%); – scales/assessment tests (52.8%); – checklists provided by leading entities (40%); – video or audio recordings (35.8%); – questionnaires to parents or caregivers (33.5%). |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|-------------------|---|
| | <p>Most teachers informally request parents' opinions (96.9%) and the opinions of other education partners (87.5%). Study results show that the leading teacher is the main decision-maker in the assessment process (ME, 2014).</p> <p>The planning of activities is based on a range of pedagogical models, namely Project Pedagogy (80.9%), Situation Pedagogy (58.5%), High Scope Curricula (55.4%) and Modern School Movement (47.8%). Less frequently referred to are the Reggio Emilia and Montessori models. The interests and needs expressed by the children, the group characteristics, the Pre-school Curricular Guidelines established by the Ministry of Education (ME; Dispatch no. 5220/97, 4 August) and the characteristics of the family and social context of the group are, in this order, the main sources of inspiration for activity planning (ME, 2014).</p> <p>The legislation referred to above recommends the participation of parents in all decisions regarding the education of their children, as well as in defining any necessary support.</p> <p>In the case of children with SEN, an IEP can only be implemented after approval by parents.</p> <p>It is worth mentioning that many schools have parents' associations which collaborate on the school project definition and contribute to the regulation of procedures.</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.

| Guiding questions | Country response |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Legislation and policy</i></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 available for children with additional needs and their families to access mainstream ECE?</p> <p>5. How is additional funding allocated?</p> | <p>The responsibility for the care and education of children from 0 to 3 years belongs to the Ministry of Welfare, Solidarity and Social Security.</p> <p>Pre-primary (3–6 years) pedagogical supervision across the national network of public schools is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>In each region, there is also support from the respective local authorities.</p> <p>The National Early Childhood Intervention System (NECIS) is the responsibility of three ministries (education, health and social security). There are representatives from each ministry in each of the structures of this system (at regional and national level) and the local intervention teams include educators from the ME, medical doctors, nurses and therapists from the Health Ministry and therapists and psychologists from the Ministry of Welfare, Solidarity and Social Security. The NECIS services are free of charge (Decree no. 281/2009).</p> <p>Pre-primary education in public schools is free.</p> <p>The tuition fees for attending private non-profit pre-primary institutions are paid by the Ministry of Welfare, Solidarity and Social Security depending on the family income. There is also a private network.</p> <p>For children aged 0–6 who are eligible for ECI, additional measures are available for free through the NECIS and children who attend pre-school and require additional</p> |



| Guiding questions | Country response |
|--|--|
| | <p>support are entitled to this support as defined in Decree no. 3/2008. This support consists of adjustments or modifications to the curriculum which are properly monitored by SEN teachers placed by the ME and also by providing assistive technologies.</p> <p>No fees are charged for 5 hours per day of pre-primary education, but parents are expected to contribute to the cost of meals and any additional hours of provision (Eurydice, 2015).</p> |
| <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>4. How well does additional funding support inclusive education?</p> | <p>In addition to the support recommended in national legislation, municipalities and local services support their regions. This support varies from region to region and there may be considerable differences among them.</p> <p>The 2013–2014 statistics indicate that 0.9% of children attending pre-primary education require additional support.</p> <p>Additional support is guaranteed in pre-primary education by the Ministry of Education, through the provision of human resources, including specialist teaching staff, operational assistants and the provision of assistive products.</p> |