



Promoting the Professional Development of Early Childhood Educators (Early-C)

LLP, Comenius Multilateral Project
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(<http://earlychange.teithe.gr>)

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Rationale and background

Research in several countries has been showing that Early Childhood Education quality has short and long-term effects on child development (e.g., Hall et al., 2009; Howes 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).

Training Materials

ECERS-R
(Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998)

- Focuses on the overall quality of preschool programs
- Consists of 7 subscales
- 43 quality indicators

ECERS-R
users' manual

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

*Good Practices

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 (Early-C, n/d, p.1).

Good Practice Categories

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

Partners

6 countries

Greece (Project leader)
Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, & Romania

19 Partner Organizations

- ➔ 9 Universities
- ➔ 10 Municipalities & Educational Districts

Portuguese Participants

- ➔ Instituto Politécnico do Porto
- ➔ Universidade do Porto
- ➔ Agrupamento de Escolas do Pinheiro
- ➔ Agrupamento de Escolas de Valadares

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.

Work Plan

STAGE OF THE PROJECT	OUTPUTS/ACTIVITIES	TIME PLANNING	PARTNERS INVOLVED
1st MEETING	Work plan, Deadlines, Allocation of tasks, Evaluation strategy, Financial issues	Feb 2012 Thessaloniki / Greece	University Members
SELECTION PHASE	Selection of: 1) assessors/early educators and 2) preschool classes	Feb - May 2012	University Members
TRANSLATION PHASE	Translation scales / manuals / Seminar Workbook	Feb - July 2012	University Members
2nd Meeting	Organizing the Training seminars	Sept 2012 Porto, Portugal	University Members
TRAINING PHASE I	Training materials/Training Seminar in each country	Sept - Dec 2012	All Participants
PROGRESS REPORT	Progress Report	Jan - March 2013	All Participants
TRAINING PHASE II	Evaluation data: ECERS-R score sheets, Good Practices/ Evaluation of preschool classes in all countries	Jan - June 2013	All Participants
DATA PROCESSING	Entering and analyzing data	June - Sept 2013	University Members
WRITING PHASE	Research papers, Conference presentations, E-book	June 2013 - March 2014	University Members
PREPARING THE FINAL PRODUCTS	Translation scales in 5 languages / Evaluation Report for each country / E-book	Sept - March 2014	University Members
DISSEMINATION PHASE	International Workshop Proceedings	May 2014 Greece	University Members

SELECTION PHASE

Participants from each country

- Cyprus ➔ 10 educators
- Denmark ➔ 18 educators
- Finland ➔ 30 educators
- Greece ➔ 20 educators
- Portugal ➔ 25 educators
- Romania ➔ 16 educators

Early childhood classrooms from each country

- Cyprus ➔ 50 classrooms
- Denmark ➔ 138 classrooms
- Finland ➔ 112 classrooms
- Greece ➔ 102 classrooms
- Portugal ➔ 96 classrooms
- Romania ➔ 115 classrooms

References

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