



European Education Area Strategic Framework

Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Making early childhood education and care more inclusive through monitoring & evaluation of quality



Making Early Childhood Education and Care more inclusive through monitoring and evaluation of quality

Manuscript completed in December 2023

LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
1. Policy background, objectives and methodology	10
2. Evaluating the visibility and efficiency of inclusive policies.....	13
2.1. Current practices	13
2.1.1. Visibility of inclusive policies.....	13
2.1.2. Efficiency of inclusive policies.....	14
2.2. Basic principles.....	18
2.3. Potential pitfalls.....	18
2.4. Recommended approaches.....	19
3. Which data and information should be collected and how?	21
3.1. Basic principles	21
3.1.1. Type of data	21
3.1.2. Resources.....	23
3.1.3. Definitions	23
3.1.4. Sources.....	25
3.2. Personal data.....	28
3.2.1. Usefulness of collecting personal data	29
3.2.2. Challenges to collect personal data	29
3.2.3. Practices across Europe.....	30
3.3. Existence and implementation of an inclusive curriculum	31
3.4. Training ECEC staff for inclusion	33
3.5. Staff:child ratio	35
3.6. Attendance or participation?	35
4. Effective use of data collected to improve accessibility and inclusiveness of ECEC	37
Annex 1 – Survey template.....	39
Annex 2 – Additional questionnaire on M&E of inclusion	43
Annex 3 – Defining vulnerable groups	44
Families with a low socio-economic status	44
Children with disabilities and/or special (educational) needs	49
Annex 4 – Collection of personal data across Europe.....	58

Executive Summary

This publication is the fourth report of the Working Group (WG)¹ on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), which was established in 2021 as part of a new generation of WGs under the Commission's Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (EEA communication, 30 September 2020)², as well as the Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training towards the European Education Area and Beyond (Resolution, 18 February 2021)³.

The European WG on ECEC supports member states in implementing the 2019 Council Recommendation for High-Quality ECEC systems and the European Quality Framework for ECEC.⁴ From January 2022 to December 2023, the WG explored the topic of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of quality – one of the pillars of the European Quality Framework – and has published three reports⁵:

1. *Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: Purposes, Values and Principles*
2. *Improving the governance of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC*
3. *Involving children, parents, staff and other stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC.*

This report is the last of this series and is based on the recognition that there are numerous policies, projects and practices across Europe which aim to support the participation of vulnerable children in ECEC, and that it is important to monitor their implementation and efficiency.

Background

Provision of high quality ECEC has clearly been established as a powerful lever to support children's development and well-being, their social inclusion and school success. This is why the European Union and its Member States have agreed several commitments underlying that all children, including the most vulnerable ones, should have access to quality ECEC (e.g., the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Education Area Strategic Framework, the Care Strategy or the Child Guarantee).

A survey of the WG members however showed that in most countries, further work was needed to collect more information on:

- whether inclusive legislation is effective in increasing ECEC attendance among vulnerable groups;
- the actual attendance of specific groups of children in ECEC.

Evaluating the visibility and efficiency of inclusive policies

Increasing visibility of inclusive policies and measures is an essential pre-requisite to increase access to ECEC. The WG therefore discussed **whether these policies and**

¹ Members list: [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](#);

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&from=EN>

³ Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48584/st06289-re01-en21.pdf>

⁴ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605(01)&from=EN)

⁵ WG reports: [ECEC - EACGroups - EC Public Wiki \(europa.eu\)](#)

measures are sufficiently well-known by families who benefit from them, which most countries are able to do.

On the other hand, **evaluating the efficiency of these inclusive policies to facilitate participation in ECEC of children from vulnerable backgrounds is more difficult.** Some WG members were however able to share some of the indicators and tools they use, e.g., for monitoring closely the use of fee-reduction schemes based on families' socioeconomic status. To support the evaluation of the efficiency of inclusive policies, the WG first agreed on some **basic principles**:

- M&E systems should assess whether policies are being well implemented, but also identify gaps and shortcomings with the view to address them;
- empirical data should be used to make evidence-informed policy decisions;
- policymakers should be held accountable for acting on the results of M&E processes.

The WG also recalls some **pitfalls** which must be avoided, e.g., not including all stakeholders in M&E processes, and **suggests some approaches** which can be useful for a successful evaluation of inclusive policies. It first recalls that when designing M&E processes, attention must be paid to the values that support the ECEC system (inclusive, equitable, consistent...), and suggests to:

- collect data on the inclusiveness of ECEC settings
- ensure that the M&E processes consider the views and experiences of all children.

Which data and information should be collected, and how?

The WG identified a number of **characteristics of an efficient M&E system which enables the evaluation of an ECEC system's inclusiveness**:

- Information to be collected should inform the evaluation of both structural and process quality, it should combine quantitative and qualitative data, and it should recognise and address ethical and sensitive issues;
- Multi-professional teams and a whole range of resources (methodological, legal, technical, financial) need to be available to support the M&E system;
- Clear and detailed definitions of target groups to be included in ECEC must be agreed and understood by all stakeholders; a range of definitions used by WG members is annexed to the report to illustrate the diversity of approaches;
- Many sources of information can be used to provide information and data to improve quality and inclusiveness of ECEC systems; some of the sources support the evaluation of structural quality, others contribute more to the evaluation of process quality and some contribute to both;
- A system is in place to ensure quality and reliability of data and an adequate coordination of services / tools which collect data;
- It is essential to build and maintain trust between the individuals / organisations providing the data and those collecting and using it;
- There must be a clear understanding by all parties of why the data is being collected and how it is going to be used;
- All the stakeholders who organise, deliver or benefit from ECEC should be heard at some stage of the M&E process. A methodology should also be in place to listen to families who do not use ECEC services.

Collecting personal data is a challenging but useful operation to support evaluation of the ECEC system's inclusiveness. It helps determining whether policies to increase the inclusiveness of ECEC systems and services are actually working, and helps identifying weaknesses at local, regional and national level and redesign ECEC systems. Challenges related to legal, administrative, ethical issues therefore need to be addressed. Examples of how countries collect and use personal data can be found in annex of the report.

The existence and implementation of an inclusive curriculum (or pedagogical framework) is a helpful tool to support inclusiveness of ECEC systems. The WG therefore agreed that it is important to:

- evaluate the inclusive dimension of the ECEC curriculum;
- consider whether it includes or is completed by concrete guidance to implement it;
- evaluate whether implementation of the curriculum supports efficiently provision of quality education and care to *all* children.

As **ECEC staff are essential to deliver quality ECEC**, the WG suggests it is useful for national and local policymakers as well as ECEC providers, employers, leaders, training services to:

- assess the inclusive dimension of initial and continuing education offered to ECEC staff, to equip them with the competences and attitudes to work with children with various abilities and profiles;
- assess the extent to which all ECEC staff have the opportunity to acquire the relevant competences;
- follow-up these assessment results with relevant measures, e.g., development of new training modules

As **staff:child ratio is usually associated with a higher quality of education and care which support the inclusion of vulnerable children**, the WG pointed the need to develop M&E systems which:

- ensure that appropriate staff:child ratio regulations are in place and that they are suitable to support inclusion of all children, including vulnerable children;
- control that staff:child ratio regulations are respected.

Finally, the WG discussed the **actual engagement of vulnerable children in the activities of the ECEC setting, beyond their simple enrolment or attendance**. This aspect is challenging to monitor and evaluate at national level, but some countries provide guidance to ECEC settings to ensure full engagement of all children, regardless of their abilities or profiles. The WG therefore concluded that:

- all countries should make sure that their guiding documents for provision and evaluation of ECEC include recommendations and tools which consider the active engagement of vulnerable children in ECEC activities;
- these should be accompanied by staff training to ensure the adequate use and follow-up of such tools.

Effective use of data collected to improve accessibility and inclusiveness of ECEC

The report closes with some examples and a reminder that **M&E processes should not only provide relevant information on the quality of practice enacted in individual settings, but also on the systemic conditions within which each ECEC settings are working, to identify and address shortcomings in existing policies and governance arrangements.**

1. Policy background, objectives and methodology

Provision of quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has clearly been established as a powerful lever to support children's development and well-being, their social inclusion and school success. It also includes other societal benefits related to parents' participation in the labour market, such as increased gender equality, the improvement of work-life balance and the reduction of poverty.

This is why **the European Union and its Member States have agreed several commitments underlying that all children should have access to quality ECEC.**

- The **European pillar of social rights**, Principle 11 on "Childcare and support to children" states that:
 - *Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.*
 - *Children have the right to protection from poverty. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to enhance equal opportunities.*
- The **European Education Area strategic framework**⁶ sets as a first priority the ambition to *improve quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training*, and recalls that:
 - *By ensuring quality and inclusive education and training for all, Member States can further reduce social, economic and cultural inequalities.*
 - *To ensure a truly inclusive education and equal opportunities for all learners in all levels and types of education and training, academic attainment and achievement should be dissociated from social, economic and cultural status, or from other personal circumstances.*
 - *Quality early childhood education and care plays a particularly important role, and should be further reinforced as a basis for future educational success.*
- The **Care strategy** and its revised target on early childhood education and care foresee that by 2030:
 - *45% of children below the age of 3 are in ECEC;*
 - *96% of children between the age of 3 and the starting age for compulsory primary education are in ECEC*
- The Council recommendation for a **Child Guarantee** calls Member States to guarantee effective and free access to ECEC, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

Research⁷ however shows that **children from vulnerable groups have less access to ECEC than other children.**

⁶ Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) (2021/C 66/01)

⁷ E.g. Baptista, I., Guio, A-C., Marlier, E., & Perista, P. (2023). Access for children in need to the key services covered by the European Child Guarantee: An analysis of policies in the 27 EU Member States - 2023. (European Social Policy Analysis Network (ESPAN))

It is also recognised that **only high-quality provision of education and care benefit all children, especially vulnerable children and children with a disadvantaged background**, and that **there is no qualitative ECEC system if it is not inclusive**. This is supported by the **Council Recommendation on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems (2019)**⁸ and the **European Quality Framework for ECEC**.

In this context, the European Member States have tasked the 2018-2020 European working group on ECEC to explore ways to make ECEC systems more inclusive, which led to the publication of the Toolkit for inclusive ECEC⁹. It exposes universal policies and practices to make ECEC systems and practices more inclusive, to the benefit of all children. It also explores specific additional measures which can be taken to include children who meet additional barriers or challenges, e.g. children with disabilities, with a migrant or Roma background, with health issues, etc.

The Toolkit for inclusive ECEC acknowledged that across Europe there are numerous policies, projects and practices which aim to increase inclusion in ECEC. It is important to monitor their effectiveness in relation to the extent to which they meet their goals.

The current working group on ECEC (2022-2023)¹⁰ has explored an essential element of quality ECEC systems, i.e. how to monitor and evaluate quality in ECEC. It defined several key questions which led to the publication of three reports:

1. *Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: Purposes, Values and Principles*
2. *Improving the governance of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC*
3. *Involving children, parents, staff and other stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC.*

A final question was: “How can monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes make ECEC systems more inclusive for all children?”.

Discussions were based on the following vision: a high quality and inclusive ECEC system, which benefits all children and the whole society requires:

- **Consistency of quality in ECEC systems for all children, regardless of the type of provision (e.g. public, private, and independent provision), with a view to achieving equality of educational opportunities. This must be supported by a solid and efficient system to monitor and evaluate quality of ECEC in general (as explored by the first three reports of the WG);**
- **All children, regardless of their personal and family circumstances, have the possibility to access ECEC, and they receive quality education and care adapted to their specific needs and circumstances.**

Throughout 2022 and 2023, the **ECEC working group (WG) identified principles, challenges and tools to best use monitoring and evaluation processes and results to support inclusiveness of ECEC systems**. This work is presented in this report and is based on discussions and peer-learning which took place through online meetings and peer-learning seminars in Belgium and Lithuania, on monitoring and evaluation in general.

Specific additional activities have been conducted to complete the information emerging from general discussions on M&E, starting with a survey of WG members on their practices and strategies to monitor and evaluate inclusiveness of ECEC (see Annex 1 – Survey template).

⁸ [EUR-Lex - 32019H0605\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁹ [Toolkit for inclusive early childhood education and care - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁰ Members list: [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](#); WG reports: [ECEC - EACGroups - EC Public Wiki \(europa.eu\)](#)

One of the main findings was that **there is limited information in many countries on:**

- **whether inclusive legislation is effective in increasing ECEC attendance among vulnerable groups;**
- **the actual attendance of specific vulnerable groups of children in ECEC.**

However, some WG members indicated that they had at least some of this information and data, and the **group therefore agreed to look at practices on the following topics:**

- **Collection of data and information on ECEC attendance of children from different groups;**
- **Evaluating the efficiency of ECEC policies aimed to increase the inclusiveness of systems and settings, with a specific focus on the following target groups:**
 - **Families with a low socio-economic status;**
 - **Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN).**

An additional questionnaire was filled by WG members who had previously responded to the first survey, to complete the information (see Annex 2 – Additional questionnaire).

2. Evaluating the visibility and efficiency of inclusive policies

Monitoring and evaluation systems have the potential to assess the extent to which ECEC systems are inclusive. This involves looking at enrolment rates, participation, and the experiences of children from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This chapter explores some of the current practices to evaluate the visibility and the efficiency of inclusive policies, and considers the basic principles, potential pitfalls and recommended approaches.

2.1. Current practices

Most countries have a system-level policy in place to encourage children and families from disadvantaged groups to attend ECEC services; **it is essential for decision-makers to evaluate whether their inclusive policies do effectively have a positive impact on the enrolment of vulnerable children in ECEC.**

WG members were invited to answer a short survey to understand whether and how they could evaluate whether their inclusive policies were well known, and whether their inclusive policies actually led to increasing the enrolment of some target groups in ECEC.

2.1.1. Visibility of inclusive policies

The Toolkit for inclusive ECEC highlights that **increasing accessibility to ECEC by vulnerable groups entails improving information** and removing administrative barriers. It recalls the Feasibility study for a Child Guarantee¹¹ which highlighted that *families may not use ECEC for [...] a lack of information on children's and families' rights or entitlement to financial support. It suggests there is a need for more outreach and information to parents of vulnerable backgrounds who may be less familiar with ECEC institutions, rules, and regulations.*

It is therefore important for decision-makers to evaluate whether their inclusive policies are sufficiently well-known by families (directly, or through the support of local authorities, social, health, education, ECEC services), to maximise the accessibility of ECEC provision for all children.

WG members were invited to answer a short survey to understand whether and how they were able to evaluate if these policies were well-known. Results of the survey showed that **over two-thirds of the respondents believe that the policies in their countries are well-known, whether they relate to the inclusion of children with a low SES background or children with disabilities / SEN.** Other respondents either thought that they were not well-known, or felt they were unable to judge the visibility of these policies.

