

Early childhood education and care curricula

in Europe 2025/2026

An insight paper based on Eurydice's System-level indicators

Authors: Akvilė Motiejūnaitė-Schulmeister and Isabelle De Coster

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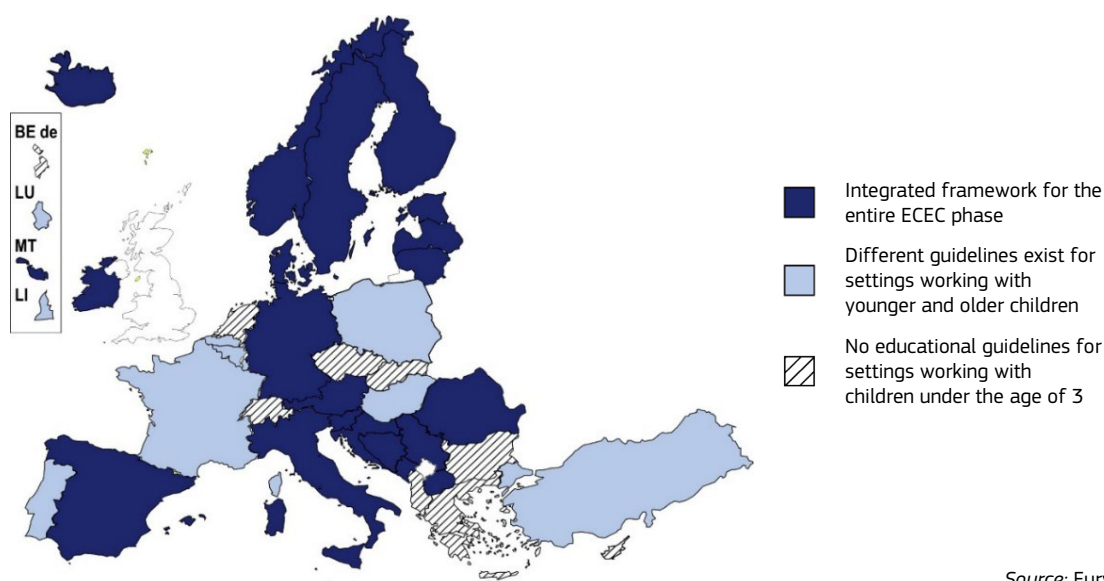
Children's development and learning are at the heart of high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems. At the national level, policymakers seek to influence the quality of educational processes taking place in ECEC settings by issuing a shared framework of guiding principles or a curriculum. These guidelines typically set out developmental goals, learning areas and age-appropriate activities. They help ensure consistent quality, support practitioners, and promote positive learning experiences for all children.

All European countries have issued official guidelines to ensure that educational content is delivered in ECEC settings. Most of them have one curriculum with integrated objectives and content for the entire ECEC age range.

However, in a quarter of education systems, curricula are exclusively directed at ECEC settings that typically enrol children aged 3 and over. These countries operate a so-called split ECEC system, separating 'childcare' and 'pre-primary education' phases. The framework for younger children in these systems primarily addresses norms related to health, safety and staffing.

Some of the split ECEC systems have introduced education elements for the childcare sector. In these cases, an educational component is emphasised from the start of ECEC, but different frameworks apply to settings for younger and older children. In these cases, it is crucial to align educational approaches and learning objectives.

Figure: Early childhood education and care curricula in Europe, 2025/2026



Source: Eurydice.

Types of educational guidelines in ECEC

Regulations on ECEC content and teaching approaches may take the form of an education programme, a reference framework of skills, care and education plans, educational standards and criteria for developing local curricula or practical guidelines for ECEC practitioners. These documents may be issued by the same or several different public authorities. The complete list of documents that form ECEC educational guidelines in European countries is provided in Table below (please click to activate the links to the full documents).

