

Childcare legislation in The Netherlands ^[1]

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See links to presentations below.

The 2005 Dutch Childcare Act radically changed the way the Dutch childcare system is funded and regulated. The Act replaced a local government operated supply-side funding system for private-for-profit and not-for-profit providers.

In its place it introduced a demand-led childcare market, whose engine is powered by three different sources of finance. Childcare costs, including those of care by relatives or friends, are now shared by parents, employers and the state. Employer contributions are compulsory. Childcare quality regulation is light-touch.

In the Netherlands childcare means what it says and includes centre-based daycare and out of school care and care delivered by childminders. In contrast, one year of publicly funded early education is universally provided in schools for children from their fourth birthday. Mothers primarily work part-time while their children are young.

Rob Vergeer, CEO and Leontine Diemel, manager planning and control, of Dutch not-for-profit childcare chain Triodus NL explored the intended and unintended consequences of this childcare revolution from a childcare business perspective. Their organisation, Triodus, has been providing childcare for young children in and around The Hague since 1910.

For an overview of recent developments in the Netherlands by Leontine Diemel, see [Leontine Diemel background paper ICMEC seminar 23.03.09](#) ^[2]

For the two powerpoint presentations by Leontine Diemel and Rob Vergeer follow these links: [Leontine Diemel ICMEC seminar 23.03.09](#) ^[3] and: [Rob Vergeer presentation ICMEC seminar 23.03.09](#) ^[4]

Two discussants responded in depth to the issues raised about the Dutch mixed childcare market economy, before they were discussed more widely by the audience in an extremely lively and open discussion.

Also from a childcare business perspective, Carole Edmond, managing director of not-for-profit childcare chain TEDDIES, in her response picked out five striking differences between the Dutch and the English situation and considered the respective merits of each country's position in these matters.

Whereas the Dutch government's help with parental childcare costs is closely tied to employment and childcare is therefore taken up almost exclusively by employed parents, childcare use in England is a free choice for parents.

Dutch schools are obliged to provide out-of-school care, whereas this is not compulsory in England. A boon for Dutch children.

The number of childminders in England has been steadily decreasing, whereas in The Netherlands the reverse is true. A great pity for England, as this trend restricts parental choice. Informal care is paid under the Dutch Childcare Act 2005, whereas this remains a contentious issue in England.

The move towards childcare deregulation in the Netherlands contrasts with increasing regulation and outcome pressures unhelpful to young children's development over here. The Dutch tripartite funding system poses significant administrative challenges from a systems and a parental perspective and the question also arises whether the Dutch childcare market was indeed 'sufficiently mature' for deregulation? Whose perspectives were represented in this decision?

In a second response, professor Kazem Chaharbaghi, professor of Management at the UEL Business School, asked searching questions of the ethical issues posed by the Dutch childcare revolution and alluded to emerging research identifying problems with these developments. His presentation can be found by following this link: [Kazem Chaharbaghi response ICMEC seminar 23.03.09](#) ^[5]

Biographical details for all four speakers can be found at: [ICMEC seminar 23.03.09 biographical details](#) ^[6].

Region: Europe ^[7]

Tags: legislation and regulation ^[8]

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