

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Belgium (Flemish community) 2016/2017
data background information**



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

Operational definition

“An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.”

Criteria for an official decision of SEN

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre)school
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

Educational assessment procedure in the country

The Flemish Parliament Decree of 21 March 2014 regarding measures for learners with special educational needs (the M-Decree) contains a number of provisions that support the transition from the medical to a social model of disability:

– The inclusion of a definition of ‘learners with special educational needs’, which is based on the social model and the framework of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). Children/learners with special educational needs are those with long-term, significant participation problems owing to the combination of one or more functional impairments at the intellectual, psychological, physical or sensory level, restrictions in the performance of activities, and personal and external factors.

– Identification of these children/learners will not just devote attention to their limitations, but rather will focus on analysing the educational and support requirements of the children/learners and the effectiveness of the measures already taken in the mainstream school. It involves the following elements:

- Whether the different stages of the care continuum for the child/learner concerned were completed
- That, after a process of action-oriented co-operation involving the child/learner and their parents, it is concluded that the accommodation – including remediation, differentiation, compensation and dispensation measures required to keep the child/learner within the common curriculum – is either disproportionate or insufficient



- That the child's/learner's educational needs were described through applying a classification system which is scientifically underpinned and based on an interactional vision and a social model of disability (i.e. ICF)
- That the educational needs cannot just be attributed to the child's/learner's socio-economic status
- Which type applies to the child/learner. For a number of types of special education, this is still based on medical criteria, among other things depending on a differentiated support system and financing mechanisms.

How the multi-disciplinary team is comprised in the country

Pupil Guidance Centres (*centra voor leerlingenbegeleiding*) are responsible for identifying learners with special educational needs. The disciplines in a Pupil Guidance Centre are: physician, paramedic worker, social worker, psycho-educational counsellor, psycho-educational worker, director, and administrative worker.

The legal document used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive

There is a statement for:

- support in mainstream education based on the common curriculum with reasonable accommodations (*gemotiveerd verslag*);
- support in mainstream education based on an individual adapted curriculum or support in special education based on an individual education plan (*verslag*).

How the document is used as the basis for planning in the country

Please refer to the answer above.

The formal, regular review process in the country

For the 'basic support' type (which replaces type 1 for children/learners with mild intellectual disability and type 8 for children/learners with learning difficulties), an evaluation every two years is obligatory.

Review is also obligatory in cases of change of level of education and changes in type of special education.

Review is possible at all times, for example, when the learner's educational support needs have changed and the criteria necessary to deliver a statement are no longer met.

Proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. This is defined as:

"An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week."



Proxy indicator used

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more.

Details on what the country proxy is

Small numbers of learners in different age groups per school and limited support implies that the children/learners are enrolled in a class with their peers for more than 80% of the time.

Why this proxy was used

Other data/information is not available.

Difficulties in using the proxy

Verification of the 80% participation rate is not necessary.

Specific country issues in applying the proxy indicator

No issues.

Detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines ‘formal education’ as follows:

“[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).

Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?

No, Belgium (Flemish community) uses the same definitions as ISCED.

How specific cases – such as home-educated children/learners – are considered

Children/learners enrolled in home education are defined as out of formal education (home education is classified as non-formal education).



Children/learners who are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)

Please refer to previous answer.

How the population of children/learners who are out of formal education is defined

Some are in non-formal education; some are in independent private education (this covers schools which are not financed or subsidised by the Flemish Government).

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in the private sector.

Private sector education in the country

Private sector education is defined according to the international definitions, i.e. government-dependent private education and independent private education. Government-dependent private education covers the schools organised by a private person or private organisation (*gesubsidieerd vrij onderwijs*). The governing body is often a non-profit organisation (*vzw*). Independent private education covers schools which are not financed or subsidised by the Flemish Government. This type of education covers, for example, the European Schools.

Child/learner population counted for each relevant question

The data for government-dependent private education is taken into account in all the tables. The data for these schools is available at the Ministry. The data for independent private education is not included.

Specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection

Data on independent private education should be reported in the UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) data collection. At the moment, only limited information is available on the number of learners enrolled in the European Schools in Belgium. Due to this, the data is reported in the UOE data collection, but not in the EASIE data collection.

ISCED level age ranges

The following are the most common (pre)school entrance ages and (pre)school leaving ages for the different ISCED levels:

- Age range in the country at ISCED level 02 (pre-primary): 2 to 5
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 1: 6 to 11
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 2: 12 to 13
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 3: 14 to 18