The status of the top-level educational guidelines for ECEC settings varies between countries and, in a few cases, within countries according to age ranges. Some countries have issued several documents with different statuses. In these cases, main legal documents or core curricula are binding, but additional support documents may serve as recommendations.

In countries with integrated curricula for the entire ECEC phase, the documents are usually binding. The only exception is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the guidelines for the implementation of common core curricula are non-binding across the whole ECEC phase.

Policy developments since 2024/2025

In **Belgium Flemish Community**, since September 2025, new knowledge-rich [attainment targets](#) have been introduced in pre-primary education, with a stronger focus on Dutch, mathematics and STEM. The reform promotes systematic knowledge building, while recognising Dutch language development as a key foundation for learning. The ‘[Every Child a Language Hero](#)’ initiative supports schools through a comprehensive package of measures to strengthen Dutch language proficiency, including evidence-informed teacher training, targeted support for preventing and remediating language delays, and the development of stronger school-wide language policies.

In **Czechia**, the revised Framework Educational Programme for Pre-Primary Education ([Rámcový vzdělávací program pro předškolní vzdělávání](#)) will be compulsory from the school year 2027/2028. This update is part of a broader, ongoing curriculum

revision. The reform seeks to streamline curricular documents, improve continuity across education levels, strengthen inclusivity, and promote diversity. In response to evolving social contexts and technological change, existing key competencies have been revised, and new cultural and digital competencies introduced.

In **Estonia**, the renewed national curriculum, in force since September 2025, defines for the first time the core values of early childhood education: universal values such as honesty, care, fairness and respect for oneself and others, as well as societal values such as freedom, democracy, respect for the Estonian language and culture, cultural diversity and tolerance, health awareness, environmental sustainability, responsibility and gender equality. The new curriculum places greater emphasis on child-centred learning, inclusive education, environmental awareness, social and emotional development, multilingualism, and problem-solving skills, including the purposeful and age-appropriate use of digital technologies. Greater attention is also given to physical activity and creative expression.

In September 2025, **Ireland** introduced an updated version of *Aistear*, its Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (first published in 2009). The updated framework has a strengthened focus on children’s rights, slow relational pedagogy, diversity and inclusion, outdoor learning, wellbeing, and sustainability. It places greater emphasis on creativity, the arts, emergent literacy and numeracy, and STEM education. Gaeilge words and phrases are incorporated throughout the framework to reinforce connections with Irish language and heritage. In addition, the framework gives greater priority to the voices of babies, toddlers, and young children, ensuring their perspectives help shape early education experiences.

France adopted new reference materials for both phases of ECEC. For children under age 3, since April 2025, the national quality reference framework for early childhood care has provided practical guidance for implementing the principles of the National Charter for the Care of Young Children. It sets out shared quality standards for interactions with children, partnerships with parents and organisational practices across childcare settings. For pre-primary education, two new

curriculum annexes on language and mathematics, complementing the existing pre-primary curriculum, were introduced for the 2025/2026 school year. These provide more detailed pedagogical guidance and strengthen the focus on foundational skills in early learning.

In **Cyprus**, the [National ECEC Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030](#) foresees the development of a coherent pedagogical curriculum framework for children aged 0–6. The strategy also provides for the introduction of dedicated curriculum guidelines for children aged 0–3 by 2027.

In **Italy**, new version of the [National Guidelines for the curriculum for pre-primary education and the first cycle of education](#) will apply from the school year 2026/2027. The new document aligns with the educational guidelines for the 0–3 age group and for the entire ECEC 0–6. It retains the fields of experience already present in the previous version, but with a different organisation of the competences and learning objectives. The guidelines introduce a playful approach to the digital world and place greater emphasis on the scientific exploration. Finally, the new guidelines align to the Guidelines on Civic Education, focusing, in each field of experience, on aspects such as sustainability, respect for diversity and health.

