



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – GREECE

1. ACCESS, PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

Key principles

1.1 Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children.

1.2 Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

In Greece, Early Childhood Education is carried out in municipal nurseries run by municipalities and accommodating children aged between 0 and 5 and in kindergartens controlled and supervised by the Ministry of Education for children aged between 4 and 6.

In nurseries, official state support for learners with disabilities does not exist.

In public kindergartens, following a series of official processes, additional support can be offered to those who are eligible. This support includes a number of supportive learning environments (inclusive classrooms, parallel educational support teachers, special kindergartens, home education).

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national policy and legislation that gives the right to all children, without exception, from at least 3 years onwards, to attend mainstream Early Childhood Education (ECE)?</p> <p>2. Is there support available to enable every child to attend ECE?</p> <p>3. Is there a period of compulsory ECE before</p>	<p>In most cases, children aged between 4 and 6 attend general education kindergarten. Nevertheless, in some cases children are referred to special schools.</p> <p>There is not an institutionalised support system within municipal nurseries for children aged 3 and 4.</p> <p>Compulsory education in Greece begins at the age of 5 and takes place in kindergartens. Here support is provided for learners with disabilities (as defined by the law concerning special education), where possible, within general Early Childhood Education classrooms. In other cases, children either attend special kindergartens or are provided with home education.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>school starts?</p> <p>4. Are arrangements in place for transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education for all children?</p> <p>5. Is inclusion stated as a goal of ECE provision? Is there a policy making ECE accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. Is there a policy that obliges mainstream publicly funded ECE to make adaptations so that all children can attend and participate? Please describe</p>	
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What percentage of children attend mainstream ECE provision at ages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years (if not primary)• 6 years (if not primary)? <p>2. What are the main factors preventing some children from</p>	<p>Children aged between 4 and 6 with disabilities and/or special educational needs either attend general kindergartens with the additional support of specialist teachers, or special kindergartens, depending on a number of factors. Assessment structures are in place in order to facilitate this decision. The Medical and Pedagogical Centres, public hospitals or Centres for Education Evaluation and Diagnosis (KEDDY) assess the children and identify their needs. Then, by law and in co-operation with the school, school counsellors decide on the appropriate educational environment for the child.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>accessing mainstream ECE?</p> <p>3. Are there children who attend special ECE settings? Please provide data if available.</p> <p>4. Describe arrangements for inter-service collaboration to enable children's attendance and participation?</p> <p>5. What proportion of children is formally identified as having additional needs at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years• 6 years	



2. WORKFORCE

Key principles

2.1. Well-qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role.

2.2. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership that creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and cooperation with parents.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What level of qualification is required to work in ECE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. What regulation is there for staff-child ratios in ECE?</p> <p>3. What provision is there for additional staffing to support children with diverse and additional needs?</p> <p>4. Does the initial training of staff include understanding and supporting children with diverse and additional needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>5. Does initial training include preparation for working in partnership with families:</p>	<p>1. Teachers working in ECE hold a university degree (bachelor) in Early Childhood Education from a public university. Specialist teachers either hold a university degree in Special Education or a bachelor in Early Childhood Education and a postgraduate degree in Special Education and/or have completed a 400 hour seminar in special education. Some specialist teachers specialise in Braille or sign language.</p> <p>2. In public kindergartens, the ratio is 15–28 children per teacher.</p> <p>3. Following the necessary procedures, in classrooms where a child needs additional support, the state provides a specialist teacher either to support the individual child or to create an inclusive classroom.</p> <p>4. Not necessarily. Early Childhood Education university departments offer courses in special and inclusive education, the majority of which are not compulsory.</p> <p>5. Not necessarily. Early Childhood Education university departments offer courses concerning preparation for working in partnership with families but these courses are not compulsory for the students.</p> <p>6. There is not a policy for in-service training. Teachers in need of advice or consultation concerning inclusive educational issues can ask for assistance from the Special Education School Counsellor in the region or from the Centres for Educational Evaluation and Diagnosis (KEDDY).</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>6. Is there a policy for in-service training? Does it cover inclusive education skills?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? 	
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What proportion of staff has the required qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. Please describe any proposed changes to the required qualifications.</p> <p>3. Describe the role of leaders of ECE settings in ensuring inclusive practice?</p> <p>4. Provide any data on staff–child ratio.</p> <p>5. Please describe the range of specialist support that is available and how it is organised?</p> <p>6. How do regular and support staff collaborate in IECE</p>	<p>All of the teachers working in public ECE settings hold the required qualifications. In the private sector, teachers can also be employed if they are graduates from private colleges.</p> <p>The leaders of ECE settings are usually teachers that have the additional responsibility of performing the administrative work in the school. Since these are the most experienced teachers in the school they can act as consultants to the other teachers. In this case, if they have experience or training in inclusive classrooms they are able to support the other teachers, but it is not their duty to do so.</p> <p>Support in public kindergartens is provided in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a specialist teacher is assigned to support a specific learner; – an inclusive classroom is created as part of the general ECE classroom, where 3–6 learners with disabilities are enrolled and have the support of a specialist teacher. <p>The class teacher and the specialist teacher should collaborate and design all the aspects of the educational procedure together from the beginning. This includes setting aims, the design and implementation of learning activities, the differentiation of teaching and learning based on all children’s interests, experiences and needs and the assessment of their work and their progress.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
settings? 7. Describe the role of support assistants in the ECE setting?	Nevertheless, this is not always the case in kindergartens, as in most cases the specialist teacher is viewed as an assistant to the class teacher. In state kindergartens, teaching assistants are not provided for the teachers.