Norway shared its experience:

- The introduction of moderation schemes for children in low-income families in 2014 and the use of these schemes has increased in the following years. It took time for the measures to be well-known and for eligible families to take part in the moderation schemes. It is still a challenge that not all children entitled to reduced fees take use of these schemes. The latest strategy for kindergartens towards

¹¹ [Feasibility study for a child guarantee - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://publications.ec.europa.eu/publication-detail?publication=94401414-1014-4800-9000-000110000000&lang=en)

2030 signals that there will be measures taken to simplify access to these schemes.

- Municipalities are required to report the number of families that received reduced fees. Municipalities are key in ensuring that the schemes are well known to parents and families. Both language barriers and bureaucratic demands can challenge families in receiving necessary information and in having their child enrolled in kindergarten.
- A report from 2014¹² identified variations in approaches and reach-out activities that municipalities took which affect the propensity of children with migrant background to take part in ECEC. Following up these findings, an earmarked funding for municipalities with high proportions of children with migrant background was introduced, supporting municipalities in local measures and reach-out activities.
- Reducing hindrances to families in availing of moderation schemes included making it possible for municipalities to directly collect information on income from the national tax authorities. (Previously many families had challenges in presenting the correct documentation to the local authorities.)

In **Ireland**, the Access and Inclusion Model supporting children with disabilities was introduced in 2016. A review of the scheme has been completed and is due to be published in early 2024. The review engaged with educators, parents, providers and children to gauge impact, implementation, understanding and awareness of the scheme.

2.1.2. Efficiency of inclusive policies

Developing and implementing policies to support inclusion of vulnerable children in ECEC is an important strategy to support economic growth and social cohesion and requires important investments. It is therefore essential to evaluate the efficiency of these policies.

As a small enquiry on the extent to which this is happening across Europe, WG members were asked their **opinions on whether the policies have led to increases in the attendance of socioeconomically disadvantaged children in ECEC**; survey results showed that:

- 10 of the 23 respondents (43.4%) believed the policy had increased attendance,
- 3 (13%) of the respondents indicated that the policy had not increased attendance,
- and **10 (43.4%) reported that they did not know.**

Similarly, **opinions on whether the policies have led to increases in the attendance of children with disabilities and/or SEN in ECEC** were generally less decisive, with

- 12 of the 21 respondents (57%) indicating that the policy had increased attendance,
- 1 (13%) of the respondents indicating that the policy had not increased attendance,
- and **8 (38%) reporting that they did not know.**

Respondents who affirmed that their inclusive policies had a positive effect, also provided examples on the **indicators and tools which can be used to evaluate efficiency of inclusive policies**, e.g.:

¹² FAFO rapport 2014:23 [20370.pdf \(fafo.no\)](#)

Country	Indicators, tools or strategies to evaluate the efficiency of policies towards children <u>with low socio-economic status (SES)</u>
Belgium (Flanders) – under 3	<p>As there is no legal entitlement to a place in ECEC settings for children under 3, and there is a shortage of places, the Flemish Government installed priority rules in 2014 to give specific groups priority access to the services that receives subsidies. In particular, providers who receive a basic subsidy + means-tested fees subsidy + plus subsidy (this is the highest subsidy) have to give absolute priority to children of vulnerable families. Minimum 30% of all children admitted in a year, must be children of vulnerable families. These providers report every year to the Opgroeien agency whether the minimum target of 30% has been reached. If the priority rules have not been respected, the agency starts a dialogue with the provider to raise awareness on the issue. Subsidies can be lowered or loss of subsidies could be part of the measures taken by the agency.</p>
Belgium (Flanders) – over 3	<p>Schools have their own data environment ('Mijn Onderwijs'), provided and maintained by the Ministry of Education. Within this data environment, schools receive data about the participation of their pupils in education, of toddlers who participate (too) little in education, about study progress, about the socio-economic status profile of their school. This data can also be compared by the school with data from comparable schools.</p> <p>The external evaluation of the school's equal educational opportunities policy, takes place in the context of the regular school audit. The education inspectorate evaluates the equal educational opportunities policy at each inspection. During the school inspection, the education inspectorate checks whether the school respects the education regulations and meets the quality expectations regarding the Equal Educational Opportunities (GOK) policy included in the educational quality reference framework. The Education Inspectorate has a long tradition of making data available to the education sector, often in static reports ('the school portraits'). From the 2022-2023 school year, the Inspectorate launched a new form of data report: 'the DataWijzer'. The DataWijzer is an online and interactive tool that visualises data related to the reference framework for educational quality (the OK) in a coherent way. The DataWijzer offers each school its own online dashboard that provides access to current and available data and positions its own data in relation to dynamic reference groups.</p>
Germany	<p>In the context of the Good Childcare Act, measures were implemented to reduce cost contributions or abolish parental fees either for all parents or for parents with low incomes and receiving social benefits. As part of the KiQuTG-Monitoring (monitoring accompanying the Good Childcare Act) the indicator on "cost relief for parents" monitors the development of cost contributions by parents. Findings¹³ are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the KiBS parental survey, in 2021 the median parental fees for daycare facilities for children under three years of age were 190 euros and for children over three years of age 50 euros per month. Compared to the previous year, parental contributions were thus slightly lower according to parents. • In addition, the proportion of non-contributing parents has risen further: 38% of parents used a free place for their child or were exempt from paying fees in 2021, compared to 34 percent in 2020.

¹³ BMFSFJ (Hg.) (2022): Monitoringbericht zum KiQuTG 2022, p. 24f

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, for families below the poverty risk threshold, parental contributions continue to be an obstacle to attending daycare more often (27%) than for families with incomes above the median income (10%). Compared to 2020, this proportion has increased by 2 percentage points for families below the poverty risk threshold (2020: 25%). Conversely, for families with a net equivalent household income from the median to 200 per cent of the median, the proportions have fallen significantly (2020: 15%). Costs as an obstacle to the use of ECEC have thus become less important only for families with a medium to high family income. • Moreover, it also became apparent that parental contributions differ greatly between the federal states and between districts in some cases. • According to in-depth-analyses only 51% of the differences in parental contributions can be explained by factors at the family level, such as the parents' income, the form of care and the amount of care provided. One third (33%) of the differences in parental contributions can be explained by regulations at Länder level, while the remaining 16% can be attributed to the district level. (p. 25).
Ireland	<p>The main scheme to support families with low SES is the National Childcare Scheme, which was launched in 2019 and has been independently reviewed after its first year of operation (Frontier Economics). A further review will be undertaken in early 2024. The key indicators centre on usage, affordability, impact on usage of ECEC, impact on household income and income on labour activation.</p>
Norway	<p>The following annual indicators are collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates of children in ECEC by age and minority background. Data comes from the annual report from kindergartens to BASIL, and statistical data on the overall population from Statistics Norway. (Data from kindergartens are delivered digitally and are checked by local authorities). • Number of children taking part of the above-mentioned moderation schemes. Data is collected through annual reports from the municipalities (BASIL). <p>Evaluations of the use of moderation schemes by low-income families¹⁴ concluded that the schemes have resulted in reductions in the cost of childcare, but that the effect on the use of ECEC among low-income families was modest. Furthermore, the analysis showed the scheme of reduced parental payment modestly increased mothers' workforce participation.</p> <p>On the demand of the ministries for children, families and education, a detailed survey on the use of child-care arrangements and participation in the workforce of parents with different SES and minority background are conducted by Statistics Norway fairly regularly: e.g. 2002, 2010, 2016. The next one is underway and will be published by the end of 2023.</p>

¹⁴ Østbakken, K.M *Evaluering av moderasjonsordningene for barnehagen – delrapport 2*, Institutt for samfunnsforskning 2019 Rapport 2019:10

Slovenia	The efficiency of ECEC inclusive policies towards families with a low SES is confirmed by the increased number of children enrolled in ECEC every year – in spite of the negative natality rate – in particular since the country implemented system changes oriented to reach families with low SES (responding to the dialogue with kindergartens and needs of the vulnerable parents in particular: free of charge ECEC for the second and the third child in the family as well as shorter programmes in duration of 240 hours per year which are free of charge for parents).
Spain	The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is currently working on a computer tool that specifies whether educational policies for families with low SES are satisfactory or not. Over the next few months, the results will be analysed, involving teachers, the educational administration and the families themselves. https://proa.educacion.es/

Country	Strategies to evaluate the efficiency of policies towards <u>children with disabilities or SEN</u>
Ireland	The Access and Inclusion Model supporting children with disabilities was introduced in 2016. A review of the scheme has been completed and is due for publication in early 2024. The review engaged with educators, parents, providers and children to assess success in supporting children across a spectrum of disability to access the free preschool (ECCE) scheme.
Norway	<p>The most important indicator to follow developments is the annual statistics with numbers of children receiving special needs education in the kindergartens. The annual reporting also includes the number of staff in addition to basic staffing that are there to support with special needs education.</p> <p>The regular survey to kindergartens conducted by the Directorate for Education and Training had questions related to the provision for children with special needs on a number of occasions¹⁵. These surveys provide information to policy makers, owners and the public. Questions are administered to both kindergarten leaders (head-teachers), kindergartens owners and local kindergarten authorities.</p> <p>Questions include topics about collaboration with services outside kindergarten, assessment of competence on different topics related to inclusion, and to what degree the kindergarten is using the guidance and competence material provided by the Directorate.</p> <p>The Directorate for Education and Training has also commissioned research specifically about the provision for children under school age with need for special educational support.</p> <p>In addition, Statped will conduct their own surveys on the provision of their special services and describing this in their annual report.</p>

Based on the high number of WG members who shared their difficulties in evaluating the efficiency of their inclusive policies, the ECEC WG agreed that progress was generally needed to develop processes and tools to better evaluate the efficiency of

¹⁵ eg Naper, L.R., A. Myhr og A.S. Haugset (2022): Spørsmål til Barnehage-Norge 2021. SINTEF

inclusive policies; the following sections explore the different elements which need to be taken into account to do so.

2.2. Basic principles

The WG agreed that the **primary aim of M&E of quality in ECEC should first and foremost be to ensure the highest possible quality of ECEC services for all children.** It also agreed that:

- **Ensuring consistency of quality in ECEC systems for all children, regardless of the type of provision (e.g., public, private, and independent provision), should lead to equality of educational opportunities for all children.**
- **Inclusiveness is an important value to consider when designing M&E systems of quality in ECEC:** *Children and families are characterised by great social, socio-economic, cultural and religious diversity, and this diversity should be respected as a fundamental element of European societies. ECEC services can promote the creation of a more inclusive and cohesive society by providing additional opportunities to children coming from societally disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs, as well as providing support to parents from vulnerable and/or marginalised groups.*

The WG noted that **M&E systems should strive toward a policy learning perspective** and evaluate not only the pedagogical quality of individual settings, but also assess the performance of the ECEC system overall, including the policies and infrastructure that are put in place to govern ECEC provision.

In this context, **M&E processes should aim to fulfil the dual purposes of 1) assessing whether policies are being well-implemented, and 2) identifying gaps and shortcomings in existing policies so that they can be addressed, leading to more inclusive ECEC.**

Linking the outcomes of M&E processes to political processes was acknowledged to be important for ensuring that these two purposes can be fulfilled, in particular through ensuring that empirical data is used to make evidence-informed policy decisions and that policymakers are held accountable for acting on the results of M&E processes.

2.3. Potential pitfalls

It is also important to recall the potential pitfalls when designing M&E systems, as these may impact the inclusiveness of ECEC systems. The 1st WG report on Purposes, Values and Principles of M&E of quality in ECEC highlighted the following: *In light of the challenges involved in adequately and comprehensively measuring quality in ECEC, there is a **significant risk that M&E processes may unintentionally make strong statements on what does and does not matter, not only in terms of pedagogical, process and structural quality, but also in terms of the relative importance of varying stakeholders' views.*** For example:

- *An M&E system which does not consciously include tailored processes, tools or activities for gathering the views of children with socioeconomic disadvantage, special educational needs and/or disabilities may contribute to their further marginalisation.*
- *An M&E system which espouses an overly standardised, normative and prescriptive vision of ECEC quality may risk ignoring or compromising cultural differences and the right to self-determination in some communities (such as Roma, traveller*

communities and other indigenous minorities), thus falsely labelling variations in cultural practices of ECEC as variations in ECEC quality.

- *An ECEC system which treats children's educational abilities as a marker of ECEC service quality may overlook the impact of children's backgrounds and socioeconomic characteristics on their educational outcomes, thus introducing the risk of unintentionally penalising ECEC centres that serve children from under-privileged (and therefore potentially under-performing) communities.*

The working group also noted that one of the *risks of publishing M&E results include encouraging ranking of individual ECEC centres, which in turn might lead to increases in competitiveness between ECEC centres as well as parents (thus disincentivising collaboration between centres and disrupting social cohesion between communities) and social stratification in attendance (where better-advantaged and more data-literate parents select higher-performing centres, resulting in a concentration of disadvantaged children in lower-performing centres and the perpetuation of educational inequality).* In cases where the assessment of children's educational outcomes is used as a marker of ECEC quality, ECEC providers might be incentivised to increase selectivity of access. However, the report also noted benefits of publishing M&E results, including facilitating transparency and accountability of service providers, making visible 'good practice' examples of centres, and acknowledging quality improvement in individual centres, which may have the added benefit of motivating further quality improvement in future.

2.4. Recommended approaches

Based on the points noted above, the working group suggested that:

- Decision-makers who design M&E systems should address the gap that may persist between the values underpinning ECEC practices and the way they are reflected in M&E processes.
- One of the guiding principles to design processes for M&E of quality in ECEC is to be "equitable and consistent", starting from the idea that *all children have an equal right to quality ECEC, therefore a key priority is to ensure that services are held accountable for providing quality ECEC to the children, families and communities they serve. M&E strives to ensure that regardless of variations in pedagogical approaches or practices across centres, the learning environment provides all children with equal access to high quality educational opportunities.* Strategies to achieve this include:
 - *Using M&E tools that generate comparable data and results, based on a shared, research-based, and well-defined understanding of ECEC quality, in order to identify gaps and areas for improvement;*
 - *Ensuring that all services comply with mandatory quality standards, while developing and implementing quality enhancement initiatives aimed at addressing the above-mentioned gaps and area for improvement at system level.*
- *In an ECEC system that values inclusion of all children, M&E processes should aim to:*
 - *Collect data on the inclusiveness of ECEC settings (for instance by tracking statistics on the representation of disadvantaged groups among attending children or assessing the extent to which all children are engaged in ECEC activities); and*
 - *Ensure that the M&E process considers the views and experiences of all children, while also using M&E tools and activities that are appropriate and*

accessible for all children including those with special needs and/or other disabilities.

These approaches are explored further in this report, looking at possible ways to monitor and evaluate the implementation of inclusive policies which are set by many countries.

3. Which data and information should be collected and how?

Quality and inclusiveness of ECEC systems depend on many aspects, as defined by the European Quality Framework for ECEC, ranging from the accessibility and affordability of ECEC provision, staff training, existence and implementation of a curriculum, adequate funding and legislation, etc.