In **Luxembourg**, a new study plan for primary education ([Plan d'études de l'enseignement fondamental](#)) will be introduced progressively from the 2026/2027 school year: cycles 1 and 2 from September 2026, followed by cycles 3 and 4 in September 2027. While keeping the existing structure of cycles, subjects, assessment and timetables, the reform modernises the curriculum and aligns it more closely with classroom practice. A key innovation is the systematic integration of seven transversal themes, including well-being, sustainability, digital education and artificial intelligence, and democratic citizenship and human rights, across all learning areas.

Austria is updating its education framework plan, with the [revised version](#) expected by September 2026.

Poland is introducing new approaches across both phases of ECEC. For children under age 3, new standards for all ECEC providers were introduced.

Placing children's needs and rights at the centre, the new standards address not only care but also physical, cognitive, emotional and social development across four areas: work with children, staff organisation, cooperation with parents, and monitoring. For children aged 3 and over, a [new core curriculum for pre-primary and primary education](#) will enter into force in September 2026. A new key feature is practical, experience-based learning that supports personal, mental, social, and physical development while building children's sense of agency. The curriculum strengthens fundamental and cross-curricular competences, enhances communication and collaboration skills, and prioritises digital wellbeing by restricting screen use.

Portugal has recently adjusted ministerial responsibilities in early childhood education and care. Previously, governance has been split between the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MECI) and the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (MTSSS). Following the adoption of Decree-Law No. 105/2025 of 12 September 2025, MECI became responsible for the pedagogical and didactic components of provision for children aged 0–6. The two ministries now cooperate closely to strengthen the quality of early childhood education and care, which is regarded both as a right of children and families and as a key factor in promoting equity and well-being in early childhood. Curriculum development, enrichment activities and pedagogical guidance are coordinated across the full 0–6 age range.

In **Slovenia**, the revised Kindergarten Curriculum (2025) builds on contemporary frameworks emphasising early learning, play as a central driver of development, and stronger parental involvement, while extending the previous curriculum with new content. Children are viewed as competent, active participants, with independence, curiosity, cognitive flexibility, and engagement actively fostered. The curriculum recognises development as a continuous process, supporting greater individualisation and differentiation. At the system level, the reform introduces two sets of vertically unified guidelines for inclusion and counselling, applicable across all education levels and replacing previously level-specific approaches.

Conclusion

All European countries recognise the importance of providing educational guidance for early childhood education and care (ECEC), and many are currently updating their frameworks to respond to evolving societal and educational priorities. Around one third of EU-27 countries have recently issued or are in the process of adopting new ECEC curricula documents, with implementation planned for 2025/2026 or the coming years. However, among those countries that do not have curriculum for childcare settings for the youngest children, only Cyprus is currently introducing educational guidance.

Recent reforms across Europe share several themes. First, there is a renewed emphasis on basic skills, particularly language, early numeracy and STEM. Moreover, digital education, sustainability, and citizenship are increasingly integrated as cross-curricula approaches.

Second, there is a growing focus on child-centred approaches that view children as active participants in their learning, with greater attention to agency, engagement and creativity.

Third, inclusiveness and well-being feature prominently across reforms, with increased attention to social and emotional development, diversity, equity, and the needs of all learners. This is accompanied by a stronger rights-based perspective, as well as a heightened focus on parental engagement and partnerships with families.

Definitions and methodology

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) encompasses educational or developmental programmes as well as childcare services for children from birth to the start of compulsory primary education. The definition goes beyond the education programmes classified as International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0 (early childhood education), as it includes all registered and regulated ECEC services. This fact-sheet, however, covers only centre-based ECEC. Home-based ECEC (childminding service or family daycare) that is delivered in a provider's home or another home-like place is not part of the scope.

Centre-based ECEC (also known as nursery, crèche, kindergarten, daycare centre, pre-primary school or preschool): publicly regulated ECEC provision that is delivered in dedicated facilities primarily intended for the care and education of young children. These facilities may be stand-alone buildings or part of larger institutions, such as schools or community centres. Centre-based ECEC typically operates in a group setting, with trained staff members supervising and guiding children's activities.

