



IEA Early Childhood Education Study



The Early Childhood Education Study (ECES) is a cross-national study that aims to explore, describe, and analyze early childhood education (ECE) provision and its role in preparing children to learn and function in school and the broader environment.

The Study Aims To

- Provide meaningful information for countries, states and jurisdictions across the world in relation to how ECE contributes to children's outcomes.
- Explore systematically, document and analyze the worldwide diversity of responses, meeting the challenge of supporting, educating and preparing our youngest citizens for school and wider society.
- Map the systems, structures and user pathways in place, along with the perceptions of stakeholders about the system, its functioning and impact.
- Measure the outcomes of ECE in preparing children for school and lifelong learning.
- Examine the relationships between policy aims, ECE provision, family background and child outcomes.
- Inform the development of high quality and inclusive ECE policy both nationally and internationally.
- Provide a framework for countries to benchmark.

Theoretical Framework

Against the background of recent results that highlight the importance of quality in ECE (e.g., Barnett, 2012; Sylva et al., 2008) ECES aims to explore ECE provision and its role in preparing children for the learning and social demands of school and wider society (UNESCO, 2013; World Bank, 2013). Based on the ecological-systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in ECES learning is considered as taking place within the socio-cultural contexts at home and in the ECE settings. Complemented by recent research findings from the ECE context (e.g., Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009), the structure of the educational system is described based on school effectiveness research (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997) and effective classroom research (Huit, Huit, Monetti, & Hummel, 2009). Together with social-cognitive learning theories (Bandura, 1986) the latter approach provides also the theoretical foundations to describe the pedagogical action. Learning contexts at home are analyzed referring to

social inequality theories (Boudon, 1974; Bourdieu, Boltanski, De Saint Martin, & Mالدیدیر, 1981).

Study Design and Instruments

ECES is divided into two phases:

■ Phase 1

This phase will establish the policy context for ECE in the participating countries and will take place in 2014. The policy context for ECE is likely to vary considerably across participating countries and therefore the outcomes of Phase 1 will need to feed into the development of the instruments used in Phase 2 (Child Assessment, ECE Setting Questionnaire, Practitioner Questionnaire, and Home Questionnaire) to ensure they are relevant to all participants. Data in Phase 1 will be gathered using one **Policy Questionnaire** per country.

The Policy Questionnaire will provide national level data on the wider policy context for ECE (from birth up to the end of ISCED 0), including questions on public policy, delivery models and providers, access and participation, quality, and expectations for outcomes.

■ Phase 2

This phase will provide information about the abilities and skills of the children, who have accessed ECE services. These outcome measures will be accompanied by questionnaires administered to leaders/ managers of the sampled ECE settings, to a sample of practitioners working in the sampled settings and the parents of the assessed children.

Phase 2 will make use of the following instruments:

■ Child Assessment

This element of the study will provide data on the outcomes of ECE in terms of key areas of development and learning at the end of ISCED 0. The child assessment will measure the

child competencies in the following five key learning domains:

- ❶ Social and Emotional Competence: the ability to manage emotions and behaviors and to make meaningful and significant friendships.
- ❷ Dispositional and Learning Competence: the ability to acquire sustained and learnt habits of mind, approaches and attitudes, which underpin lifelong learning.
- ❸ Physical Competence: the ability to perform both gross and fine motor skills, coordination, laterality, balance and controlled or rhythmic movement.
- ❹ Language and Literacy Competence: the abilities and skills associated with the foundation of language, communication and literacy.
- ❺ Numeracy Competence: the abilities and skills associated with the foundations of mathematics.

The assessment outcomes will be achieved through a blended approach consisting of practitioner ratings and direct assessment tasks with the child.

■ ECE Setting Questionnaire

The questions will capture information on the characteristics of the setting, such as the providers' motivations and philosophy, curriculum, number and age of children, opening hours and services provided.

■ Practitioner Questionnaire

The questionnaire will collect information on practitioner characteristics, attitudes, and job satisfaction, professional education and development, leadership perceptions, characteristics of the children in their care, pedagogical approaches and interactions with children, expected outcomes, monitoring processes and parental involvement.

■ Home Questionnaire

The questions will capture information on family/child characteristics including the age and gender of the child, family income level, cultural background and language, whether the child has any special needs, ECE experiences and details of the child's home learning environment.

Why Participate in ECES?

ECES can support countries in their efforts to develop high quality early childhood education programs, which research shows to be crucial for children's socialization and lifelong learning and achievement.

Participation in ECES will enable countries to:

- Examine their system's approaches and implementation of early childhood education in comparison to other countries.
- Gain an evidence-based understanding of the competencies that children need to develop in order to make a successful transition to school.
- Evaluate the role of early education programs in developing children's social and emotional competence, dispositional and learning competence, physical competence, language and literacy competence and numeracy competence.

International Study Consortium

- IEA Data Processing and Research Center (study coordination, study framework, practitioner questionnaire, sampling, data processing and analysis)
- National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales (study framework, child assessment, ECE setting and home questionnaires)
- Centre for Research in Early Childhood in England (policy questionnaire)
- IEA Secretariat (translation verification, quality monitoring)

For country enrollment, contact:
IEA Secretariat at
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Project Highlights

2013
Framework Development

2014
■ Phase 1
Policy Questionnaire

2015
■ Phase 1
Reporting

2015–2017
■ Phase 2
Child Assessment, ECE Setting, Practitioner and Home Questionnaire

2018
■ Phase 2
Reporting

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