Considering the different components of quality ECEC, **the working group discussed which data can usefully inform the monitoring and evaluation of the inclusive policies which target different vulnerable groups.** Aspects covered in this chapter are:

- Basic principles: considers the type of data that is needed, the necessary resources, the need for commonly agreed definitions and the use of a coherent and well-coordinated range of sources;
- Personal data: why should this be collected, and which data can be useful;
- Existence (and implementation) of an inclusive curriculum;
- Training of ECEC staff on inclusive practices;
- Staff:child ratio;
- The participation / engagement of disadvantaged children in ECEC activities, beyond their mere attendance at the ECEC setting.

3.1. Basic principles

3.1.1. Type of data

Many types of information can be collected and used to evaluate the efficiency of inclusive policies. Before looking at some specific data and information related to inclusion, it is however worth recalling the general principles agreed by the WG¹⁶:

What kind of data and information do we need to achieve a balance between M&E of structural quality and of process quality?

Any discussion focused on the type of data that are needed to inform M&E processes must be framed by a clear vision on the purposes for which information are collected. In this sense, the group identified the different types of data that are needed in relation to each of the following agreed purposes:

- *data that are helpful to support the learning and development of each and every child (process quality);*
- *data that support policy decision-makers in providing the systemic conditions (structural quality) that allow process quality to be of a good level and to be constantly improved;*
- *data that allow to identify problems and address them responsively by taking into account the specific context within which they are situated (meaning that the collection of data on structural and process quality needs to be complemented by data referring to socio-demographic indicators allowing a contextualised analysis of problems, as well as the development of tailored solutions).*

¹⁶ PLA BXL

- data that value the diversity and richness of practices enacted in each ECEC setting, as a resource for the entire ECEC system.

Therefore, it was agreed that only by **combining quantitative and qualitative data** diversified solutions to complex problems could be developed, by striking a balance between the principles of educational equity and responsiveness in M&E processes¹⁷.

It was also highlighted that only those data that could be used should be collected, in order to avoid over-burden – in terms of additional workload – from both the side of evaluators (collecting and analysing data) and the side of ECEC providers (providing data on a regular basis). It was also agreed that:

- data should be collected systematically over time, to give account of both progresses (made by ECEC setting/systems in quality improvement) and processes (through which quality improvement was achieved)
- data collected from multiple sources should be combined in a complementary way, in order to reflect the experiences and voices of all the actors involved in educational process.

In conclusion, the group agreed that a well-balanced combination of data related to both structural and process quality should be collected in order to improve - **simultaneously** - the quality of ECEC provision at centre's level (supporting professional teams in analysing, reflecting on, and revising their practice) and at system level (ensuring favourable framing conditions for ongoing ECEC improvement i.e., adequate no-contact time, etc...).

At the same time, excessive additional workload for data collection should be avoided by:

- piloting M&E tools before full scale implementation,
- complementing systematic data collection processes with research-focused thematic studies,
- embedding data collection processes within everyday practice in ECEC centres (i.e., gathering children's and parents' perspectives; collegial planning, documentation and reflection).

Source: ECEC Working Group, 1st Peer Learning Activity, Brussels, 2022

In addition, the working group noted that when it comes to evaluating the inclusiveness of an ECEC system or setting, additional ethical issues / sensitivities need to be considered:

- The nature of the data collected is highly sensitive, meaning that its privacy must be preserved. It must be asked for and collected in sensitive ways, and aggregated/anonymised data must be used.
- Collecting data in relation to family vulnerability (e.g. poverty, socio-cultural background...) and children's special needs / disabilities might be perceived as breaking the privacy of families (fear of stigmatization). This sensitive data has the possibility of labelling children and families if the data is not handled properly.

¹⁷ Cfr. 'Principles guiding M&E of quality in ECEC' endorsed by the working group and published in the first WG report on [Monitoring and evaluating quality in ECEC: purposes, values and principles](#).

3.1.2. Resources

A number of essential resources have been identified by the WG which should be considered by decision makers who build an M&E system which aim at improving quality in general:

Resources needed to collect data and information

- *In terms of **methodology and design**, it is essential for all involved stakeholders to share a common vision and understanding of the importance, priorities, and purposes of the data collection exercise.*
- *A strong and balanced **legal foundation** is necessary for data collection to achieve its intended goals, while protecting the interests of the individuals providing the data.*
- *A **high-quality IT** infrastructure is indispensable for the collection and processing of M&E data.*
- *Adequate collection of valid, reliable and relevant data on ECEC requires **professionals** with knowledge in ECEC (e.g., academics, practitioners, and child rights experts), as well as inspectors, observers and interviewers who are highly skilled in qualitative research methods, particularly for the collection of data and information on process quality. Furthermore, legal expertise is required to ensure that data collection and storage processes are compliant with the law, and IT expertise is required to keep data storage and analysis systems running. People with expertise in data analysis (e.g., statisticians or social scientists) are equally important for ensuring that raw data is converted into clear findings and evidence-based conclusions. In cases where data collection is automated/digital and self-serviced (for example in the case of electronic surveys or data entry platforms), support teams will be necessary to run helpdesks and ensure that data providers are able to submit their information correctly. Finally, people with strong leadership skills are required to maintain the clear distribution of roles and responsibilities across the full spectrum of stakeholders.*
- *For raw data to feed into evidence-based initiatives for the improvement of ECEC policies and practices, it must first be analysed into concrete ‘results’ which are then assessed within their local, regional or national context to generate key messages, policy pointers, and recommendations. A **communication strategy** for analysing, presenting, and disseminating the data is therefore necessary to ensure that the conclusions from the data are understandable for end-users and can be used to their full potential.*
- *An **adequate and consistent budget** is essential to ensure that the necessary people and IT services are available to sustain the M&E system in the long-term.*

Source: 1st Peer Learning Activity of the Working Group, Brussels, December 2022

3.1.3. Definitions

The WG acknowledged that M&E systems leading to **inclusive ECEC need to be based on definitions of target groups agreed by all stakeholders at national level, across all administrative levels and throughout all sectors** and noted that *a common definition is needed for specific groups of vulnerable children, which should be focused on their specific needs rather than their characteristics* – grouping children may be arbitrary unless it is done with an aim to find common ways to support their learning and development.

To illustrate the different approaches which can be used to define target groups, the WG focussed on families with low socio-economic status and on children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Families with low socioeconomic status

The survey of WG members showed that most countries use an agreed definition of families with low socioeconomic status upon which their system-level policies are based. Annex 3 presents the definitions used across Europe to define families with low socio-economic status; **the following characteristics were typically used as indicators or proxy of socioeconomic disadvantage and eligibility for support in accessing ECEC:**

- maximum household income thresholds (e.g., a 'poverty line' that may be below a specified proportion of the median income);
- living in poor-quality housing conditions (as defined by a set of standardised criteria);
- the use of languages other than an official national language in the home;
- parents' employment status and education levels;
- parents' eligibility for other benefits, such as additional housing or child benefits;
- other social risks such as the presence of substance abuse or violence in the home.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) / disabilities

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education offer the following definitions for children with SEN / disabilities¹⁸:

- *SEN is a construct that countries usually define within their legislation. These definitions are then used to identify, assess and make provision for learners with different needs – including recognised disabilities – in different ways (Watkins, Ebersold and Lénárt, 2014). Special or 'additional' needs should not be seen as the result of 'in-child' factors, but rather 'a discrepancy between what a system of schooling ordinarily provides and what the child needs to support their learning' (Rouse, 2008, p. 6, cited by Soriano, Watkins and Ebersold, 2017, p. 22).*
- **Official decision / statement of special educational needs (SEN):** *An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs. An official decision meets the following criteria:*
 - *There has been some form of educational assessment procedure involving different people. This procedure may involve the child/learner, parents, school-based team members, as well as professionals from multi-disciplinary teams from outside the child/learner's (pre-)school.*
 - *There is some form of legal document (plan/programme, etc.) that describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive, which is used as the basis for decision-making.*
 - *There is some form of regular review process of the child/learner's needs, progress and support (European Agency, 2021a, p. 8).*

¹⁸ <https://www.european-agency.org/resources/glossary>

- **Disability** : the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that: ‘Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’ ([United Nations, 2006, Article 1](#)).

The survey of WG members showed that most countries use a national definition of children with disabilities and/or SEN upon which system-level policies are based; examples of such definitions are presented in Annex 3. Among the respondents who provided information on how disabilities and/or special needs is defined, **the following characteristics were typically used as indicators of disability and special needs:**

- the presence of a chronic physical health problem;
- the presence of a chronic mental health problem;
- motor impairments impacting movement and independence;
- sensory impairments relating to sight, hearing, and other critical functions;
- cognitive/intellectual impairments affecting learning and/or social interactions;
- any developmental delays which place a child’s capabilities below their age-appropriate level;
- any non-environmental impairment, physical or mental, that inhibit the child’s full and equal participation in educational, social or other processes;
- any non-environmental impairment, physical or mental, that results in a child needing additional support measures to achieve their educational goals.

These impairments should typically be ‘long term’. However, the temporal definition varies from country to country, with some specifying that it must last at least 6 months and others specifying that it must be permanent or likely to be permanent. Some countries also note in their definitions that the disability or special educational need can be either stable or progressive in nature.

Next to the issue of defining SEN or disabilities, the working group also noted a specific challenge for collecting data on children with special educational needs and disabilities: an official diagnosis is needed, which may be inaccessible to the most vulnerable families, or which cannot be made for children at a very young age. In particular, gathering data on ECEC attendance of disabled children under 3 may be challenging due to the sometimes late diagnoses of certain physical or cognitive illnesses and impairments.

3.1.4. Sources

Many sources and tools can provide valuable information and data to improve quality and inclusiveness of ECEC systems as demonstrated in the table below. Some of the sources support the evaluation of structural quality; others contribute more to the evaluation of process quality, and some contribute to both.

Country examples

To identify children from a low socio-economic status and the provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs, **Norway** uses a number of sources:

- Annual information about income distribution – from the National Tax register and Statistics Norway.

- Annual self-reporting from kindergartens and municipalities (BASIL). Aggregate data. Digital reporting through the reporting portal to the directorate for education and training.
- Regularly conducted broad surveys on the use of child-care arrangements and on participation in the workforce of parents with different SES and minority background are conducted by Statistics Norway (2002, 2010, 2016, 2023).
- Surveys to kindergarten heads and kindergarten owners. (The Ministry commissions these surveys – one third of kindergartens are targeted each year. The survey is conducted by research institutes)

In **Slovenia**, actors involved in collecting data include:

- The Ministry of Education with several different departments and units involved, as well as Kindergartens (private and public)
- The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
- The National education institute Slovenia¹⁹
- The Inspectorate of education and sport (body within the ministry, responsible for education, responsible for inspection of regularity of operations in kindergartens, elementary schools, music schools, upper secondary schools, higher vocational colleges, and institutions for education of SEN children, organisations for adult education and private providers that deliver officially recognised programmes).

In **Hungary**, a questionnaire survey is conducted annually in relation to the settings of nursery care as a mandatory data service within the scope of the National Statistical Data Collection Program. Data collection is performed and aggregated by the Central Statistical Office. Moreover, nursery care settings provide attendance information daily for the Hungarian State Treasury that is responsible for the administration of the support from the central budget and for the official financial inspection.

In **Italy**, the National register of students (Anagrafe nazionale degli studenti) provides information on children enrolled in pre-primary schools (3-6 years), and the National registry for the integrated system 0-6 is being set up with the aim of activating a national information system of the educational services 0-6 in which the data of the regional systems converge.

In **Slovakia**, data on children under 3 years of age are available only if they are admitted to a kindergarten included in the network of schools and school facilities. The network of schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic is a state-kept register of schools and school facilities that are authorized to provide education and training, while the control of education and training they provide is controlled by an external evaluator - the State School Inspectorate.

In **North Macedonia**, kindergartens input information in an Early Childhood Database which collects data on children with disabilities and Roma children.

In **Türkiye**, e-School Management Information System is utilized by all public/private educational institutions (from preschools to high schools), the provincial/district directorates and the Ministry of National Education. The personal data or education

¹⁹ <https://www.zrss.si/en/>

related to data of the students are gathered through this system and all information that is collected is treated confidentially. As stated in the 2022–2026 Official Statistics Programme, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for the annual publication (hardcopy and online) of Formal Education Statistics. The publication prepared includes number of new entrants, students, graduates and teachers by settlement according to Statistical Regions as well as certain internationally comparable educational indicators.

Source: <https://sqb.meb.gov.tr/www/resmi-istatistikler/icerik/64>

The working group identified a number of challenges and suggestions to address them, to ensure that M&E sources are reliable and can support inclusiveness of ECEC systems.

The working group noted that **insufficient or poor-quality data, as well as insufficient coordination and information-sharing between different institutions (e.g. education, health, social care) may lead to a loss or under-use of potentially relevant data which can be particularly crucial to support vulnerable families.** It is therefore **essential to triangulate all sources of information** to ensure a holistic vision of quality and be able to monitor and evaluate the inclusiveness of ECEC systems.

Ensuring reliability of data is a general concern when designing efficient monitoring and evaluation systems. It is particularly important to consider the following points when designing a M&E system which supports inclusiveness:

- For the data collected through M&E practices to be accurate and reflective of the everyday realities of staff, children and parents, it is essential to **build and maintain trust between the individuals providing the data and the individuals or institutions collecting and using the data.**
 - Without such trust, the data and information collected about ECEC conditions and practices is at risk of being unreflective of the true challenges, gaps and areas for improvement within ECEC settings.
 - Distrust of data collectors may also dissuade families or communities from participating in data collection.
- Central to the cultivation of trust between data providers, data collectors and users is the **establishment of a clear understanding of why the data is being collected and how it is going to be used.** Any gathering of data on individuals in the ECEC system should therefore be strongly justified, with a clear understanding of how information on each indicator will be processed, disseminated, and further consulted in ongoing practical or policy initiatives.
- **In cases where the data relies on self-reporting, issues of reliability and validity may also arise:**
 - Data on single parent families may be difficult to collect due to the need for self-declaration and the taboo/stigma in some countries. Fear of stigma may prevent families in categories of disadvantage from revealing certain details about their backgrounds during data collection processes.
 - Data on vulnerable children may be collected by asking ECEC providers to estimate the number of disadvantaged children in their cohort (in order to estimate the ECEC centre's need for extra resources and support), which raises questions about the validity of the findings.

Being mindful of who is in charge of collecting the data, why and how it will be used, and who is being asked to provide it may support the reliability of the data provided. It should also be noted that involving a too high number of people /

institutions / administrative levels in data collection may lead to collecting unreliable data.

