

# Report for SOW on the financing of early childhood education and care in Europe, and, in particular, on the training and remuneration of childcare workers and its costs <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Full article PDF <sup>[2]</sup>

This report summarizes a wide variety of policies and practices in early childhood education and care (ECEC) to be found in Europe and OECD countries, highlighting a range of issues including but not limited to: working conditions, recruitment, retention and remuneration in the workforce; funding and governance; data strengths and shortcomings; and quality of provision at the system level. Finland, Germany, Ireland and Norway are examined in greater detail, drawing out relevant areas of comparison for ECEC policy in the United States. The author concludes that individual examples of innovative solutions at the provider level will not solve large scale systemic issues, such as inequitable access.

## Executive Summary

This report summarizes the wide variety of policies and practices in early childhood education and care (ECEC) to be found in Europe and OECD countries, highlighting the issues that are relevant to the terms of reference set out by SOW. It draws primarily on EU and OECD documentation as reference points for the discussion.

A background preamble is presented as an essential background to discussing the policies and practices of all European countries, and in particular, of the four European countries, Finland, Germany Ireland and Norway, for whom an analysis was requested.

The background preamble covers the following issues:

- The nature of EU and OECD jurisdiction and influence
- Available data sources and their strengths and shortcomings
- A coherent approach across EU and OECD
- Levels of provision
- Quality of provision at a systemic level
- Changes in policy and provision
- Training issues; initial training, in-service or continuous training; impact of training on child outcomes.
- Working conditions and remuneration of staff, recruitment and retention, staff mobility
- Funding and governance

Four country profiles are presented, Finland, Germany, Ireland and Norway. These profiles cover the following issues:

- Structures of governance and financing
- Rationales for the distribution of costs
- Levels of provision
- Affordability
- Parental Leave
- Training issues – initial and continuous training, impact of training on child outcomes
- Working conditions, remuneration of staff, recruitment and retention, staff mobility
- Transformation- rapidity of change, strategies for making changes

Relevant examples of these issues in other countries are also considered.

## Relevance to the USA

The final section of the report considers the relevance of these findings to the USA. The report notes that equity and access for all children are fundamental principles for European and OECD provision. Major changes would be necessary in the funding and organization of early education and care services in the USA, if it were to adopt a European or OECD trajectory for progress. In the more limited terms of securing the improvement of the training, remuneration and conditions of service for early education and childcare workers, most – but certainly not all- countries have experienced some difficulties, which can provide limited examples. However, the main barriers to

improvements for early education and childcare 4 workers in the USA are likely to be the lack of coherent ECEC policies, the shortfalls in funding early childhood education and childcare, and the reliance on a poorly regulated private market.

**Region:** International <sup>[3]</sup>

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