



**INTESYS**

TOGETHER / Supporting  
vulnerable children  
through integrated early  
childhood services



Funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS for strengthening integration in early childhood systems

### INTESYS- Vers des systèmes intégrés pour la petite enfance Recommandations pour une transition de qualité à l'entrée à l'école maternelle English summary

#### FRENCH SPEAKING COMMUNITY

---

In Belgium, the vast majority of children starts going to preschool at the age of 2.5-3. The child then enters the school and, at a very early age, is led to adopt a new identity as a pupil. In order for this transition to be of high quality, it is essential that the school is ready for a holistic approach to the child's development during its journey to become a pupil while respecting the needs of its age.

In our split system, some of the preconditions favorable to this quality transition are more likely to be found in childcare and free time services (for the 3- to 12-year-olds) regulated by the Office of Birth and Childhood (ONE), others rather in preschool regulated by the Ministry of Education of the French Speaking Community of Belgium. The following recommendations ensure that the preconditions for a high-quality transition is present in all services for children under the age of 6, and that preschool is ready to welcome the young child and his/her family

#### 1. Recommendations to promote a common framework for ECEC

- Support the knowledge and skills of educare (combination care, education, learning) in the pre- and in-service training of all professionals in early childhood (0- to 6-year-olds): teacher, child carer, and future bachelors in "childhood education".
- Share the theoretical benchmarks on the importance of the basic need for continuity, especially during transition phases (period of familiarization at school entry, arrival at school in the morning, transitions between periods of activity ...).
- Emphasize the importance of positive relationships between the various actors in the child's life (family and

parents, actors in other environments of the child's life, social support actors where possible).

#### 2. Recommendations on professional practices

- Systematically support opportunities for interprofessional / cross-sectoral meetings to exchange, analyse and reflect together on the practices of "educare" in the sector of Early Childhood Education and Care. To do this, promote an ethical framework that supports trust and an equal relationship between professionals with different training backgrounds and professions.
- Stimulate partnership with parents, with specific attention for parents in precarious situations and poverty, in a context of diversity.

#### 3. Recommendations on organization

- Systematically review the organization of the school to support the need for continuity for children. Identify and remove structural barriers to parents' entry into school while maintaining the necessary security of access.
- Reflect and take concrete action so that the rhythm of the children is predominant on the school rhythm (the various moments of learning, periods of naps and meals for example).
- Include formally in the school day a moment of welcoming of the child during which its parents are welcome, and take into account the familiarization needs of each child.

#### 4. Recommendations for educational policies

- Recognize the importance of educare as a critical step to ensure a quality transition of all children to preschool and to all services for children under 6 years.
- Increase the time allocated to professionals to carry out the necessary intersectoral and interprofessional activities.
- Improve the teacher/pupil ratio in reception classes or 1<sup>st</sup> year preschool, as an essential condition to implement educare practices.
- Improve the working conditions of the school principals, with a view to supporting innovations especially for the preschool level.