Promoting the Professional Development of Early Childhood Educators (Early-C)  
(http://earlychange.teithe.gr)  
Manuela Pessanha¹, Silvia Barros¹,², Teresa Leal², & Ana Madalena Gamelas²

Rationale and background

Research in several countries has been showing that Early Childhood Education quality has short and long-term effects on childhood development (e.g., Hall et al., 2009; Hawes et al., 2008). The recent reforms in several early childhood curriculums of the international educational community highlighted the demand to develop learning environments that meet children’s needs in the most effective way (Gettinger, 2003). Furthermore, early childhood education constitutes the foundation of child academic development and the quality of preschool education is considered as a major point for the development of national, social, educational and family policies (OECD, 2001). The basic presuppositions for the improvement of the quality of early childhood education across Europe are (a) the enhancement of early educators’ professional development and (b) the systematic and multidimensional assessment of structural and process quality of the provided education. This project attempts to combine the widely accepted need for lifelong training and professional development of the early childhood educators with the implementation of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT).

Aims

The enhancement of the professional development of early educators.

The implementation of ICTs in the training of early educators from 6 E.U. countries.

The evaluation of the early childhood education environments of these countries.

Objectives

Professional development

(a) The acquisition of skills to work as trained assessors of Early Childhood Education Environments through the participation in the training phases of the project.

(b) The development of self-assessment skills through the implementation of the ECERS-R Scale in their own classrooms.

Implementation of ICTs in the training of early educators

The effective communication, support and feedback of early educators by the academic staff through the synchronous and asynchronous use of the website and the web-based platform.

Evaluation of early childhood education environments

(a) The collection of empirical data for the assessment of the structural quality and process quality of early childhood education environments.

(b) The comparison of the quality of early childhood education environments across six different educational systems.

(c) The recording of a wide range of ‘good practices’ implemented in early childhood classrooms in the participating countries.

Training Materials

ECERS-R (Harrer, Clifford, & Cryer, 1990)

Focuses on the overall quality of preschool programs.

Includes 7 subscales:

- 43 quality indicators
- Presentation of the scale
- Training on using the scale
- Training on the sub-scales
- Scoring activity - Score sheets
- Inter-rater reliability sheet

ECERS-R users’ manual

Good practices in education are identified practices or interventions that are linked to specific outcomes and contribute to improved provision of education for all children (van C., 2014, p.5).

Good Practice Categories

- Health & Safety
- Activities/Play
- Interactions
- Classroom Management
- Diversity/Inclusion

Work Plan

STAGE OF THE PROJECT

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SELECTIVE PHASE

Participants from each country

- Early childhood classrooms from each country

- Cyprus: 50 classrooms
- Denmark: 128 classrooms
- Finland: 112 classrooms
- Greece: 102 classrooms
- Portugal: 96 classrooms
- Romania: 115 classrooms

References