



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

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***Pamela Oberhuemer***

Associate researcher

State Institute of  
Early Childhood Research (IFP)  
Munich/Germany



State Institute of Early Childhood Research



# Germany - at a glance

## Contextual data



### 16 federal states - *Länder*

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 – Länder – 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



## Germany in EU-28 context

# ECEC governance models 2013

### 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

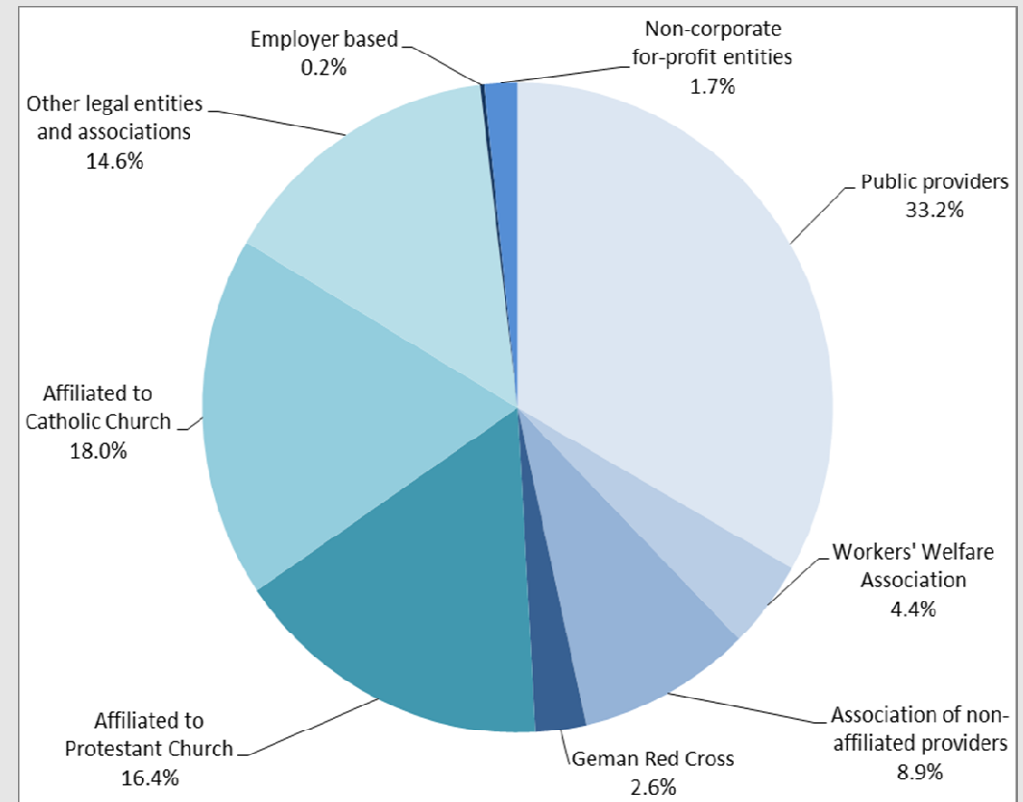


# Germany

## Overall policy framework

**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



## Federal-level legislative framework

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### 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



## Germany - federal-level policies **Promoting universal access**

**1996**

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

**2013**

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.



## Promoting high quality and inclusive ECEC

Policy mechanism	Comments
<b>Structural standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regulatory frameworks generally well developed.</li> <li>● Set requirements for <i>all</i> providers</li> <li>● Requirements include <b>staff qualifications</b> and <b>staff/child ratios</b></li> </ul>
<b>Curricular frameworks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All <i>Länder</i> (16 frameworks) - in some mandatory</li> <li>● Common Framework 2004, non-mandatory</li> </ul>
<b>Language/literacy programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most <i>Länder</i></li> <li>● Additional funding support by <i>Bund</i> and new 5-year <i>Bund-Länder</i> research and development initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Quality improvement strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All <i>Länder</i></li> <li>● But different approaches and levels of accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Provision models with specifically inclusive approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some <i>Länder</i></li> <li>● Family Centres in Northrhine-Westfalia (→ universal), Hamburg (→ targeted), Hesse</li> </ul>





# Germany – ECEC participation rates 2012

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

	Under 1 year-olds	1 year-olds	2 year-olds	3 year-olds	4 year-olds	5 year-olds
	in per cent					
<b>Eastern <i>Länder</i></b> (excluding Berlin)	<b>4.7</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>93.0</b>	<b>96.9</b>	<b>97.4</b>
<b>Western <i>Länder</i></b> (excluding Berlin)	<b>2.3</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>97.6</b>
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>76.6</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>97.7</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>97.6</b>





## Germany – implementing universal access policies

### Equal access?

The **basic right** to access does not always translate into **equitable** access, particularly regarding provision for the under-threes.

#### Issues

- 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.



## Germany – implementing universal access policies

### Entitlement and the undefined 'place'



#### Issue

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

Participation rates of children under 3 years of age  
in early childhood centres and subsidised family day care  
in per cent

2002	2007	2012
9.0	15.5	27.6

### Issues

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

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



# Germany – implementing policies to promote high quality ECEC Staff qualifications

**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](http://www.weiterbildungsinitiative.de))



# Quality = Qualification PLUS staff-child ratios

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



Germany – implementing policies to promote high quality ECEC

## Staff-child ratios 2012 for work with under-threes

### Issue

Structural standards vary considerably

Federal state	Region	Children per adult (median)
Brandenburg	East	6.2
Saxony	East	6.0
Saarland	West	3.4
Bremen	West	3.1
Average across <i>Länder</i>	Germany	4.5



# Germany

## Research on quality in ECEC

### NUBBEK - National Study on Education, Care and Upbringing in Early Childhood

2009-2011 (Tietze et al., forthcoming)

- **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.





## 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.

Thank you.