Many European countries structure ECEC services according to the age of the children. Usually, the transition from the first phase to the second takes place when children are around 3 years old. In order to reflect the different regulations, a distinction is often made between the provision for children under 3 years old and for children of 3 years and over. However, it is important to keep in mind that in some countries the transition can be as early as 2.5 years (e.g. Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) or as late as 4 years of age (e.g. Greece, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein).

Educational guidelines (curriculum): official documents issued to steer or guide ECEC providers that may include main principles, values, developmental and learning goals or learning areas, competences, educational/pedagogical approaches, suggested activities and assessment methods. Such documents may be national curriculum frameworks or criteria for developing local curricula; they might be expressed as practical guidelines for ECEC practitioners, be incorporated into legislation, or be published as a reference framework of educational/care standards, care and education plans, etc. Depending on how formal or binding they are, steering documents allow varying degrees of flexibility in the way they are applied in ECEC settings.

Pre-primary classes: organised in the last 1–2 year(s) of ECEC, they aim to prepare children for primary education with a specific programme, compulsory for all children, to smooth the transition to school education. Pre-primary classes may be organised within centre-based ECEC settings or in primary schools.

Country	List of ECEC curricula in Europe, 2025/2026			
		Children < 3 years	Children ≥ 3 years	Pre-primary classes

☒ Binding
 ☐ Non-binding
 ☐ No pre-primary classes

BE fr	Quality Code for ECEC Centres (Code de Qualité de l'Accueil)	☒		
	Minding Very Young Children – Go for quality: A psycho-pedagogical guide for quality childcare (Accueillir les tout petits: Oser la qualité – Un référentiel psycho-pédagogique pour des milieux d'accueil de qualité)	☐		
	Guidelines for quality practices in ECEC (Meeting the Settings, Meeting the Families, Meeting the Children, Supporting Professionals) (Repères pour des pratiques d'accueil de qualité : À la rencontre des milieux d'accueil , À la rencontre des familles , À la rencontre des enfants , Soutien à l'activité des professionnel.le.s)	☐		
	Initial Skills Reference Guide (Référentiel des compétences initiales)		☒	
BE de	Activity Plan for Pre-primary Education (Aktivitätenplan für den Kindergarten)		☒	
	26 April 1999 – Decree on Regular Basic Education (26 April 1999 – Dekret über das Regelgrundschulwesen)		☒	
BE nl	A pedagogical framework for childcare for babies and toddlers (Een pedagogisch raamwerk voor de kinderopvang van baby's en peuters)	☐		
	Developmental Aims of Pre-primary Education (Ontwikkelingsdoelen kleuteronderwijs)		☒	
	Decree on Elementary Education (Decreet basisonderwijs)		☒	
BG	Pre-school and School Education Act (Закон за предучилищното и училищното образование)		☒	☒
	Regulation No 5 for pre-school education (Наредба № 5 от 3 юни 2016 г. за предучилищното образование)		☒	☒
CZ	Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro předškolní vzdělávání)		☒	
DK	Executive order on pedagogical objectives and content in six curriculum themes (Bekendtgørelse om pædagogiske mål og indhold i seks læreplanstemaer)	☒		
	Act on Daycare Facilities (Bekendtgørelse af lov om dag-, fritids- og klubtilbud m.v. til børn og unge (dagtilbudsloven))	☒		
	The Strengthened Pedagogical Curriculum – Framework and content (Den styrkede pædagogiske læreplan – Rammer og indhold)	☒		
DE	Common framework of the federal states for early education in childcare centres (Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen)	☒		
EE	National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (Alushariduse riiklik õppekava)	☒		
IE	Aistear: The early childhood curriculum framework (Aistear: Creachuracclam na Luath-Óige)	☒		
EL	Curriculum for Pre-school Education (Προγραμμα σπουδών για την Προσχολική Εκπαίδευση)		☒	
	Curriculum for Pre-school Education – Extended version (Προγραμμα σπουδών για την Προσχολική Εκπαίδευση-Διευρυμένη Έκδοση)		☒	
	Pre-school Education Teachers' Guide (Οδηγός Νηπιαγωγού)		☒	
	Skills labs (Εργαστήρια Δεξιοτήτων)		☒	
ES	Organic Law 2/2006 on Education (LOE), as amended by Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE) (Ley Orgánica 2/2006 de Educación, modificada por la Ley Orgánica 3/2020)	☒		
	Royal Decree 95/2022, of 1 February, which establishes the organisation and minimum teaching of early childhood education (Real Decreto 95/2022, de 1 de febrero, por el que se establece la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Infantil)	☒		