- **Access to data may rely on consistent cooperation and data provision from nurseries and preschools, which might be unreliable if only done on a voluntary basis. It may be more efficient when linked to a funding support system.** In **Lithuania** for example, although the data provision requirements are an administrative burden for ECEC staff to fulfil, they are generally incentivised due to the funding that is linked to this data. For instance, for every child who is marked as having special educational needs or disabilities, additional funding is calculated and allocated to the setting.
- Data on migrants or refugees may not be available, meaning that **assessments rely on proxy indicators** such as foreign nationality status, language capabilities, etc.
- **As far as possible, all the stakeholders who organise, deliver and benefit from ECEC should be heard during the monitoring and evaluation processes. These processes should be inclusive and reflect all points of views**, which is the only way to fully assess the inclusiveness of ECEC systems and policies. The 3rd WG report explored in-depth how to best involve children, families, staff and other stakeholders in M&E of quality in ECEC²⁰; amongst the points which were noted to meaningfully involve these various target groups. Some are particularly relevant to include vulnerable groups in the process, e.g.:
 - *With a view to ensure equal participation to all children, the tools adopted for gathering children's views are age appropriate, culturally sensitive, and diversified in relation to children's language and abilities (both verbal and non-verbal);*
 - *Statistics about children's participation in M&E are disaggregated to show which children are (and are not) participating in M&E (e.g., children with SEND);*
 - *Inclusive data collection processes are designed to ensure that the voices of parents in all their diversity (including disadvantaged, foreign, young, old, and also those who do not use ECEC) are heard - the language used to communicate with parents and families is clear and accessible;*
 - *Research tools are designed to provide easy and accessible participation in M&E – there is consideration of the scheduling and formats needed for parents to be realistically involved;*
 - *There is a strategy in place to identify and manage the risks of involving external stakeholders, and ensure that the smallest or most excluded actors are also involved meaningfully.*
- It was also noted that a methodology should be in place to involve families who are not using ECEC, to find out the reasons for this.

3.2. Personal data

This section addresses an important element to monitor and evaluate the inclusiveness of an ECEC system, which is the collection of personal information

²⁰ [ECEC Documents - EACGroups - EC Public Wiki \(europa.eu\)](#)

and data on children belonging to specific groups who may encounter specific challenges to access and/or benefit fully from ECEC.

The working group has first discussed the usefulness of collecting personal data and identified the challenges to do so. The group also discussed practices across Europe based on many examples provided by working group members.

3.2.1. Usefulness of collecting personal data

In the report *Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools*²¹, Eurydice recalls that:

- *The collection of disaggregated personal data is often perceived as a sensitive matter by many European countries. For this reason, constitutional norms, the applicable EU data protection laws and the Charter of Fundamental Rights protect sensitive personal data, and the EU anti-discrimination legislation prohibits the use of such data to the disadvantage of the groups they refer to.*
- *However, as affirmed by the European Commission's High-Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity, 'if collected and processed in full respect of this legal framework and the safeguards it sets out, such data are essential for Member States to assess their compliance with human rights obligations and enables policy makers to design evidence-based measures to address discrimination, inequalities and exclusion' (2018, p. 6).*
- *In the area of school education, disaggregated student data can be used by education authorities to monitor the diversity of their student populations, identify students who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of being discriminated and understand barriers to inclusion (UNESCO, 2021a). These data also allow governments to develop evidenced-based policies and monitor their implementation.*

The WG agreed that collecting data on ECEC attendance for different sub-groups of vulnerable children can be very useful to:

- **determine whether policies to increase the inclusiveness of ECEC systems and services are actually working;**
- **identify weaknesses at local, regional, and national level, and redesign ECEC systems.**

Discussions in the ECEC working group have focussed on children with disabilities and children with low socio-economic status, while also considering children with a migrant/refugee background, Roma children and children from single-parent families.

3.2.2. Challenges to collect personal data

The WG however noted the **ethical or methodological challenges of gathering data on children belonging to different categories of vulnerabilities**. This poses a real problem for policymaking, as it is difficult to understand or address any issues relating to inclusivity without a clear understanding of how many children need support and how dispersed they are. Specific challenges include:

- Legislation may prohibit the collection of personal (ethnic) data, which makes it more difficult for national / local policymakers to adopt the right measures to support vulnerable groups.

²¹ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/promoting-diversity-and-inclusion-schools-europe>

- Definitions of target groups may be too vague or not understood similarly by all data collectors, which might make data unreliable or incomplete.
- Data on the rate of attendance of children belonging to different sub-categories of children may be challenging to collect, due to the relative ease of gathering information of children who attend ECEC settings, and the relative difficulty of gathering similar data on the children who do not attend ECEC (to get an idea of the proportion of attendees or the characteristics of children in each group).
- It may only be possible to collect data on the characteristics of children who attend ECEC if the families are engaged in a support or financial programme (for example the National Childcare Scheme in **Ireland**) that provides them with an incentive to share personal data.
- There are mixed views on collecting data on single parents, which many countries do not collect. However, it is noted that while the number of parents in a household may not be relevant for children's education, it may be relevant in terms of outreach and access as single parents are likely to rely more heavily on ECEC services.
- People in Roma or traveller communities may be hard to identify and follow-up on due to their mobile lifestyles.
- There may be an overlap between categories of target groups, making the data difficult to interpret.
- Data may not be available for all the ECEC settings.
- Data on children with special needs may not be reliable since a diagnosis at such an early age is often missing.
- Sharing of personal information between institutions (e.g. kindergartens and primary schools) may be limited by the legislation, which might hinder smooth transitions between the different educational cycles.

3.2.3. Practices across Europe

A survey asked the working group members whether they collect personal data related to children with low SES, children with disabilities / SEN, Roma children, recent migrants/refugees, or children from single-parent families. **The extent to which data on ECEC enrolment by various groups of children is collected varies greatly depending on countries, target groups and children's age, as demonstrated by the results of the survey:**

- The extent to which respondents reported that enrolment data was available for each category of children was largely similar between the under 3 and over 3 age groups, with **data most often reported to be available on the attendance of children with low socioeconomic status and children with disabilities and/or SEN.**
 - more specifically, of the 22 respondents on whether such attendance data was available for children under 3, children with disabilities and/or SEN and children with low SES were the only two groups for which half of the respondents confirmed that this system-level data exists.
 - in the over 3 age group, children with disabilities and/or SEN were the only category for which at least half of the 22 respondents reported that system-level data on ECEC attendance is available, while only 9 out of 22 respondents reporting the same availability of system-level data for children with low SES.

- In contrast, **respondents were less likely to report that system-level data on ECEC attendance is available for Roma children, recent migrants/refugees, or children from single-parent families.**

Annex 4 provides some examples of the type of personal data collected across Europe.

3.3. Existence and implementation of an inclusive curriculum

The 2019 Council Recommendation on High-Quality ECEC Systems invites Member States to *enhance the development of early years' curricula to follow children's interests, nurture their well-being and meet the unique needs and potential of each individual child, including those with special needs or in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation.*

The survey of ECEC WG members examined the extent to which the inclusion of children with low socioeconomic status, disabilities and/or SEN is codified in official ECEC curricula across participating countries, as this is likely to foster inclusiveness of the ECEC system as a whole. According to the respondents, **the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or SEN is more likely to be explicitly referenced in official curricula than the inclusion of children with low socioeconomic status.**

More precisely, among the 20 respondents who confirmed that an ECEC curriculum framework exists in their country:

- 13 (65%) reported that the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs is explicitly referenced and supported in the curricular guidelines
- 50% of respondents reported that a similar explicit reference exists in curricular guidelines to support the inclusion of children with low socioeconomic status.

A small minority reported that these explicit references only apply to the younger age range (0-3) or the older age range (3-6).

Examples of the ways that curricular guidelines reference the inclusion of children with disabilities and special educational needs include the following:

- ECEC settings are requested to be 'welcome to all', with the guiding question being 'what must be done to integrate children with these particularities and provide them with the best possible working and caring, playing and learning conditions?';
- Curricula may require that ECEC staff follow specialised training and develop adequate competencies in engaging and supporting children with disabilities and SEN;
- Curricula may contain specific and ready-to-use guidelines and programmes for educating children with a diverse range of disabilities and/or special educational needs;

Furthermore, **examples of the ways that curricular guidelines reference the inclusion of children with low socioeconomic status** include the following:

- Curricula may stress the importance of early childhood intervention to buffer children against the effects of environmental adversity;
- Curricula may explicitly instruct ECEC services to consider how they can include and engage children from marginalised and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds;

- Curricula may provide clear, actionable guidance on the needs of children who are growing up in social exclusion and/or poverty, as well as how to meet those needs.

The Toolkit for inclusive ECEC²² provides examples of how some European countries developed an inclusive curriculum (Portugal, Slovakia, Ireland, Cyprus, Slovenia, Norway).

It is generally helpful when the curriculum is embedded in the legislative framework and in national guidelines and strategic documents.

For instance, in **Slovenia**, the curriculum development is framed by the following documents:

- White Paper on Education, 2011: "Education that follows the often mentioned generally accepted values and norms of civilization - human rights and duties, tolerance, respect, which promotes mutual assistance and solidarity, care for the environment, which supports knowledge and respect for intergenerational differences, etc. - also support the goals of inclusion and integration.
- Organisation and Financing of Education Act:
 - States that one of the education goals of the Republic of Slovenia is to provide the optimal development of the individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or invalidity.
 - Defines that kindergartens, schools and other institutions for education of SEN children shall be in line with the education goals, guarantee a safe and supportive learning environment wherein physical punishment of children and of any kind of violence against and among children, as well as discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnic and national origin, physical and mental development are disallowed.
- Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act (article 11) defines access to inclusive education:
 - Inclusion in educational programmes at all levels and lifelong learning in their living environment shall be provided to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with other citizens. Inclusion in various programmes, such as programmes offering a special and adapted curriculum, and the adaptation of regular programmes to the abilities of a person with a disability shall not be deemed discrimination.
 - Persons with disabilities shall be entitled to appropriate accommodation for inclusion in educational or study process and shall have the right to have an educational or study process adequately adapted to their individual needs.

In addition, some **countries may assess children's progress in acquiring skills, for instance when there is no national curriculum and when each school has pedagogical freedom.**

Belgium (Flanders, 2.5-6years) for instance, uses two monitoring tools to assess children's progress in kindergartens:

- From the 2021-2022 school year, pre-primary schools in mainstream pre-primary education screen every 5-year-old child for listening skills in Dutch (KOALA-test).

²² [Toolkit for inclusive early childhood education and care - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

The screening checks whether the child has sufficient command of Dutch. Based on the results of the language screening, students who have insufficient command of Dutch will receive an active Dutch language integration program from the 2021-2022 school year.

- Flanders participates in the IELS study ('International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study'), an international comparative study coordinated by the OECD. The core of IELS 2024 is a measure of early literacy, early numeracy, self-regulation, and a set of social-emotional skills (empathy, trust, and social behaviour) in a representative sample of 5-year-olds. The administration is done via tablets and for each child separately by a specially trained test assistant. In addition to the testing instrument, questionnaires are also administered to each child's teacher and parents. In this way, a broad spectrum of information is collected that can put the child's outcomes into perspective. Equity and quality of ECEC are two important perspectives that are included, next to SES and SEN.

As a conclusion, in the context of monitoring and evaluating quality, the WG agreed that it is worth assessing:

- **The inclusive dimension of the ECEC curriculum;**
- **Whether it includes or is completed by concrete guidance to implement it (rather than general principles);**
- **How the curriculum or the guidance for implementation can be improved;**
- **The implementation of the curriculum in ECEC settings, and whether it supports *efficiently* provision of quality education and care to *all* children, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, from a vulnerable or migrant background, etc, and if not, how this can be improved.**

3.4. Training ECEC staff for inclusion

In 2021, the ECEC working group mapped the whole range of competences required from ECEC staff²³, many of which support inclusion in ECEC. At the same time, the Toolkit for inclusive ECEC recalled that the *training and education of ECEC staff is central to the quality of provision*:

- *Training which enables staff to be inclusive and use inclusive pedagogic approaches will make children and their families feel more welcome and will ensure that every single child's individual need for well-being, learning and development is supported. In many ways, the promotion of inclusive practice is one aspect of putting children at the centre of provision and organising services to meet their needs.*
- *Training and education can support staff in creating a welcoming environment that values children's languages, culture and home backgrounds, and contributes to the development of their sense of belonging.*

The OECD-TALIS Starting Strong survey²⁴ however stressed that ECEC staff feel that the training they receive in these regards is often not sufficient.

²³ [How to recruit, train and motivate well-qualified ECEC staff](#), European Commission, 2021

²⁴ OECD (2020), Building a High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce: Further Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b90bba3d-en>

A survey of the ECEC WG members highlighted that:

- Mandatory initial training for ECEC staff appeared to be more common for supporting children with disabilities and/or SEN than for supporting children with low SES.
- Among the respondents who reported that some - but not all - staff were required to attend initial training on how to support children with disabilities and/or SEN, different approaches were reported on who is expected to receive this training:
 - The content of ECEC degrees may be set with considerable independence by the individual universities / initial training providers running the programmes. This means that while some may require students to receive training on supporting children with a low SES or disabilities/SEN, others may not. In these cases, the training is a university requirement for graduation from the programme. It should not be confused with a national-level procedure for gaining accreditation as an ECEC professional after graduation.
 - The provision of special inclusivity training may be hierarchical and only preschool teachers are expected to receive it, whereas teaching assistants are not.
 - There may be distinctions between 'generalist' ECEC staff and ECEC staff who are specialised to support children with special educational needs. In these cases, only teachers who opt to specialise are expected and required to take additional disability/SEN inclusivity training.
- In contrast, the respondents who reported that some - but not all - staff were required to attend similar training on supporting children with low socioeconomic status provided the following details on the staff for whom such training is mandatory:
 - Some countries may only provide inclusivity training for low-SES children to those teachers who have already been allocated to catchment areas where the concentration of pupils with low-SES is higher. The training is therefore not a part of initial ECEC teacher training, and is instead delivered as continuous professional development;
 - As is the case for children with disabilities and/or special needs, the ECEC teachers who were educated in a context of university autonomy and want to support children with low SES may only be required to undergo SES inclusivity training if the university delivering the degree agrees.

In the context of monitoring and evaluation of quality in ECEC, it is useful for national and local policymakers, as well as ECEC providers / employers / leaders / training services to:

- **assess the inclusive dimension of initial and continuing education offered to ECEC staff;**
- **assess the extent to which all ECEC staff have the chance to acquire the relevant competences through initial training, continuing professional development, team learning and work-based learning;**
- **follow-up these assessment results with relevant measures**, e.g., development of new training modules, or making sure that all staff are required to complete mandatory initial training on how to support children from different categories of marginalisation.

3.5. Staff:child ratio

A better staff:child ratio is usually associated with a higher quality of education and care which support the inclusion of vulnerable children who may require more attention.

