

Making connections: Reflections on over three decades of EU initiatives in early childhood education and care (ECEC) ^[1]

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Abstract

Recent anniversaries remind us of the lengthy history of the European Union's involvement in ECEC, from the early work of the European Commission's Childcare Network, from 1986–1996, to the European Commission's publication in 2015 of an indicative Roadmap outlining potential new initiatives. European-funded research and policy reviews are numerous, frequently highlighting the significance of integrated ECEC systems in developing services and other areas of provision. This article looks back on three decades of EU policy initiatives and suggests that whilst key EC reviews have advocated integrated systems for member states, the Commission's own fragmented approach has impeded the development of an effective framework at an EU level. It is argued that a tougher approach to improving ECEC, as suggested by recent developments, requires an integrated policy framework, unified targets and a strong single lead able to initiate and not just support actions at an EU level.

Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: quality ^[4]

access ^[5]

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