Country	List of ECEC curricula in Europe, 2025/2026	Children < 3 years	Children ≥ 3 years	Pre-primary classes
	☒ Binding ☐ Non-binding ☐ No pre-primary classes			
FR	National Charter for the Care of Young Children (Charte nationale pour l'accueil du jeune enfant)	●		
	National Quality Reference Framework for Early Childhood Care (Référentiel national de la qualité d'accueil du jeune enfant)			
	Pre-primary Education Curriculum (Programme d'enseignement de l'école maternelle)		●	
	Pre-primary Education Curriculum for the Development and Structuring of Oral and Written Language (Programme d'enseignement pour le développement et la structuration du langage oral et écrit du cycle 1)		●	
	Pre-primary Education Curriculum for Acquiring Basic Mathematical Skills (Programme d'enseignement pour l'acquisition des premiers outils mathématiques du cycle 1)		●	
HR	National Curriculum for Early Childhood and Preschool Education (Nacionalni kurikulum za rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje)	●		●
IT	National Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services (Orientamenti nazionali per i servizi educativi per l'infanzia)	●		
	Educational Guidelines for the Integrated System 0–6 (Linee pedagogiche per il sistema integrato zero-sei)	●		
	National Guidelines for the Curriculum of Pre-primary Education and for the First Cycle of Education (Indicazioni nazionali per il curricolo della scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo d'istruzione)		●	
	National Guidelines and New Scenarios (Indicazioni nazionali e nuovi scenari)		●	
CY	Preschool Education Curriculum (Αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα προσχολικής εκπαίδευσης)		●	●
LV	Regulations regarding the state guidelines for pre-school education and the model pre-school education programmes (Noteikumi par valsts pirmsskolas izglītības vadlīnijām un pirmsskolas izglītības programmu paraugiem)	●		●
LT	Guidelines for the Preschool Education Programme (Dėl ikimokyklinio ugdymo programos gairių patvirtinimo)	●		
	General Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (Priešmokyklinio ugdymo bendroji programa)			●
	Methodological Recommendations for Development of Preschool Curriculum (Metodinės rekomendacijos ikimokyklinio ugdymo programai rengti)	☐		☐
	Advice and Practical Examples for Developing a Preschool Curriculum (Patarimai ir praktiniai pavyzdžiai rengiant ikimokyklinio ugdymo programą)	☐		☐
	Competencies and Their Descriptions (Kompetencijos ir jų aprašai)			☐
LU	National curriculum framework for non-formal education for children and youth (Cadre de référence national sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes)	●		
	Framework Plan for Pre-school Education in Luxembourg (Plan-cadre pour l'éducation précoce au Luxembourg) (cycle 1 – first year)		●	
	Study Plan – Fundamental education (Plan d'études – l'école fondamentale) (cycles 1 (second and third years) to 4)			●
HU	National Core Programme for Nursery Education and Care (A bölcsődei nevelés-gondozás országos alapprogramja)	●		
	National Core Programme of Kindergarten Education (Az óvodai nevelés országos alapprogramja)		●	
MT	National standards for early childhood education and care services (0–3 years)	●		
	A National Curriculum Framework for All – 2012		●	
	Early Childhood Education and Care (0–7 Years) – National policy framework for Malta and Gozo	●		
	Educators' Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment: Toolkit for the Early Years Cycle	●		