The survey of the ECEC WG members explored the extent to which participating countries used favourable staff:child ratios in ECEC settings to promote the inclusion of children from disadvantaged or marginalised groups. Half of respondents (n=13) confirmed that this is an existing practice for promoting inclusivity in their ECEC systems. These 13 respondents provided the following details on the different approaches they use:

- A greater number of staff may be allocated in a reactive way to ECEC centres where children with low socioeconomic status or disabilities/SEN are over-represented;
- The national regulation may prescribe the number of children by which a group unit must shrink to compensate if there is a child with a disability; the regulation may also instruct to count one child with disabilities and/or SEN as being equivalent to 2, 3, or even 4 children in order to reduce group size;
- New staff roles may be developed, with a specialisation to work with children with disabilities and/or special needs and function specifically to support children who are already in attendance at an ECEC setting.

In the context of monitoring and evaluation, it is therefore advisable to develop a good M&E system which:

- **Ensures that appropriate staff:child ratio regulations are in place, and that they support inclusion of all children, including vulnerable children;**
- **Ensures that staff:child ratio regulations are respected in every ECEC setting at any time, even in a context of staff shortages.** For instance, in **Luxembourg**, The Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth (MENJE) is responsible for monitoring of attendance and other services relating to early childhood care. In this respect, the software in which the ECEC setting must enter the children's actual presence, makes it possible to check the number of ECEC professionals to comply with the ratio.
- **Adopts measures to address potential failures to respect the staff:child ratio regulation.**

3.6. Attendance or participation?

Beyond the attendance of children in ECEC, a question was raised on **whether it is possible to measure the extent to which vulnerable children are *effectively and inclusively engaged* in the ECEC services.**

A short survey of the ECEC WG members showed that **this aspect was particularly challenging to evaluate, at least at system-level.** One suggestion would be to gather data based on indicators related to the inclusion of children with disabilities or with a migrant background (and a foreign language) in mainstream groups. This gives an impression on the degree of segregation of the ECEC system.

Several countries pointed that each ECEC centre is responsible for ensuring a real engagement of all children. Some countries mention it specifically in the legislation which governs the provision of ECEC (e.g., **Norway** in its Kindergarten Quality Framework Plan, or **Slovenia** in its legislation on education and on disabilities).

This aspect can also be considered within external or internal evaluation processes and tools.

- For instance, in **Ireland**, the Early Years Education Inspections include an evaluation of the quality of the early educational experiences for children in a centre, which is followed by a report and recommendations to improve the provision of education and care in that centre. The 20 outcomes specified in the Department of Education’s Guide to Early Years Education Inspections (2022) include that: “Children learn in an inclusive environment”; that “The atmosphere and organisation of the setting nurture babies and young children’s learning and development and support the inclusion of all children”; and that “Children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured.” All ECEC settings in receipt of State funding are subject to these education-focused inspections.
- Similarly, in **Luxembourg**, the extent to which vulnerable children are effectively and inclusively engaged in the ECEC services is evaluated during the meetings with the regional officer; the evaluation is completed by an analysis of the concepts and the practice documentation and then recorded annually in an individual report for each ECEC service. The report includes suggestions and obligation for the improvement of the quality of the ECEC services.
- In **Germany**, where separate ECEC institutions for children with disabilities were widespread, a reform of the Child and Youth Welfare Act in 2017 stipulates that children with and without disabilities should be supported together in groups. In the context of the KiQuTG monitoring, it is therefore analysed how groups are composed which are attended by children with SEN. In this way, it can be determined, for example, whether children with disabilities are more likely to be cared for in separate groups or in an inclusive way. Similarly, it is also monitored how big the proportion of children with a migrant background or with non-German family language is in children’s groups. This can give a first impression of the (considerable) degree of segregation of the child care centres.

In this context, the ECEC WG suggests that:

- **All countries should make sure that their guiding documents for provision and evaluation of ECEC include recommendations and tools which consider the *active engagement* of vulnerable children in ECEC activities, beyond their enrolment or attendance.**
- **These should be accompanied by staff training to ensure the adequate use and follow-up of such tools.**

4. Effective use of data collected to improve accessibility and inclusiveness of ECEC

In its first report “Purposes, values and principles of monitoring and evaluation quality in ECEC”, the working group recalled that **M&E processes should not only provide relevant information on the quality of practice enacted in individual settings, but also on the systemic conditions within which ECEC settings are embedded, in order to identify and address shortcomings in existing policies and governance arrangements.**

The previous chapters explored the objectives, challenges and practices to collect information and data which informs policymaking when it comes to making ECEC policies, systems and settings more inclusive. Using monitoring and evaluation results efficiently can however be a great challenge. In addition to examples provided throughout this report, the examples below show how a country can use the M&E results to improve inclusiveness of its ECEC system.

Flanders (2.5-6 years) participates in international research or conducts ad hoc policy research on SES and SEN. Flemish colleges and universities carry out educational policy and practice-oriented scientific research (OBPWO) on behalf of the Flemish Government. The studies answer knowledge questions about education policy and practice. The themes are in line with the policy priorities of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, small calls can also be launched.

Within the theme of ECEC, an OBPWO research project on Quality and Inspiring Pre-school Education (KiKO) is currently undertaken to provide an overview of the (characteristics of) practices that, according to the international scientific literature, have proven to be effective in strengthening pre-schoolers in the learning areas of language and mathematics, and in the development of executive functions (EF). In addition, the aim is to investigate to what extent these practices are applied in Flemish pre-primary classes and what (pre)conditions are required for the implementation of these practices. High-quality pre-primary education is of great importance for all children in Flanders. This applies to all children, but especially to children who experience limited developmental opportunities at home and in other out-of-school contexts.

The research project will yield diverse output, namely (1) a scientific final report, (2) recommendations for various actors in the Flemish educational field, and (3) practice-oriented utilization (valorisation) products. These practice-oriented products will be further thought through and developed in close consultation with a valorisation advisory group and will include an inspiration guide (with subdivisions for language, mathematics and executive functions), inspiration clips, poster materials and a seminar.

Estonia recently conducted a study²⁵ on ECEC, mapping the use, accessibility and flexibility of ECEC as well as the needs of parents in this regard and presenting a prognosis for ECEC needs in Estonia until 2030.

The study draws from the data from the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), social services reporting (s-veeb), accounting data from municipalities, county level population prognosis from Statistics Estonia, as well as the results of two surveys carried out with education officials of municipalities and parents of preschool children. The survey of parents gathered responses about 4,583 children from 3,444 parents of ECEC children aged 0–7. The survey of education officials was completed by 75 municipalities out of 79.

²⁵<https://centar.ee/en/tehtud-tood/preschool-education-and-childcare-in-estonia-in-2020>; <https://centar.ee/failid/alushariduseRaport/summary.html>

Based on the results of the study, there were suggestions on how to improve ECEC, including on offering supportive measures more effectively.

- It was found that there is a great *shortage of support professionals*, which was flagged as a problem by survey respondents. According to parents, only about half of children who need the help of a support specialist can use their required services. To alleviate this problem, a reform of the support system for children with special needs has been launched. It was also recognized that there is a need for better qualifications for teaching assistants. The team, and the support around children was recognized as very important.
- The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs are starting to reform support services for children with special needs (SN). This is because *the support system for children with SN has been too fragmented, time-consuming and bureaucratic*.
- Over the next two years, changes are planned in both legislation and practice to prioritise the needs of children and families in the organisation of support services, reducing the burden on parents to apply for support services, and shifting the focus to early detection of problems. It was recognized that *cooperation in the fields of education, social affairs and health can reduce duplication and reduce the fragmentation of services*. In essence, the aim of the changes is to provide children with faster, and more effective and comprehensive assistance.
- A new law on early childhood education and care (ECEC) is being prepared, making the ECEC system more coherent in order to provide high-quality ECEC to all children and support pre-primary education. The new law harmonises the requirements for kindergartens and childcare facilities, and municipal and private kindergartens, to give parents a clearer understanding of the level of education provided in kindergartens or childcare facilities. The aim is to achieve a joint responsibility of the family, local government, and kindergarten in supporting pre-school education, and parent guidance will be provided in this light. There will also be support for the professional competences of teachers, assistant teachers and heads of kindergartens.

Annex 1 – Survey template

EU survey of ECEC Working Group members on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The survey is intended to deepen the discussion on monitoring and evaluation of inclusiveness of ECEC that was initiated within the previous WG:

'Across Europe there are numerous policies, projects and practices which aim to increase inclusion in ECEC. It is important to monitor their effectiveness in relation to the extent to which they meet their goals. These monitoring processes require agreement on what will be measured, how the data to support this measurement will be collected, who will collect and interpret the data, and how the data will be used to improve the policy/project's effectiveness. This monitoring may be accompanied (or be part of) an evaluation of the policy/project, or it may be a separate iterative activity. Central to the monitoring work will be an agreement on whether to use targets, indicators or benchmarks as the basis for measuring success. When this type of quantitative approach is used, it is important that the measures of success are agreed before the policy/project starts.' (p. 32)

Starting from these premises, the survey has a twofold aim:

1. identify the range of possible indicators which could be used for M&E of inclusiveness of ECEC on the basis of existing work carried out at EU level;
2. map which data is already available in each country to monitor and evaluate quality under the angle of inclusion.

This preliminary step will allow us to identifying strengths and weaknesses of processes currently implemented in each Member State to monitor and evaluate inclusiveness of ECEC, as well as to address existing gaps in relation to the need to use inclusion-related indicators in M&E processes.

It will help us address the key question agreed by the group: *How can M&E processes make ECEC systems more inclusive for all children?*

The survey is primarily targeted at WG members who represent their country. We encourage you to prepare a single response per Ministry/agency.

Section 1: Background Questions

* Please select your country from the list below:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Albania | <input type="radio"/> Estonia | <input type="radio"/> Latvia | <input type="radio"/> Portugal |
| <input type="radio"/> Austria | <input type="radio"/> Finland | <input type="radio"/> Liechtenstein | <input type="radio"/> Romania |
| <input type="radio"/> Belgium (FR) | <input type="radio"/> France | <input type="radio"/> Lithuania | <input type="radio"/> Serbia |
| <input type="radio"/> Belgium (NL) | <input type="radio"/> Germany | <input type="radio"/> Luxembourg | <input type="radio"/> Slovak Republic |
| <input type="radio"/> Bulgaria | <input type="radio"/> Greece | <input type="radio"/> Malta | <input type="radio"/> Slovenia |
| <input type="radio"/> Croatia | <input type="radio"/> Hungary | <input type="radio"/> Netherlands | <input type="radio"/> Spain |
| <input type="radio"/> Cyprus | <input type="radio"/> Iceland | <input type="radio"/> North Macedonia | <input type="radio"/> Sweden |
| <input type="radio"/> Czechia | <input type="radio"/> Ireland | <input type="radio"/> Norway | <input type="radio"/> Turkey |
| <input type="radio"/> Denmark | <input type="radio"/> Italy | <input type="radio"/> Poland | |

* What is your name?

* At which organisation/institution are you based?

Section 2: Indicators relating to Legislation

* Is there a system-level policy in place to encourage children and families from disadvantaged groups to use ECEC?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

* Is there a system-level policy in place to encourage the participation of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs to use ECEC?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

Section 3: Indicators relating to Accessibility and Affordability

* Are families with low socioeconomic status entitled to publicly-funded or subsidised ECEC places for their child/children?

- Yes.
- Yes, but not for the full 0-6 age range.
- No.

I don't know.

* Are children with disabilities and/or special educational needs entitled to publicly-funded or subsidised ECEC places?

- Yes.
- Yes, but not for the full 0-6 age range.
- No.
- I don't know.

* Can every family which is entitled to publicly funded or subsidised ECEC find a place for their child/children?

- Yes.
- Yes, but not for the full 0-6 age range.
- No.
- I don't know.

* Are there reductions or free provision for children from disadvantaged and/or marginalised families?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

* Are there are reductions or free provision for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

Does the data collection at system-level provide information on the attendance rate of the following categories of children **under 3**?

	Is data available? (please insert one of three proposed responses: <u>Yes</u> , <u>No</u> , or <u>I don't know</u>)	Rate of Attendance (please insert attendance figure, or 'NA' if not available)
Children from a low SES		
Children from single-parent families		
Recent migrants/refugees		
Children with disabilities and/or special needs		
Roma children		

* Please use the box below to add any comments and/or sources of information you may have on the system-level data on attendance rates of children **under 3**.

Does the data collection at system-level provide information on the attendance rate of the following categories of children **over 3**?

	Is data available? (please insert one of three proposed responses: <u>Yes</u> , <u>No</u> , or <u>I don't know</u>)	Rate of Attendance (please insert attendance figure, or 'NA' if not available)
Children from a low SES		
Children from a single-parent family		
Recent migrants/refugees		
Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs		
Roma children		

* Please use the box below to add any comments and/or sources of information you may have on the system-level data on attendance rates of children **over 3**.

Section 4: Indicators relating to Staff

Are staff working in ECEC required to complete an initial education programme which includes either of the following elements?

	Yes.	No.	Some staff, but not all.	I don't know.
• Training on how to support children and families with low socioeconomic status.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Training on how to support children who have disabilities and/or special educational needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

• Are more favourable staff:child ratios used to support the inclusion of children from disadvantaged or marginalised groups.

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

Section 5: Indicators relating to the Curriculum

• If there is an official, approved or mandatory curriculum, does it include explicit reference and guidelines to support the inclusion of children and families with low socioeconomic status?

- Yes, and it covers the entire ECEC period.
- Yes, but only for the **younger** age range (0-3).
- Yes, but only for the **older** age range (3-6).
- No, it does not include such references.
- Not applicable (there is no such curriculum).
- I don't know.

• If there is an official, approved or mandatory curriculum, does it include explicit reference and guidelines to support the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs?

- Yes, and it covers the entire ECEC period.
- Yes, but only for the **younger** age range (0-3).
- Yes, but only for the **older** age range (3-6).
- No, it does not include such references.
- Not applicable (there is no such curriculum).
- I don't know.

Section 6: Additional Comments

Please use this text box to add any additional information that you believe would be helpful to explain your responses to the survey.

Annex 2 – Additional questionnaire on M&E of inclusion

- Section 1.1 - Evaluating the efficiency of ECEC inclusive policies towards families with a low socio-economic status (SES)
 - Please check the **definition** you provided of families with low SES, and please complete / modify your answer (please indicate if there is a legislative reference)
 - You may have also indicated that the inclusive policies in favour of families with low SES are well-known. **How do you measure whether the policy is well-known?** Please indicate the tools, processes, indicators and actors involved.
 - **How do you measure whether the policy is efficient?** Please indicate the tools, processes, indicators and actors involved.
- Section 1.2 - Evaluating the efficiency of ECEC inclusive policies towards children with disabilities and/or special (educational) needs
 - Please check the **definition** you provided of children with SEN / disabilities, and please complete / modify your answer below (please indicate if there is a legislative reference)
 - You may have also indicated that the inclusive policies in favor of children with SEN / disabilities are well-known. **How do you measure whether the policy is well-known?** Please indicate the tools, processes, indicators and actors involved.
 - **How do you measure whether the policy is efficient?** Please indicate the tools, processes, indicators and actors involved.
- Section 2 - Collection of information and data on ECEC attendance of children from different groups

You may have indicated that you are able to collect data on participation in ECEC of specific groups of children, in spite of many potential challenges which the group identified during its discussions in June 2022.

