

Competence requirements in early childhood education and care ^[1]

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Excerpted from the project rationale and objectives

The present study is grounded in international research on quality, competences and professionalism in early childhood. At European level, 14 Member States and one candidate country were included in a survey, and seven detailed case studies were conducted. Recommendations for action in the various layers of the early childhood system, including the level of European policy, have been developed.

As detailed in the Terms of Reference for this tender, the specific objectives of the project were:

1. To produce a summary of current evidence about the competences required by ECEC staff, based on a systematic, comprehensive and critical literature review.
2. To provide a comprehensive summary of the competences that countries require their ECEC staff to possess based on definitions in relevant national legislations and policy documents.
3. To provide a description of competences taught in a geographically balanced sample of training programmes that lead to qualifications required for work in ECEC services, including countries that have no legislation on competence requirements.
4. To conduct seven case studies of ECEC policy and provision in a geographically balanced sample, emphasising high-quality programmes and analysing staff competences contributing to the quality of provision.
5. To propose a definition of the core competences that all ECEC staff require in order to contribute to a high-quality ECEC service.
6. To develop recommendations for actions that should be taken at national and European level.

The analysis of the findings of objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the project, together with experiences gathered in the case studies (objective 4) and the survey of actual competence profiles for the ECEC workforce across Europe, has enabled us to 'map' areas of policy and practice where action can and should be taken. These areas have been discussed with key actors in the field (as represented by the collaborators of this project), and have led to recommendations for policy and practice to

- promote professionalism in early childhood across all layers of the professional system, including practice, management, qualification and training, and research
- improve pre- and in-service training of the ECEC workforce
- develop an understanding of qualification requirements for the ECEC workforce that shares common values and respects the diversity of possible approaches to realize them across Europe.

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Region: Europe ^[3]

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