3. CURRICULUM

Key principles

3.1. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values and approaches that enable children to reach their full potential in a holistic way.

3.2. A curriculum that requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national ECE curriculum for <i>all</i> children?</p> <p>2. Does it include skills and competences to be achieved by children?</p> <p>3. Describe how the curriculum facilitates inclusion?</p> <p>4. Is the use of new technologies included in the curriculum?</p> <p>5. Is the curriculum adaptable to meet the needs of all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in the adaptation of the curriculum to individual children?</p> <p>7. Is there awareness of the impact of labelling on children's participation</p>	<p>1. Since 2003, with the introduction of the national Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, a cross-thematic approach has been adopted in an attempt to interconnect different areas of knowledge. This curriculum aims to ensure the continuity of knowledge, eliminate the fragmentation of knowledge and create a framework that ensures greater autonomy for teachers. This curriculum is implemented in all public early childhood education settings.</p> <p>2. The Curriculum for Early Childhood Education defines 5 areas of knowledge and provides aims and suggestions for activities for each one, with the note that these programmes are not to be considered as separate focus areas for the teacher, but should be used as a guide in order to plan and implement meaningful activities for the learners. The knowledge areas within the curriculum include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Child and Language; – The Child and Mathematics; – The Child and the Environment; – The Child and Creativity/Expression; – The Child and Information Technology. <p>In each area the curriculum provides/suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – competences to be developed by the learner (for example, to be able to narrate); – content and suggested activities (for example, encourage the children to compose and narrate a



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>story);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– the fundamental concepts of the cross-thematic approach (for example, dimension). <p>3. Even though respect for human rights, difference and cultural diversity in the frame of a multicultural society was a basic need that led to the design of the new curriculum in Greece, in many ways this new education and social reality is still being neglected. There are points within the curriculum where an attempt is being made to include and show how to use diversity as a way to enrich education, but these points are few. Of course, the cross-thematic Curriculum for Early Childhood Education states from the very beginning that it is only to be used as a flexible tool, a starting point for each teacher to recreate in a way that will include all learners. The problem is that the lack of teacher training acts as a barrier in their efforts to do this. In the same way, the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Institute of Educational Policy, has made efforts to create a differentiated version of the curriculum in order to assist and inform teachers in their efforts to differentiate the existing curriculum, but this differentiated programme has not yet been released.</p> <p>4. Within the curriculum, there is a knowledge area entitled ‘The Child and Information Technology’. The aim of introducing the use of new technologies in Early Childhood Education is for the children to be acquainted with the computer’s simple basic functions and to experience its different uses as a learning and teaching tool, as well as a means to discover, create and express in everyday activities. With the support of their teachers, learners are encouraged to understand the basic uses of the computer, to acquire basic computer and age-appropriate software skills, to play and to recognise new technologies as helpful tools. New technologies provide opportunities to achieve goals such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– an energetic approach to knowledge;