 - Can you please tell us **how you collect this information**: what are the indicators, tools, processes, actors who are involved?
 - How do you deal with **ethical / sensitive / data protection issues and limitations**?
 - How do you deal with **methodological challenges**?
 - Last but not least: beyond attendance rate, are you able to measure the **extent to which these children are effectively and inclusively engaged in the ECEC setting's activities**?

Annex 3 – Defining vulnerable groups

Families with a low socio-economic status

Country and organisation	How are families with low socioeconomic status defined in your country?
Albania Ministry of health and social protection	The Law of Social Assistance/ 2019 defines "income of families"
Belgium (FR) ONE (Office for birth and childhood)	The poverty line is an income of €13,023 net per year, or €1,085 net per month for a single person, or €27,348 net per year or €2,279 net per month for a household made up of two adults and two children (<14 years old). According to this criterion, 14.5% of the Belgian population are at risk of poverty. These are the 18-24 year old (18.5%), the unemployed (40.7%), single-parent families (36.4%), people with a low level of education (27.8%), tenants (32.8%) who are the most exposed.
Belgium (NL) Opgroeien (Kind en gezin) - settings (0-3)	<p>Vulnerable/disadvantage families is more complex than socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic status can be part of the elements that makes a family disadvantaged/vulnerable. A vulnerable or disadvantaged situation is a situation in which people are restricted in their chances of having a sufficient share in socially highly valued goods, such as education, work, housing. This is not a one-off fact, but a sustainable situation that occurs in various areas, both material and immaterial. Such a disadvantaged or vulnerable situation cannot always be captured in a certain status and it is often a combination of two or more of the following criteria: income, education, employment, health, social and pedagogical circumstances.</p> <p>A reference is made to 6 criteria in the definition. These criteria are used to establish whether or not a family lives in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation. The 6 criteria are more specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● monthly income of the family ● education level of the parents ● employment situation of the parents ● quality of housing ● health of parents ● the degree in which parents stimulate the child (pedagogical, physical, communication, ...) <p>There is no legislative reference: it is a definition developed by the Opgroeien agency. Nurses from the department "preventive family and youth support" visit every new-born baby in Flanders at his/her home. Based on the 6 criteria, they evaluate the situation of the family they are visiting. When the living condition of the visited family is scored low on 3 of the 6 criteria formulated above, the family is being defined as a living in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation. The Opgroeien agency has this information for more than 95% of the children < 3years born in Flanders. However, it is a snapshot at birth of the child. The situation of the family can change over the years.</p>
Belgium (NL) Ministry of education	3 indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● low educated mother

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school allowance • home language is not Dutch <p>In the context of operating grant, there is also the neighbourhood indicator (where the students live).</p> <p>Decreet basisonderwijs artikel 78: wet: Decreet basisonderwijs (vlaanderen.be)</p> <p>Education Disadvantaged Indicator (OKI): Each of the characteristics described above gives an idea of a student's social profile. In order to get an idea for how many characteristics for each pupil he or she is considered to be a pupil at risk, the educational deprivation indicator (OKI) can be calculated for each pupil. The OKI is calculated as the number of risk characteristics for which the student ticks and is therefore a number between 0 and 4.</p>
Czechia	<p>According to the decree 14/2005 on pre-school education, the following persons are exempted from paying childcare fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal guardians of children in compulsory pre-school education; • parents or legal representatives of children receiving a recurring benefit in material need; • parents or a legal representative of child, if the parents or the child are entitled to an increase in the Care Allowance; • a person who personally look after a child and receives foster care benefits for looking after that child, as long as this person is able to prove this fact to the principal of the kindergarten. <p>Jobless parents or legal representatives receiving unemployment benefits and using childcare services are not exempted from childcare fee payments.</p>
<p>Germany Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)</p>	<p>Families which receive certain benefits to secure their livelihoods according to Social Code Books II or XII or the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, or which receive child supplement pursuant to the Federal Child Benefit Act or housing allowance pursuant to the Housing Allowance Act.</p> <p>The operationalisation of low SES follows Social Code Book VIII §90 paragraph (4) referring to cost contributions by parents/users of childcare services. It reads as follows:</p> <p>"... the cost contribution shall be waived upon application or the participation fee shall be paid by the public youth welfare agency upon application if the cost contribution is an unreasonable burden for the parents and child. Cost contributions are always unreasonable if parents or children receive benefits to secure their livelihood according to Social Code Book II (Basic income support for jobseekers), benefits according to the third and fourth chapters of Social Code Book XII (Social assistance) or benefits according to §§ 2 and 3 of the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz) or if the parents of the child receive a child supplement according to § 6a of the Federal Child Benefit Act (Bundeskindergeldgesetz) or receive housing allowance under the Housing Allowance Act. The public youth welfare agency shall inform the parents about the possibility of submitting an application ..." (SGB VIII §90 (4))</p>
<p>Hungary Ministry of Culture and Innovation</p>	<p>The definition of disadvantage in Hungary: a very complex definition</p> <p>Guardianship authorities establish this status in their decisions.</p> <p>The measures taken by the authorities in terms of child protection include the establishment of the existence of a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged situation. The municipalities, as guardianship authorities, decide on this</p>

	<p>through a notary decision. The Child Protection Act lays down the criteria for such classifications.</p> <p>A <i>disadvantaged person</i> is a child entitled to regular child protection benefits and a child who has reached the age of majority and who is affected by one of the following circumstances:</p> <p>(a) low level of education of the parent or adoptive guardian, if both parents are raising the child together, the parent raising the child alone or the adoptive guardian can be found, on the basis of a voluntary declaration, to have at most primary education at the time of applying for the regular child protection benefit,</p> <p>(b) low employment status of the parent or the adoptive guardian, if either of the parents or the adoptive guardian is found to be entitled to social benefits for active members of the age group at the time of claiming the regular child protection benefit or to have been registered as a jobseeker for at least 12 months during the 16 months preceding the date of claiming the regular child protection benefit,</p> <p>(c) the child's unsatisfactory housing or housing conditions, if it is established that the child lives in housing declared as segregated, semi-segregated, uncomfortable or in housing in need, or in housing conditions with limited conditions for healthy development, as defined in the integrated settlement development strategy for the municipality.</p> <p><i>Severely disadvantaged:</i></p> <p>a) a child entitled to regular child protection benefits and a child who has reached the age of majority and for whom at least two of the circumstances defined in the scope of the disadvantaged status are present,</p> <p>(b) a child in care,</p> <p>(c) a young adult in receipt of after-care and who is a pupil or student.</p> <p>Definition of regular child protection benefits:</p> <p>The guardianship authority establishes the child's entitlement to regular child protection benefits, inter alia, if the monthly income per person in the family caring for the child does not exceed 180% of the social protection base (the social protection base in 2023 is HUF 28 500 approx: EUR 71), if the child is cared for by a single parent or other legal representative or if the child is permanently ill or seriously disabled, or, in addition to the above cases, if the per capita income exceeds 165% of the of the social protection base (the social protection base in 2023 is HUF 28 500 approx: EUR 71), provided that the value of the per capita assets does not exceed the statutory limit. The purpose of establishing entitlement to the regular child protection allowance is to certify that the child is entitled to various benefits on the basis of his or her social situation.</p>
<p>Ireland Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</p>	<p>Responses to socio-economic status are generally in the context of poverty. The official poverty measure is around "consistent poverty", which is measured by identifying the proportion of people, from those with an income below a certain threshold (less than 60% of median income), who are deprived of two or more goods or services considered essential for a basic standard of living. Other measures are used in assessing eligibility for certain supports in ECEC, including relative income poverty.</p>
<p>Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sport</p>	<p>Families / persons experiencing social risk: persons (families) affected by factors and circumstances due to which these persons (families) experience social exclusion or are in danger of experiencing it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lack or absence of social skills of adult family members to properly care for and educate minor children (adopted children);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to ensure full physical, mental, spiritual, moral development and safety conditions of minor children (adopted children) in the family; • psychological, physical or sexual abuse; • violence; • exploitation for human trafficking; • involvement or propensity to engage in criminal activity; • abuse of alcohol, narcotic or psychotropic substances; • addiction to alcohol, narcotics, psychotropic substances, gambling; • begging, vagrancy or homelessness; • lack or absence of motivation to participate in the labor market. <p>Persons experiencing social risk can be considered both socially excluded and socially vulnerable persons at the same time.</p>
Malta Ministry for Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Working poor • Persons with physical and/or mental health challenges; • Persons experiencing violence and other forms of abuse; • Asylum seekers and immigrants; • Persons with addictive behaviour; • Persons who lack life skills; • Persons experiencing discrimination.
Netherlands Janusz Korczak Association & Alliance for Childhood	<p>One or two parents with migrant background; children not being confronted with the Dutch language at home</p>
North Macedonia Bureau for Development of Education	<p>Households that do not possess any earning generating property and property rights, and whose total average household income on all grounds from the last three months prior to application is lower than the amount of the Guaranteed Minimum Allowance (the main national poverty fighting cash benefits).</p> <p>This definition was temporarily relaxed during the COVID-19 pandemic to include households who own real estate in which they reside, a car older than 5 years and a construction land parcel smaller than 500 m², as well as to perform means testing based on income in the previous month – rather than the previous three.</p>
Norway	<p>Children of immigrant parents are more likely to be in a low-income family. This is related to lower education, lower labour-market participation and larger families. (Statistics Norway: Fremdeles 115 000 barn med vedvarende lavinntekt i 2020 (ssb.no)) 11.7 per cent of children are in low-income families in Norway.²⁶ The proportion is higher for the youngest age groups, but has gone somewhat down from 2021 to 2022 due to an increase in the child-care-allowance.</p>

²⁶ Defined below 60% of the median income over a three year period. Please note that this might differ from the conventional EU definition of low income.

	<p>Children in families with low-income are entitled to free core time in kindergarten (ECEC) from 2 years of age. The annual income limit for families from 1st of August 2023 is NOK 615 590 (around 54000 EUR). With incomes below this limit children will be entitled to 20 hour/week free core time. The income limit for children in low-income families entitled to free core time in kindergarten is set annually in the National budget.</p> <p>In addition to free core time for children in low-income-families, no family shall pay more than 6 % of their combined annual family income for a place in kindergarten. A maximum cap on parental payment is set by the nationally set maximum fee (NOK 3000 per month as of 1st of January 2023). In 2022 t families with income below NOK 559 167 had a right to reduced fees (in combination with free core time, this meant a sliding scale from 0 to somewhat less than half the price of the maximum fee).</p>
<p>Portugal Directorate- General for Education</p>	<p>The integration in "school social action" is done through the family allowance that is granted to families, taking into account their income.</p>
<p>Slovak Republic Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport</p>	<p>Socially disadvantaged environment is an environment which, due to social, family, economic and cultural conditions, does not sufficiently stimulate the development of mental, will, emotional characteristics of the child, does not support his socialization and does not provide him with sufficient appropriate stimuli for his personality development.</p>
<p>Slovenia Ministry of education</p>	<p>Parents / Families who receive certain social benefits to secure their livelihoods according to Act on the enforcement of rights from public funds (ZUPJS - Zakon o uveljavljanju pravic iz javnih sredstev). A right from public funds is granted when a person's income does not reach the income limit set by law for an individual right from public funds, and when other conditions specified by regulations are also met.</p> <p>Centers for social work decide on the right to the following subsidies and payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of payment for kindergarten programs according to the law governing preschool education (reduced payment of kindergarten); • additional lunch subsidies for pupils and students according to the law regulating school meals (lunch subsidy for pupils and students); • lunch subsidies for pupils according to the law regulating school meals (lunch subsidy for pupils); <p>Settings/services in socio-economically disadvantaged areas In Slovenia: the socio-economically disadvantaged areas are a type of area with special development problems (according to the Decree on the criteria for defining territories with special development problems, and on the determination of municipalities meeting these criteria). According to the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the primary school programme, the norms for forming a class or establishing/closing down a setting may be more favourable in such areas. There is no other additional support in these areas. Measures for the disadvantaged in Slovenia mostly target individuals, not disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>The income limit for determining the amount of the kindergarten payment is the average monthly income per person, namely the reduction of the kindergarten payment for parents is depending on the income class of the family and varies since parents pay from from 0 – 77 % of the price of the kindergarten program. Parents are placed in nine income brackets and the first income bracket is completely exempt from payment.</p>

	<p>Legislative reference in this regard: Act on the enforcement of rights from public funds is the ground for subsidies for the reduced payment of parents since the Centres for Social Work decide on a reduced kindergarten fee as well as an exemption from kindergarten fees for the second child (if his/her sibling is as well in the kindergarten at the same time) and the third or each subsequent child (regardless of whether the older children / siblings from the same family are enrolled in the kindergarten or school, i.e. it is an absolute right).</p> <p>Foster children are also fully exempt from kindergarten fees, and the price of the program in which the child is included is covered by the municipality where the foster child has permanent residence.</p> <p>Also relevant in this regard of inclusion and place guarantee also for children with low SES is specific article of Kindergarten Act</p> <p>Article 10 (<u>Ensuring inclusion of children in programmes of public service</u>): If there is no kindergarten to provide the public service in the area of permanent residence of the parents; or if there are no free places in the relevant kindergarten and the number of children the parents are seeking to enrol meets the standards and norms to form one group, the local community shall initiate the procedure for ensuring additional places at a public kindergarten, or shall issue a call to award the concession within 30 days. Under this Act as well the interest of foreigners without permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia shall also be considered if at least one parent is subject to the payment of income tax. In this case, the municipality of the registered temporary residence of the parent liable for the payment of income tax shall be considered as the municipality of permanent residence.</p> <p>Legislative reference:</p> <p>Act on the enforcement of rights from public funds (ZUPJS) link: Zakon o uveljavljanju pravic iz javnih sredstev (ZUPJS) (pisrs.si)</p> <p>Kindergarten Act (ZVrt) link: Zakon o vrtcih (ZVrt) (pisrs.si)</p>
<p>Spain Ministry of Education</p>	<p>Based on the family income; families in situation of vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the INE (National Institute of Statistics), families at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion are considered to be the population that is in any of the three situations defined below: • Families who live with low income (60% of the median equivalent income or per consumption unit in the year prior to the interview). • Families who suffer severe material deprivation (4 of the 9 items defined). • Families who live in households with very low employment intensity (below 20% of their total work potential in the year prior to the interview). In case of being included in two or three conditions, people are counted only once.

