Access and quality issues in systems of early education and care
In focus: Germany

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16 federal states - Ländler
10 west, 5 east, Berlin

Population 80.5 million (2012)
Approx. one fifth 'persons with a migration background'

Key features ECEC
- Multi-level governance
  Bund – Ländler – Kommunen
- All ECEC under Child and Youth Welfare (not Education)
- Virtually no private for-profit sector
- Two-thirds of provision run by publicly funded NGOs
Fully integrated ECEC systems 0-6; 1-7
Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Sweden (Iceland, Norway) – all now under the auspices of Education

Partially integrated systems 0-5; 0-6
Austria, England/UK, Germany, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Spain – most under overall auspices of Education

'Split' systems 0-3; 3-6 (childcare/education)
Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia

'Parallel' systems 0-6; 0-3 (childcare); 3-6 (education)
Cyprus, Greece
Federalism, subsidiarity and diversity are key political principles underpinning the organisation, funding and regulation of early childhood services.

Responsibility is shared between the federal government, the 16 regional governments and local government bodies - in partnership with a wide range of voluntary agencies.

Germany: Providers of early childhood and out-of-school services 2012
Source: Federal Statistical Office 2012; own calculations
Children's services are required to:

- Support the child in developing independence and a sense of community
- Support and complement upbringing and education in the family
- Help parents to combine work and family responsibilities

Overall objectives:

- A integrated and holistic approach towards upbringing (Erziehung), education (Bildung) and care (Betreuung)
- Provision to be adapted to the 'needs of children and their families'
- Parents to be included in decision-making processes on key aspects
- Wherever possible, children with disabilities to be included in mainstream provision

Legal entitlement to a 'place' in kindergarten or family day care for all 3, 4 and 5 year olds.

In 2008 the Childcare Funding Act pledged to extend entitlement to 35% of 1 and 2 year olds by 1st August 2013 (now in force).

Indicated a significant attitudinal shift in the western part of Germany.
### Germany - Länder-level policies

#### Promoting high quality and inclusive ECEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy mechanism</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural standards</strong></td>
<td>● Regulatory frameworks generally well developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Set requirements for all providers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Requirements include staff qualifications and staff/child ratios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curricular frameworks</strong></td>
<td>● All Länder (16 frameworks) - in some mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Common Framework 2004, non-mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/literacy programmes</strong></td>
<td>● Most Länder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Additional funding support by Bund and new 5-year Bund-Länder research and development initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality improvement strategies</strong></td>
<td>● All Länder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● But different approaches and levels of accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provision models with specifically inclusive approach</strong></td>
<td>● Some Länder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Family Centres in Northrhine-Westfalia (universal), Hamburg (targeted), Hesse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Germany – ECEC participation rates 2012

In centre-based settings and publicly subsidised family day care, according to age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 1 year-olds</th>
<th>1 year-olds</th>
<th>2 year-olds</th>
<th>3 year-olds</th>
<th>4 year-olds</th>
<th>5 year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Länder</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Länder</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013, pp.281 ff., adapted; data from Federal Statistical Office, 01.03.2012
The **basic right** to access does not always translate into **equitable access**, particularly regarding provision for the **under-threes**.

- Children from **low income** families are less likely to be in an ECEC setting than children from higher-income and higher-educated families.
- Type of access is subject to **regional variations**.
- Children with a **migration background*** are more likely to attend settings of lower quality and generally less likely to attend at all at an early age.

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* At least one parent with a migration biography

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Specific conditions of access depend on regional legislation and/or local providers.

**TREND at Länder-level:**
To regulate daily hours of entitlement.

**DISPARITIES at Länder-level:**
From 10 hours daily to no specification.
Germany – implementing universal access policies
Meeting the new entitlement for under-threes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More than 200,000 additional places
- Up to 20,000 additional staff

Issues

Required according to expert estimations to meet the revised government target of 39%.

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Rauschenbach 2013
In Europe a Bachelor degree is the requirement
- for work with the 3-6 age-group in 23 of 28 countries;
- for work with 3-6 year-olds and 0-3 year-olds in the Nordic and Baltic countries, Croatia and Slovenia.

In Germany
- Over 70% of staff have the required post-secondary vocational qualification.
- The proportion of non-qualified staff is low (2.5%) and the proportion with a Bachelor-level qualification is very low (approx. 4%) in EU perspective.
- Bachelor (and Master) degrees are mushrooming – but not yet a requirement.
- Alternative pathways into the profession are being piloted (controversial).
- The traditional vocational qualification has been placed alongside the Bachelor degree on the new German Qualifications Framework (controversial).
- Nation-wide quality initiatives are focusing on the continuing professional development of staff (www.weiterbildungsinitiative.de)

Oberhuemer, Schreyer & Neuman 2010; Berth et al. 2013
Recent research in England shows that both the level and quality of qualification as well as the number of children per member of staff have a positive impact on process quality – but in different ways.

**Qualification**
more strongly associated e.g. with language enhancement and supporting effective learning processes

**Staff-child ratio**
more strongly associated e.g. with individualised support and responsive routine activities

Eisenstadt, Sylva, Mathers & Taggart 2013
Germany – implementing policies to promote high quality ECEC

Staff-child ratios 2012 for work with under-threes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal state</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Children per adult (median)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandenburg</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxony</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saarland</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average across Länder</strong></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td><strong>4.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Länderreport Frühkindliche Bildungssysteme 2013
**Process quality** assessed in 403 centre-based settings and 164 family day care settings

**According to the instruments used** (ECERS, ITERS, CIS), approximately 80% of EC centres (and most FDC settings) assessed as mediocre, 10% good to excellent, and 10% below average quality

NUBBEK authors raise questions as to whether previous quality improvement strategies have been successful. Systematic and continuous monitoring of quality is considered to be the way forward – also more sophisticated research methodologies (multi-level, longitudinal) to capture the impact of ECEC more effectively.

Kalicki & Egert 2012; Kalicki 2012
Some conclusions

While a number of policy challenges and disparities across the country have become evident, the German system of ECEC has many **positive features**. These include:

- the **right to access** for all children from age 3 up to school entry at 6 and the newly introduced **entitlement** for 1 and 2 year-olds;
- the **well-developed regulatory frameworks** at the *Länder*-level, which ensure structural and quality standards (e.g. staffing, curricula);
- the current high funding levels for **quality initiatives** (e.g. language and literacy support and the continuing professional development of staff);
- **choice for parents** through diversity of provision;
- the very **low level** of private **for-profit** provision, viewing ECEC as a public good.

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Thank you.