Guiding questions	Country response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – co-operation between learners; – a connection between knowledge, society and everyday life; – the presentation of information through various forms (multimedia); – the creation of a realistic learning environment. <p>Nevertheless, it should be noted that even though the use of new technologies is included within the curriculum, the incorporation of new technologies both as tools and as lessons is still minimal, even in schools where the necessary infrastructure is available. Again, the lack of teacher training can be connected to this issue.</p> <p>5. As mentioned in previous sections, the cross-thematic curriculum is a flexible tool and can be adapted to meet the needs of all children, as long as it is differentiated based on the interests and personal experiences of each child.</p> <p>6. Parents can act as a source of information for the teacher. In parent-teacher meetings, they provide valuable information concerning their children. It is then the responsibility of the teacher to use this information for the benefit of adapting the curriculum to the needs of the child.</p> <p>7. The answer to this question varies according to the teacher, their training and education, their personal attitudes and views and their experience.</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of children from age 3 years?</p> <p>2. What arrangements</p>	<p>Assessment focuses on planning, scheduling and implementation in action. The main aim is to collect the necessary feedback in order to proceed with changes and improvements in educational procedures. In Early Childhood Education, there is no standardised progress in learning. The teaching environment is ideal for reflection, experimentation, the approach of different methods and attractive learning activities. Assessment is constant, it should be part of the everyday procedure, and is based on</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>are there for the screening of children's functioning?</p> <p>3. Is children's engagement and participation in ECE activities monitored?</p> <p>4. How do ECE settings reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children?</p> <p>5. How do staff adapt (prepare and present) the curriculum and the learning activities to make them accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>7. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p> <p>8. How is ICT used to overcome barriers to participation and learning?</p> <p>9. What provisions are there for meeting children's additional needs?</p> <p>10. How is the environment adapted to the needs of all children?</p>	<p>the overall evaluation of the programme. During assessment the teacher should take into consideration the personal characteristics of each child, the differences in learning styles, the views and attitudes of each child, their wishes, and interests, opportunities for learning within the family and social environment and their different needs.</p> <p>Learner assessment should take into account the age, learning needs and experiences of the learners. The teacher observes and records all the elements that are considered important and that are connected to the development, learning and socialisation of the child. The teacher supports all children and their personal differences and is called on to assess what the child can achieve. This assessment is focused not only on what the child can do alone, but also in co-operation with other children, and their support but not in comparison with other peers. In Early Childhood Education, alternative assessment methods are used instead of traditional ones that focus solely on knowledge areas. Emphasis is being put on the processes of acquiring knowledge. The aim is to highlight the communication skills of the learners, the acquired responsibilities through teamwork, research and critical thinking.</p> <p>This type of alternative assessment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– the course and development of work plans;– the assessment of the team from the learners themselves;– learner portfolios. <p>The learner portfolios are a reflection of the learning process. They include material that reveals what learners are interested in, what they have learnt, how they think, create, analyse and compose. The learner portfolio should include samples of the learner's work, which are authentically produced by the children (such as drawings, crafts, samples of writing) and not pre-designed worksheets. It should also include a record of the</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>teacher's systematic observations, such as photographs of the learner's participation in various activities, recordings of the learner's narration, etc. This material should be organised in a chronological order to facilitate the comparison between older and new work and assess progress.</p> <p>Final assessment therefore focuses on both the teacher's notes and observations for each learner and on the learner portfolio. This material should be accessible to parents. The teacher should inform parents on a regular basis through parent-teacher meetings. All important decisions and conclusions that the teacher must make in relation to the progress of each child should be based on different sources of information, for example from parents, other teachers and experts.</p> <p>As stated within the Guidelines of the Curriculum, the role of the teacher is to create the appropriate conditions to ensure that all learners will enjoy attractive learning experiences that will hold meaning and interest, with a spirit of co-operation, encouragement, trust and acceptance within a flexible, safe, friendly and incentive-rich environment. The teacher needs to approach knowledge through playful activities, conversation, the exchange of different points of view and the participation of each child in the learning activities according to their personal pace and way of learning. The teacher ought to use the pre-existing knowledge of the children and their experiences as a starting point and pursue the widening and enrichment of this knowledge. The role of the teacher is determinant since the teacher is the one called on to help, co-operate, mediate and facilitate the educational process.</p> <p>In the private sector, this monitoring is usually examined by a group of people, including the teacher, teaching assistants, the head teacher and in some cases the overall supervisor of the educational programme.</p> <p>Parents are not actively involved in this process. Parents</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>can share their concerns or add their own point of view and information concerning their children in parent-teacher meetings.</p> <p>Children are also hardly ever involved in this process, at least not in a regular and scheduled way.</p> <p>The environment is not always adapted to the needs of all children. Most schools have made the necessary changes in terms of access (ramps, specially adapted bathrooms, etc.), but there are still many flaws in this area.</p>



4. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Key principles

4.1. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

4.2. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What standards are in place for ensuring the quality of ECE at national level?</p> <p>2. Describe the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of ECE provision?</p> <p>3. How is the participation of all children reflected in the national quality standards for ECE?</p> <p>4. How does national policy identify and address inequalities in participation in ECE?</p> <p>5. How does research inform policy and practice in ECE?</p>	<p>The standards in place for ensuring the quality of ECE at national level are defined through the legislation, where clear guidelines are provided concerning the pedagogical aims, the teachers' qualifications, the structure of the educational settings and the regulations concerning space and child-teacher ratios.</p> <p>The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of ECE provision through scientific research. IEP was created in 2011 through Law 3966, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The main purpose of IEP is scientific research and the study of all matters concerning primary and secondary education. In order to fulfil this purpose, IEP is concerned with all matters relating to the on-going modernisation and optimal implementation of educational policy in all types of schools. IEP is also responsible for the school curricula, the harmonisation of teacher training and re-training and the assessment and evaluation of the administrative and educational structure of primary and secondary schools. IEP systematically studies the issues connected to school life and proposes ways to improve them. More specifically, IEP investigates and identifies overlaps in research and studies issues concerning special education, as well as the educational goals and needs of specific groups of learners and proposes ways to meet these needs. It also studies the factors that directly or indirectly affect the nature, function and effectiveness of schools, such as the educational structure, the organisational-administrative system and infrastructure and proposes necessary</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	changes and interventions.
<p data-bbox="150 383 464 459"><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p data-bbox="150 490 517 667">1. How do staff monitor and evaluate the participation and learning of all children?</p> <p data-bbox="150 689 443 817">2. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p data-bbox="150 840 501 967">3. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p>	<p data-bbox="545 383 1442 1102">As mentioned in section 3, teachers are the main people responsible for monitoring and evaluating the participation of all children. The guidelines on how to perform this evaluation are described within the national curriculum, but the way that each teacher actually implements and complies with these guidelines is not monitored. Parents can and should be involved in the process as well, as it is necessary to ensure meaningful collaboration, but again this process or the degree of involvement of parents is not monitored outside the classroom. Learners should be involved in the process every day, as is also proposed in the curriculum guide for teachers, but the level of involvement and the procedures are not clear, therefore it is not possible to be certain if and how learners participate in the evaluation of their participation and learning.</p>



5. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Key principles

5.1. Stakeholders in the ECE system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

5.2. Legislation, regulation and/or funding supports progress towards a universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised or funded ECE, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. Under which ministry(ies) / department(s) are ECE provisions regulated and funded?</p> <p>2. How is intersectorial (health, social and education) collaboration promoted among all stakeholders in ECE?</p> <p>3. How is free or affordable provision guaranteed to all children age 3 years and over?</p> <p>4. What additional economic measures are available for children with additional needs and their families to access mainstream ECE?</p> <p>5. How is additional funding allocated?</p>	<p>ECE provisions are regulated and funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.</p> <p>From the age of 5, the state is obliged to provide free education to all learners. Depending on the space in neighbourhood public kindergartens, 4-year-old children may also be enrolled as pre-schoolers.</p> <p>Under the age of 5, parents can enrol their children in municipal day-care centres for a small fee, depending on the available space. In the case of parents that want to enrol their children in private early childhood education centres, depending on their income and other social criteria, the state offers financial assistance in the form of vouchers or direct payments to the private centres through funds from the European Partnership Agreement 2014–2020 and in this way cover part of the tuition expenses.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p data-bbox="150 320 464 398"><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <ol data-bbox="150 427 501 1332" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="150 427 501 600">1. How far does the standard of ECE provision vary across regions and localities?<li data-bbox="150 629 501 891">2. How effective is collaboration between the ECE and health, social and other relevant agencies for children and families?<li data-bbox="150 920 501 1137">3. What proportion of children (3 years to primary education) make use of additional funding?<li data-bbox="150 1167 501 1332">4. How well does additional funding support inclusive education?	<p data-bbox="549 320 1337 398">Recent data is not currently available to answer the questions in this section with certainty.</p>