Children with disabilities and/or special (educational) needs

Country and organisation	How are children with disabilities and/or SEN defined in your country?
<p>Albania Ministry of health and social protection</p>	<p>Law 18/2017 in Article 32 Child with disabilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child with disabilities enjoys all the rights provided in this law in a full and equal way with other children

	<p>2. The child with disabilities enjoys the right to benefit from health, social, educational services, as well as any other services, as needed, determined by the responsible disability assessment structures. The responsible authorities take measures to provide these services as close to the child as possible and free of charge whenever possible and taking into account the economic situation of the parent or guardian.</p>
<p>Belgium (FR) ONE (Office for birth and childhood)</p>	<p>A child with a disability is a child who needs specific care and/or attention due to medical problems (physical and mental health) with or without psychosocial problems</p> <p>https://www.one.be/fileadmin/user_upload/siteone/PRO/Brochures/Sante_dans_milieux_accueil_2019.pdf p 61</p>
<p>Belgium (NL) Ministry of education</p>	<p>Children with a report and motivated report</p> <p>https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/belgium-flemish-community/educational-support-and-guidance_en</p> <p>Pupil with specific educational needs: pupil with long-term and important participation problems due to the interplay between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more mental, psychological, physical or sensory disabilities and; • restrictions on the performance of activities and; • personal and external factors;
<p>Croatia Ministry of Science and Education</p>	<p>Children whose abilities in interaction with environmental factors limit their full, effective and equal participation in the educational, social or other processes. Children may have different educational needs arising from physical, mental, intellectual, sensory impairment and function disorders or combinations of several types of disorders.</p>
<p>Czechia Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport</p>	<p>A child, pupil and student with special educational needs means a person who needs to be provided with support measures to fulfill his or her educational opportunities or to exercise his or her rights on an equal basis with others. Support measures are necessary adjustments in education and school services corresponding to the health, cultural environment or other living conditions of a child, pupil or student. We have five levels of support measures. In the first, they are provided directly by the school without the need for diagnostics, in the second to fifth, they are provided by the school based on the recommendations of the school counseling facility, which is based, among other things, on psychological and special pedagogical diagnostics. Children, pupils and students with special educational needs have the right to free provision of support measures by schools and school facilities. We have a wealth of data on the education of children with special educational needs and the provision of support measures. Support measures can be personnel support (teaching assistant, school psychologist, school special pedagogue, Czech sign language interpreter), adjustment of educational content/outputs, methods/organization of teaching, assessment, subject of special pedagogical care, individual educational plan, reduction of the number of pupils in the class, compensatory aids, special textbooks, etc.</p> <p>School Act: https://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/skolsky-zakon-ve-zneni-ucinnem-ode-dne-1-2-2022</p>

	<p>Decree on Education of Children with Special Educational Needs and Gifted Children (No. 27/2016 Coll.) and Decree on Provision of Counseling Services in Schools and School Counseling Facilities (No. 72/2005 Coll.): https://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/vyhlasiky-ke-skolskemu-zakonu. https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-561 https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2016-27 https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2005-72</p>
<p>Germany Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)</p>	<p>Children, adolescents and young people with disabilities are people who have physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in combination with attitudinal and environmental barriers, prevent them from participating in society on an equal basis with others for more than six months. An impairment exists if the physical and health condition deviates from the condition typical for their age. Children, adolescents, young adults and young adults are at risk of disability if an impairment is to be expected. (KJSG §7)</p> <p>Legislative reference: Social Code Book XIII §7 (2)</p>
<p>Hungary Ministry of Culture and Innovation</p>	<p>According to Hungarian law, a child with special educational needs is a child who, according to the opinion of the expert committee, has a motor, sensory (visual, auditory), intellectual or speech disability, or, in the case of a combination of several disabilities a cumulative disability, autism spectrum disorder or other mental development disorder (severe learning, attention or behavioural disability). Children who are below their age-appropriate level in one or more areas of development (motor development, intellectual development, auditory and visual development, speech and language development, social and emotional development, or behaviour) require early intervention. Eligibility for special educational needs and early intervention is determined by an expert committee of pedagogical professional services.</p>
<p>Ireland Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</p>	<p>Whilst there are definitions of SEN and disability, these are not used to determine access to additional supports for ECEC. The Department delivers the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), which seeks to create a more inclusive environment in pre-schools, so all children, regardless of ability, can benefit from quality early learning and care through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The model achieves this by providing both universal and targeted supports to pre-school settings, which focus on the needs of the individual child, without requiring a diagnosis of disability. For the purposes of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), disability is defined as ‘a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a child’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’. This definition is broad and should ensure that children with needs arising from a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment will be supported by AIM, even where the particular impairment may not be traditionally recognised as a disability. ‘Long-term’ should be understood as referring to an impairment which is enduring and permanent or likely to be permanent.</p>
<p>Italy Ministry of Education</p>	<p>A child with disability is a child who has a physical, psychic or sensorial impairment, stabilized or progressive, which is the cause of difficulties in learning, relationship or work integration and such as to determine a process of social disadvantage or marginalization</p>

<p>Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sport</p>	<p>Children with special educational needs - the need for assistance and services in the educational process, arising from a person's exceptional abilities, congenital or acquired disorders, unfavourable environmental factors. Groups of students with special educational needs are determined and their special educational needs are divided into small, medium, large and very large according to the procedure established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports, the Minister of Health Protection, the Minister of Social Security and Labour.</p>
<p>Malta Ministry for Education Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education</p>	<p>Children who need support either physical or intellectual to function independently; refers to a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder one's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Equal Opportunities Act, Act XXIV of 2016).</p>
<p>North Macedonia Bureau for Development of Education</p>	<p>The following groups of students with Special Educational Needs are defined in the concept for inclusive education adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students with disabilities - who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and who, in interaction with various social barriers, may impede their full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with others, • students with behavioural disorders or emotional problems or with specific learning difficulties; • students from disadvantaged socio-economic, cultural, and / or linguistically deprived environments, • students with complex needs - who have multiple stages of difficulty, multiple stage disorders, complex health needs and need for great and intensive help and support, • children / students with foreign citizenship, stateless children, refugee children, asylum seekers, children with recognized refugee status, children under subsidiary protection, children under temporary protection residing in our country, • children / students who were not included in the teaching, and are over aged • children / students and other vulnerable categories who for various reasons require special support and care during the educational process.
<p>Norway</p>	<p>Children under compulsory school age (6 years of age) are entitled to special educational assistance if they have special needs. This applies whether or not they attend kindergarten. The objective of special educational assistance is to provide children with early help and support in development and learning, for example language and social skills. Special educational assistance can be given to children individually or in groups. The assistance must include an offer of counselling to the parents. The municipality must fulfil the right to special educational assistance to children residing in the municipality. (cf Kindergarten Act Chapter VII)</p> <p>In Norway Kindergartens are required to provide inclusive pedagogies for all children. The framework plan for kindergartens (regulations to the</p>

	<p>Kindergarten Act) describes this in the following paragraph: “Adaptation of mainstream provision for children in need of additional support Kindertagens shall adapt their general pedagogical practices to suit the children’s needs and circumstances, including children who may require additional support for shorter or longer periods. Kindertagens shall quickly make the necessary social, pedagogical and/or physical adjustments to ensure that children who require additional support can benefit from inclusive and equal provision. These arrangements shall be periodically reviewed and amended in response to the child’s needs and development. Inclusion in kindergarten is also about facilitating social participation. Kindergarten content must be administered in a way that allows different children to participate according to their respective needs and circumstances. Play is the single most important arena for socialising in kindergarten. For some children, early intervention could mean that staff have to work methodically and systematically – over shorter or longer periods – to include these children in meaningful social relationships. If there is reason to believe that a child’s needs cannot be met by the kindergarten’s general pedagogical practices, the kindergarten must inform the parents of their right to request an expert assessment to establish whether the child has special educational needs. Kindertagens shall ensure that children receiving special needs support are included in the group and in mainstream activities. “</p> <p>In addition to this general expectancy on inclusive provision, municipalities are required to provide an adapted provision to all children in need of special educational support. Children with disabilities are entitled to priority for admission to kindertagens (cf. Kindergarten Act section 18). Parents can apply for a place in the kindergarten they want, but often - through guidance from the special educational services and the municipality - they will be provided with information on which kindertagens are most suitable to meet the individual needs of their child. The obligation to tailor the services does not include measures that would entail a disproportionate burden for the municipality (cf. section 37 in the Kindergarten Act).</p>
<p>Portugal Directorate- General for Education</p>	<p>Children who need learning support in accordance with Decree-Law n.º 54/2018, of 6 July</p> <p>Portugal is shifting away from the labelling of the students that were defined as students with SEN-Special Education Needs, through the use of the category “students in needs of additional support”. This concept focuses on the type of measure(s) provided to students within mainstream education rather than the personal characteristics of students. This approach is the result of a series of education policy and legal changes. (OECD Review of Inclusive Education: Country Background Report for Portugal, p. 55: https://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/EInclusiva/country-background-report-portugal-educacao-inclusiva-em-revista-2022.pdf)</p>
<p>Serbia Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with learning difficulties (due to specific learning disabilities or behavioural and emotional development problems); • Children with disabilities (physical, motor, sensory, intellectual or autism spectrum disorders); • Children living in a socially unstimulating environment (socially, economically, culturally, linguistically poor environment or stay for a long time in a health or social institution)

<p>Slovak Republic Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport</p>	<p>A child with SEN is considered a child who has been diagnosed with SEN by a counseling and prevention facility. Children with SEN are children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with disability, i.e. children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ with a disability, i.e. children with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disabilities, speech or language impairment, with autism or other pervasive developmental disorders, with multiple disabilities, ➢ who are ill or in poor health, ➢ with developmental disorders, ➢ with behavioral disorders • from a socially disadvantaged environment • gifted • whose health status, social conditions, language skills, talents, behavior, cognitive abilities, motivation, emotionality, creativity or skills require the provision of a support measure.
<p>Slovenia Ministry of education</p>	<p>Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (sl) (en) (2011; covers ISCED 1, 2 and 3 levels):“Children with special needs are children with intellectual impairments, blind and partially sighted children, children with visual impairment, deaf and hard of hearing children, children with speech and linguistic disorders, children with motor disabilities, children with long-term illness, children with deficiencies in individual areas of learning, children with autistic disorders, and children with emotional and behavioural disorders who need adapted provision of education programmes with additional professional assistance or adapted education programmes or special programmes of education.”(Article 2 of the Act)</p> <p>Learners are recognised as having SEN when they get an official decision by the National Education Institute Slovenia (NEIS). Parents usually request the introduction of official placement procedures for learners with SEN, but schools or learners themselves (from 15 years old) can also request it. (GEM) The complaint against the decision is possible. The Ministry responsible for education decides on the case of the appeal considering the recommendation by the second instance placement commission. (Eurydice)</p> <p>SEN learners are placed in the education programmes considering their physical, cognitive, emotional, social and special health needs. To this end, the child's achieved level of development, his/her ability to learn and attain the standards of knowledge and the prognosis of his/her further development shall be considered, allowing for the child's deficiencies, impairments or disorders, as well as the criteria for defining the type and degree of deficiency, impairment or disorder. (24 Article)</p> <p>The provision of education for SEN children is public service; in special circumstances, it may be in private settings without concession or a private institute, and in the form of home schooling. (Eurydice; https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/slovenia/educational-support-and-guidance)</p> <p>Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs, 2017 (in force from 1. January 2019) covers ISCED 01</p>

	<p>and 02. "Children with special needs in the pre-school period are defined as children with developmental disabilities, delays, impairments disorders in physical, cognitive, perception, social-emotional, communication characteristics as well as children with long-term illnesses.</p> <p>Another target group are children at risk. Those children experience risk factors for developmental disabilities, delays, impairments and/or disorders. The risk factors take shape during pregnancy, at birth or immediately after birth, and they can influence the development of the child. The risk factors can manifest later because of an illness or poor socio-economic background of the family.</p> <p>Article 3 and 4 of the Act – no text in English available Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs (sl)</p> <p>Eurydice: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/slovenia/special-education-needs-provision-within-mainstream-education</p> <p>Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs, 2017 (in force from 1. January 2019) covers ISCED 01 and 02. "Children with special needs in the pre-school period are defined as children with developmental disabilities, delays, impairments disorders in physical, cognitive, perception, social-emotional, communication characteristics as well as children with long-term illnesses.</p> <p>Article 3 of the Act – no text in English available Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs (sl)</p> <p>Individual acts have been amended or new drafted. New/amended acts regarding disadvantaged/vulnerable groups of children:</p> <p>Act Regulating Special Rights of Members of the Italian and Hungarian Ethnic Communities in the Field of Education (Uradni list RS, št. 35/01, 102/07 – ZOn-F, NPB1, 11/18)</p> <p>Placement of Children with Special Needs Act (Uradni list RS, št. 58/11, 40/12 – ZUJF, 90/12, 41/17 – ZOPOP in 200/20 – ZOOMTVI) - The classification of learners based solely on specific disabilities was suspended. The emphasis was placed rather on the learners' needs and this formed the concept of the inclusion model of education. It redefined learners who need adaptations and/or assistance in the education process. Learners with autistic disorders were added on the list of groups of SEN children.</p> <p>Act Regulating the Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs (Uradni list RS, št. 41/17) - It set out the provision of the integrated early support to a family and a SEN child, in so doing, it aims to improve their quality of life. SEN children and children at risk can be identified within the family, health system via primary preventive health care, and other treatment in a kindergarten, educational institution, social care institution, or via services of social work centres. The Act determines providers of early treatment</p>
<p>Spain Ministry of education and vocational training</p>	<p>Students with a specific need for educational support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to special educational needs, • due to developmental delay, • due to language and communication development disorders, • due to attention or learning disorders,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to a serious lack of knowledge of the language of learning, • due to being in a situation of socio-educational vulnerability, • due to their high intellectual capacities, • for having joined the educational system late, • or due to personal conditions or school history. <p><i>The definition in annex 3 remains in force according to the Organic Law 3/2020, (LOMLOE), which regulates the Spanish educational system.</i></p> <p>https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-17264</p>
<p>Türkiye Ministry of National Education</p>	<p>Special education needs provision within mainstream education:</p> <p>Individuals with a special education need are defined as individuals showing differences at a significant level compared to their peers in terms of their individual, developmental improvements and educational competencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual with autism at serious level: individual with a need for intensive special education and support program due to his/her limitations in social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communications, interests and activities. • An individual with a mental handicap at serious level: individual with a need for a life-long intensive special education and support program due to his/her disabilities in mental functions and contextual, social, practical adaptation and self-care skills • Individual with a physical handicap: individual with a need for a special education and support program due to the disorders in muscle, skeletal and neural system • An individual with a handicap at very serious level: individual with a need for a life-long care and watch who cannot attain self-care, daily life and basic academic skills because of the other disabilities as well as mental disabilities • An individual with a visual handicap: individual with a need for a special education and support program because of losing the visual power partly or completely • An individual with autism at minor level: individual with a need for a special education and support program because of limitations at minor level in social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communications, interests and activities • An individual with a mental handicap at minor level: individual with a need for a special education and support program due to his/her disability at minor level in mental functions and contextual, social, practical adaptation and self-care skills • An individual with a hearing handicap: individual with a need for a special education and support program because of losing the hearing sensitivity partly or completely • An individual with autism at medium level: individual with a need for a special education and support program because of limitations

at medium level in social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communications, interests and activities

- An individual with a mental handicap at medium level: individual with a need for a special education and support program due to his/her disability at medium level in mental functions and contextual, social, practical adaptation and self-care skills in attaining basic academic, daily life and occupational skills
- A gifted individual: individual learning faster compared to the peers, leading in the capacity regarding creativity, art and leadership, having a special academic talent, being able to understand abstract ideas, enjoying acting independently in the fields of interest and being able to have a high level performance.