Country	List of ECEC curricula in Europe, 2025/2026			
		Children < 3 years	Children ≥ 3 years	Pre-primary classes

☒ Binding
 ☐ Non-binding
 ☐ No pre-primary classes

NL	Core Objectives for Primary Education 2006 (Kerndoelen primair onderwijs 2006)		●	
AT	Statewide framework curriculum for elementary educational services in Austria (Bundesländerübergreifender BildungsRahmenPlan für elementare Bildungseinrichtungen in Österreich)		●	
	Live Values, Develop Values – Development of values in early childhood (Werte leben. Werte bilden: Wertebildung in der frühen Kindheit)		●	
	Module for the last year in early childhood services (Modul für das letzte Jahr in elementaren Bildungseinrichtungen)			●
	Language promotion for the transition from kindergarten to primary school (Sprachliche Förderung am Übergang vom Kindergarten in die Grundschule)			●
PL	Regulation of the Minister of Family and Social Policy of 13 December 2024 on the standards of care provided to children under 3 years of age (Rozporządzenie Ministra Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 13 grudnia 2024 r. w sprawie standardów opieki sprawowanej nad dziećmi w wieku do lat 3)	●		
	Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on core curricula for pre-school education and core curricula for general education for primary school including for pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, general education for stage I sectoral vocational school, general education for special school preparing for employment and general education for post-secondary schools (Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 lutego 2017 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły podstawowej, w tym dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym, kształcenia ogólnego dla branżowej szkoły I stopnia, kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły specjalnej przysposabiającej do pracy oraz kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły policealnej)		●	
PT	Pedagogical Guidelines for Creches (Orientações Pedagógicas para Creche)	●		
	Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education (Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-Escolar)		●	
RO	Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2019 (Curriculum pentru educația timpurie 2019)		●	
SI	Kindergarten Curriculum (Kurikulum za vrtce)		●	
	Supplement to the Kindergarten Curriculum for Roma Children (Dodatek h Kurikulu za vrtce za otroke Romov)		●	
	Supplement to the curriculum for working in the bilingual areas (Dodatek h Kurikulu za vrtce na narodno mešanih območjih)		●	
	Instructions regarding the kindergarten curriculum with adapted implementation and additional professional support for children with special needs (Navodila h Kurikulu za vrtce v programih s prilagojenim izvajanjem in dodatno strokovno pomočjo za otroke s posebnimi potrebami)		●	
	Guidelines for Counselling Services in Education Programmes (Programske smernice svetovalnega dela v programih s področja vzgoje in izobraževanja)		●	
	Guidelines for the Inclusion of Children and Students from Diverse Linguistic and Cultural Backgrounds in the Slovenian Education System (Smernice za vključevanje otrok, učencev in dijakov iz drugih jezikovnih in kulturnih okolij v slovenski vzgojno izobraževalni sistem)		●	
SK	State Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education in Kindergarten – Consolidated version (Štátny vzdelávací program pre predprimárne vzdelávanie v materských školách – konsolidované znenie)		●	
FI	National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (2022) (Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet 2022)		●	●
	National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education 2014 (Esiopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014)			●