Special education programs are applied for the purpose the objectives targeted in line with the developmental features, educational needs and performances depending on the program the individuals with a need for special education follow and comprising supportive educational services to be given to these individuals. This program is called Individualized Educational Program.

Annex 4 – Collection of personal data across Europe

In **Belgium (Flanders)**, for childcare settings, information is collected on the socioeconomic status of families when ECEC providers apply means-tested fees. As the country applies a priority rule for disadvantaged children, information is gathered on where and in what type of settings the minimum target of 30% is reached or not. Providers also report every year to the Opgroeien agency on the number of children with special needs that participate, but since there are two types of subsidies (one per child that participated and 1 subsidy in case infrastructural modifications are necessary in order to be able to accept a child with specific needs), there is no global view. Only in case of a subsidy per child, the providers have to report on the number of children that participated (once a year). No reporting on the number of children is done on the other type of subsidy. So, for children with special needs, data are available but only for a small part of the population of childcare settings. The Opgroeien agency has a number of rules to ensure data protection:

- There is a “privacy commission” (watch dog) to verify if the GDPR is respected
- The agency does not share information of individual settings (except name and address of a setting and recently, the results of an external inspection of the setting) or families (only aggregated and anonymised information is communicated or used). Individual information is kept within the agency.
- Authorisation is always asked to parents if information has to be collected about their child in a childcare setting or to parents that are being visited at home.
- The legislation stipulates that all information gathered by the agency and provided by the childcare settings and childcare providers is only being used in an aggregated way in view of policy development and/or the evaluation of policies, reporting to the Flemish government (since they provide the budget to finance the childcare sector) or in view of the follow-up of their individual dossier.

For pre-primary schools, data is collected in various ways. Most of the data is brought together in the large database of the Agency for Educational Services (AGODI) called “Discimus”. Each school uses a software package. This package is used to support school administration and automatically exchanges the data with the Discimus database. For example, the schools register the attendance or absence for each child per half teaching day. This information allows AGODI to analyse the attendance frequency of children. To categorize children into certain groups / types, schools also request personal data from children and parents. Also these data are shared with AGODI by the software package. That information includes the date of birth (to support analyses per year of birth) and the socio-economic status of the student (SES). At the time of child's subscription at school, schools use a form to inquire about following SES characteristics: the language the pupil uses at home with parents, brothers/sisters and friends and the highest certificate of the mother. These data have been used since 2008-2009, along with a range of other data, to aid schools financially to support pupils appropriately. Next to this, AGODI receives information from another government agency about whether a family gets a school allowance or not (and whether the family applied for it). Finally, an in-house constructed characteristic is called “neighbourhood”. It computes whether there is an increased percentage of children with a school delay of at least 2 years in the relatively broad neighbourhood of the particular child. This neighbourhood is called a “statistical sector” – as defined by Statbel, the Belgian statistical office²⁷.

²⁷ <https://statbel.fgov.be/en/open-data/statistical-sectors-2020>

To support data protection, the following measures are in place:

- AGODI has a Data Protection Officer
- Discimus is a shielded application protected by access rights, digital sign-in, and can only be accessed by government owned computers
- The software packages operate also in shielded environments and have a secure exchange with Discimus
- Typically, the published data concern general data only (for example general data about attendance rates by age), not sensitive students' characteristics.

When sensitive data is published, it is guaranteed that individual children cannot be identified.

In **Cyprus**, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, which is responsible for providing ECEC to 3-6 years old, collects the following personal data on children and families:

- Socio-economic status of families (only for public kindergartens)
 - Data on the socioeconomic status of children is collected through a standardised form offering clear definitions of different SES categories. The data is collected and compiled centrally through the department of primary education and can only be processed and analysed by a small number of persons. This data is presented in an anonymous way to protect individual children.
 - Data is collected from kindergartens annually according to set criteria and sent to the Ministry.
 - The Ministry provides financial support to families in need and implements projects like the project "Feeding pupils in need" which provides daily free breakfast to children in need who attend public schools. The purpose of this project is to address material deprivation through the provision of free breakfast and to ensure adequate nutrition standards.
- Children with emotional and educational difficulties and number of formally assessed children with special needs
 - Detailed information is collected on children with special educational needs, disabilities, and health problems, covering highly sensitive issues. Although this data often needs to be linked to individual children in order to ensure that they receive adequate and appropriate support, the data is handled carefully by the designated unit for SEND children and can only be accessed by a limited number of colleagues within the unit.
 - When someone identifies a child with difficulties, s/he can initiate the evaluation process of the child's needs
 - To ensure the reliability of data, the Ministry sets a number of criteria which are specified on a form that is completed accordingly and submitted to the Ministry
 - The evaluation of the child is carried out by specialists and a special committee to reach a formal decision
 - The committee provides data for the appointed staff needed and the adaptation of facilities/buildings to support inclusion
 - Special Education Coordinators are assigned to work as officers at the Ministry, who collect and monitor data from the committee

- Inspectors for special needs are provided with these data before they visit the kindergartens.
- Number of children with a migrant background; home language
 - Data on immigrant children is obtained by legally obliging each ECEC centre to submit data on the number of child attendees with immigrant backgrounds at the beginning of each school year.
 - The data collected informs action plans to meet the needs for targeted school units, which may include several measures:
 - Implementation of the project “School and social inclusion” (co-funded by the European Social Fund), for kindergartens who welcome a high percentage of children from vulnerable groups. The kindergartens are provided with an assistant teacher in the classroom for extra support, as well as other teaching staff for implementing creative activities, like dancing, drama game, physical education, music, arts and crafts
 - CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning): education approach which promotes the basic skills of multilingualism and interculturalism
 - Reinforced implementation of the curriculum’s dimensions related to inclusion, acceptance, etc.

Czechia records data about attendance of children over the age of 3 and younger in kindergartens (e.g., data on the age of children in kindergartens divided by territory and founders, which children go to regular kindergartens/classes, which to kindergartens/classes for children with severe disabilities, by gender etc.). There is also data on specific groups of children in kindergartens, but usually not divided by age (numbers of children according to special educational needs, nationality, provided support measures etc.). The data is a very important basis for further analysis and changes to legislation, strategies and measures.

Finland does not collect data on low SES children, but they collect data on client fees, and if parents have low fees or do not have to pay at all for ECEC, it is assumed that the income level of the family is low. Single parents might be identified by looking at children who only have one parent whose income is registered as information for the client fees, but this is not fully accurate and not easily available.

In **Germany**, the official Child and Youth Welfare Statistics, which are based on a full nation-wide survey of ECEC services, contain data on the education and care of children who receive assistance (“Eingliederungshilfe”) due to a disability or impending disability. In the data physical, mental, and socio-emotional disabilities can be distinguished. In addition, differentiation is made according to forms of care, whereby a distinction can be made between segregating and non-segregating forms of care. In 2021, 3,844 children under three years of age and 57,133 children between three and under six years of age in child day care in Germany received integration assistance due to a disability. A large proportion of these children attended day care facilities run by the child and youth welfare services (85%), mostly in inclusive groups of children. Only 0.5% were cared for in publicly funded family day care. About 15% of the children receiving integration assistance attended school-related facilities which are specifically targeted to children

with disabilities. The data and developments are also monitored in the KiQTG-monitoring²⁸.

The Official Child and Youth Welfare Statistics also records the number of children in ECEC with a migrant background (i.e., at least one parent was not born in Germany) and with non-German family language (i.e.: language predominantly spoken in family context). Data on migrant background and on non-German family language are reported by ECEC staff. This means that the assignment to the categories is made by staff; there may be some discrepancies, but the pedagogical staff is usually very well informed. The Official Child and Youth Welfare Statistics also records the number of children in ECEC with (impending) disability. SEN children in Child and Youth Welfare Statistics are those children who receive integration assistance due to a disability or impending disability, which requires a corresponding diagnosis. This is done by medical authorities.

Data from Child and Youth Welfare Statistics are only used on an aggregate level, ranging from the federal level via the Länder and – though restricted – to the level of Child and Youth Welfare Districts. Thereby it is safeguarded that neither individual children, individual ECEC institutions or individual ECEC providers can be identified. At this most regional level, data is made available by the Statistical Offices of the Federation and the Länder only if it is ensured that neither individual children, nor individual childcare facilities or individual childcare providers can be identified.

In Hungary, the anonymous data of children under 3 enrolled in nursery care are reported to the national statistical data collection system: for example, their SES (disadvantaged children; severely disadvantaged children; children in protective care), if they are from a single parent family, status of refugee/homeless children/ beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or children with special educational needs (SEN) are also registered. The nationality of enrolled children and their ethnicity, however, are not included in the statistical survey questions. In all cases, the characteristics of the children enrolled are recorded by the institution/provider as part of the data collection on the basis of a fact established and certified by an authority/expert committee. For example, the single parent status must be verified by the certification of the Hungarian State Treasury in terms of the higher amount of the family allowance (single parents eligible for higher amount of family allowance) or the SEN status established by the expert committee of the professional pedagogical services.

Statistics **Iceland** collects data on children with foreign background.

In **Ireland**, data is gathered on attendance by household income, work status and education status, where children's participation is subsidised through the National Childcare Scheme. It is notable that parents apply for that scheme with the Department (Ministry), and as such a considerable amount of the personal and sensitive information is not accessible to the provider. It also allows for privacy information to be communicated directly to parents.

In **Lithuania**, the EMIS system (Education management information system) contains data which is filled by educational institutions (governmental, municipal level or private institutions). It contains information from registries of pupils and pedagogues (practitioners). The system has 3 levels of access – institution level (users, info providers); municipal level (administrators) and national level (national administrators).

The Child's card include the following information:

- Personal ID
- Personal code
- Name, Surname

²⁸ Source: BMFSFJ (Hg.) (2022): Monitoringbericht zum KiQuTG 2022, p. 72f

- Sex
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Nationality
- The status of a foreigner of Lithuanian origin
- Mother tongue
- Orphan child
- Education status
- Did child attend a LT non formal school while living abroad / returned from abroad
- Groups child attended before
- Group title, Group practitioner name, surname, Education language in the group
- In the group from (choose a date)
- Personal file number
- First child's day in institution
- Education programme
- Territorially assigned
- Attends the institution at least 20 hours a week
- Learning method / form
- Contract
- Care group
- Group works 24h
- Lives more than 3 kms away
- Lives in family who gets social benefit / social risk
- Free meals
- Suffered injuries in the institution
- Attends non formal education programmes
- Lives in dormitory
- Moral education (ethics or religion)
- Foreign language
- Special education needs
- Mandatory pre-school education provided
- Designated educational support
- Provided educational support
- Coordinated service received
- Attends all day school
- (only PCR aggregates) Consent of the child's representative regarding participation in a preventive study for the detection of COVID-19 disease (aggregates)
- (rapid antigen tests only) Self-test (Covid)
- A minor who illegally entered the territory of the Republic of Lithuania

In some cases, the personal data on each 'child's card' is not obtained by the manual submission of information from ECEC providers, but through coordination with other sectors.

- For example, a child's personal ID will automatically contain key data on their address and eligibility (according to household income and other risk factors) for extra financial subsidies, free school meals, and other forms of support, which function as proxy indicators of socioeconomic status.
- Data related to trauma exposure is only obtained and added to a child's file through the reports of police or social workers; ECEC professionals are therefore not asked or given the opportunity to enter information on these indicators. Notably, this means that forms of 'hidden' trauma (those which do not escalate to

the point of being detected and intervened upon by the state) are not monitored or recorded.

As Lithuania collects a dense amount of information on children's social and economic backgrounds, a number of measures are in place to ensure the right use of the data:

- The number of people who are able to handle and view this information is strictly limited, with typically 1 person in the ECEC centre submitting the data, and only certain staff within the National Agency being able to compile and process the data within the registry.
- In the case of data collected on children's achievements, which is collected across 18 themes, this data is only available to the institution and the parents and is only used to track and support each child's progress.
- The data collected is contained in an open system, however only some statistics are visible and these are presented in an aggregated format, with none of the visible data being personal.

Furthermore, as data on children is collected until the age of 19, children are allowed to ask to see their personal data. Parents may also request to see personal data of their children.

In **Luxembourg**, data is available on how many resident or cross-border children attend ECEC per year.

In **Spain**, there is a system for collecting and analysing statistical data regarding students with SEN²⁹. These data can be disaggregated by type of condition and educational stage, including ECEC. The latest report published by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is for the 2021-2022 academic year and work is currently underway to publish the report for the 2022-2023 academic year. There are also data on students of foreign origin³⁰.

In **Norway**, there are strict rules on the publication of numbers in the statistical portal of the Directorate for Education and Training, so as not to publish information that can be tracked. The statistics are therefore presented on municipal, regional or national level dependent on this assessment. There are regulations on privacy and the treatment of personal data and the kindergarten shall ensure that information is treated and stored safely. The duty of confidentiality applies to all kindergartens.

In **Serbia**, the national Statistical Office collects annually data on children in ECEC. For some categories of children (children with disabilities, Roma children; children from a low SES) data are gathered through some indirect indicators, such as - number of children that have individual educational plan (IEP) and/or pedagogical profile; native language - for identifying Roma children; data on socio-economic status of parents; number of children from families who use financial social help; child allowance through the system of social protection...).

In **Slovenia**, the Statistical Office collects annual data on children in ECEC. For some categories of children (children from a low SES) data are gathered through some indirect indicators, such as - data on socio-economic status of parents; number of children from families who use financial social help; child allowance through the system of social protection). The law determines the types of monetary benefits, subsidies and payments

²⁹<https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano/estadisticas/no-universitaria/alumnado/apoyo.html>

³⁰ http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado/2021-2022-rd/extran/10/&file=extran_03.px&type=pcaxis

(rights from public funds), income limits that are taken into account when exercising rights from public funds, which depend on the material situation, a uniform method of determining the material situation, the amount of certain rights from public funds and the procedure for their enforcement. The Kindergarten Act defines the following groups who may benefit from specific measures: minorities (Italian and Hungarian national communities), members of the Roma community, foreign citizens, pupils in hospitals, children with special needs.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