Country	List of ECEC curricula in Europe, 2025/2026	Children < 3 years	Children ≥ 3 years	Pre-primary classes
	☒ Binding ☐ Non-binding ☐ No pre-primary classes			
SE	Act 2010:800 (Education Act) (Skollag 2010:800)	●		●
	Curriculum for the Preschool (Läroplan för förskolan)	●		
	Curriculum for Compulsory School, Preschool Class and School-Age Educare (Lgr22) (Läroplan för grundskolan samt för förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet)			●
AL	Curriculum Framework for Preschool Education (Korniza Kurrikulare e Arsimit Parashkollor)		●	
BA	Guidelines for the implementation of common core curricula and defined learning outcomes (Smejernice za implementaciju zajedničke jezgre nastavnih planova i programa za kroskurikularno i međupredmetno područje definirano na ishodima učenja)	☐		☐
CH	German-speaking cantons: Curriculum 21 (Lehrplan 21)			
	French-speaking cantons: Curriculum Romand (Plan d'études Romand)		●	
	Italian-speaking cantons: Curriculum for Compulsory Education in Ticino (Piani di studio della scuola dell'obbligo ticinese)			
IS	Notice No 897/2023 amending the national curriculum guide for preschools (Auglýsing No 897/2023 um breytingu á aðalnámskrá leikskóla)	●		
	The Icelandic national curriculum guide for preschools (Aðalnámskrá leikskóla)	●		
LI	Guidelines of the Ministry of Social Affairs for approval and quality assurance of extrafamilial childcare services (Richtlinien des Amtes für Soziale Dienste für die Bewilligung und Aufsicht in der ausserhäuslichen Betreuung von Kindern)	●		
	National Curriculum (Liechtensteiner Lehrplan)		●	
ME	Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education (Zakon o predškolskom vaspitanju i obrazovanju)	●		
	Programme for Preschool Upbringing and Education (Program za predškolsko vaspitanje i obrazovanje)	●		
MK	Early learning and development standards for children from 0–6 years (Стандарди за рано учење и развој кај деца од 0 до 6 години)	●		
	Curriculum for Early Learning and Development (Програма за рано учење и развој)	●		
NO	Framework Plan for Kindergartens (Rammeplan for barnehagen)	●		
RS	Fundamentals of the Preschool Education Programme (Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja)	●		●
TR	Education programme for children aged 0–36 months old (0–36 Aylık Çocuklar İçin Eğitim Programı)	☐		
	Preschool Education Programme (Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı)		●	

Country-specific notes

Ireland: The curriculum framework designed for the whole ECEC phase (Aistear) is not legally mandated but is binding for all centre-based settings under the contractual agreement for receipt of public funding from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Netherlands: There is no national curriculum for ECEC for children under the age of 4 years. However, in order to be able to offer voorschoolse educatie (subsidised provision targeting disadvantaged children) for that age range (2-and-a-half to 4 years), centre-based settings must apply [an education programme](#) that meets legal requirements ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.nji.nl/voor-en-vroegschoolse-educatie-vve/welke-afspraken-kunnen-gemeenten-maken-over-voorschoolse-educatie>.

Aims

This insight paper provides a concise reference to all top-level documents containing educational guidelines in the EU Member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye. It also offers a brief comparative overview of the age groups covered in these documents and highlights recent reforms. This lays the groundwork for exploring the effective approaches to development of basic skills in support of the [Union of Skills](#).

Sources

This paper draws on the annually updated [Eurydice system-level indicators](#), which enable the monitoring of key education policies and structures across Europe. These indicators support building of the European education area and are aligned with the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. They also provide a contribution to the European Commission's yearly analysis of developments in the EU's education and training systems – the [Education and Training Monitor](#).

The [indicators on early childhood education and care](#) focus on every child's right to affordable, high-quality provision, and examine selected aspects of access, curriculum, and staff in 38 European education systems.

The [Eurydice Network](#)'s task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Want to know more?

[Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe - 2025](#) report provides comprehensive comparative information on access, governance, funding, staffing, curricula and monitoring. The curriculum section addresses topics such as sustainability education, digital awareness and safety, early foreign language learning and targeted educational support. It explores measures recommended to ease children's transitions from different types of ECEC settings as well as into primary education.

For in-depth descriptions of national education systems, see Eurydice country profiles in our continuously updated [Eurypedia](#), which includes a chapter on ECEC.

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Boulevard Simon Bolivar 34 (Unit A6)
BE-1000 Brussels

Email: eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu

Website: <http://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu>

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