



Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education

Interim Report 2016 of the Federal Government and Federal States (Länder)
Declaration of the Federal Government-Federal States Conference



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“Early education – More quality for all children”**Declaration of the Federal government and Federal States (Länder) Conference
14 and 15 November 2016**

1. By way of implementation of the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” of 6 November 2014, the working party of the federal government and federal states (Länder) submits the Interim Report 2016. The report describes the important areas of child day care for quality developments and contains a summary appraisal of the related additional costs. The Federal Government/Federal States Conference takes note of the Interim Report 2016 and deems the mandate from the Communiqué to have been fulfilled. It sees in this a solid foundation for the further development of quality in child day care, for further discussions about concrete implementation steps and for clarification of the related questions of the responsibility of the public levels and financing options.
2. The Federal Government/Federal States Conference appreciates the quality development process of the federal government and the federal states up to now and sees the Interim Report 2016 as an important step towards achieving the common goal of opening up good education and development opportunities to all children. Against this backdrop it welcomes the participatory involvement of other relevant stakeholders from child day care, in particular the municipal umbrella organisations and the associations and organisations in the field of child day care. It expressly thanks all those involved for their constructive participation in this process.
3. In line with the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” the Federal Government/Federal States Conference reiterates the need to drive forward the further development of the quality of day child care and to continue to gether the quality development process. At the same time, it appreciates the efforts made up to now mainly by the federal states, municipalities, the private providers and the support services of the federal government in establishing and securing the level of quality achieved so far in child day care. It should be noted that the respective definitions of priority areas in the federal states have led to different strengths on the one hand and development needs on the other. The future strategy for quality development must take these differences into account and tap into the respective strengths and development needs.
4. The Federal Government/Federal States Conference notes that when describing the action goals and need for action in the Interim Report 2016, the focus was not

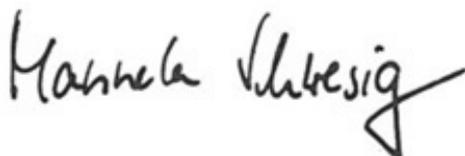
DECLARATION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT/FEDERAL STATES (LÄNDER) CONFERENCE

on contextual, structural or time-related implementation questions. This means that the Interim Report has been true to its mandate of submitting a compendium for very good quality in child day care. In this context “quality” has a multi-dimensional character. This means that the further quality development process cannot take place sporadically in an isolated manner. Nor can any isolated demands be derived for the federal states, the municipalities or the providers of child day care. What is really needed is a coordinated and long-term overall strategy of the federal government and the federal states.

5. There is agreement that the success of the process launched with the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” and the elaboration of an overall strategy are dependent on the ongoing and far greater participation of the federal government in the costs of child day care. The benchmark for this should be the benefits generated for the federal government by high-quality child day care. This is confirmed inter alia by calculations of the economic returns on child day care compared with the income and cost burden distribution between the federal government, federal states and municipalities. There is agreement that participation by the federal government, which is to be distributed on the basis of uniform criteria to the federal states, must be undertaken in a purpose-specific manner. At the same time, however, the different development needs of the federal states that have been outlined must be taken into account too. Hence, the development dimensions from the Interim Report could be seen as a kind of “toolbox” which makes a major contribution to the further development of quality in child day care in combination with the target agreements to be entered into by the federal government and each federal state on the basis of a statutory regulation. From the angle of the federal states it makes sense to implement a combination of toolbox and target agreements for each federal state.

The Federal Government/Federal States Conference welcomes the fact that the federal government is to make additional funds available for child day care for the period from 2017 to 2020.

6. The Federal Government/Federal State Conference invites the working party which submitted the Interim Report to present a proposal for the further shaping of the quality development process and its financial safeguarding at the Youth and Family Ministers’ Conference in 2017.



Manuela Schwesig
Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth



Günter Baaske
Minister for Education, Youth and Sport of the Federal State Brandenburg
Representative of the Youth and Family Ministers’ Conference

Preface of the Working Party “Early Education”

Strengthening and carrying forward good child day care with a joint framework and far greater federal government involvement

Child day care: highly dynamic developments

In recent years Germany has experienced sweeping social change. Today, attendance in early childhood education and care centres (ECEC)¹ centres and family day care settings is all part of growing up. For children it has become the norm to participate over several years prior to starting school in early education and care outside the family. This supports the upbringing mandate of parents and helps them to achieve a better balance between family and working life.

The major expansion process in recent years has made an important contribution to this. Thanks to major efforts by the federal government, federal states, municipalities, providers and ECEC staff, the quantitative expansion of provision for children under the age of three has been successful. This means that the legal entitlement for children from age one, which entered into force on 1 August 2013, can be put in place. At the same time, there have been also increases in the number of places for children over the age of three and full day care provision.

Child day care has been shaped for years by an extraordinary dynamic which is undiminished. The demand from parents is growing and this against the backdrop of a birth rate that is once again on the rise. In addition, there are the children with a refugee background. This results in the need for further quantitative expansion. But the quality of services is also evolving. Quantity and quality cannot be conceived separately from one another.

Good child day care from the very outset has a positive impact on education, participation and integration, and helps to prevent poverty. It ensures the supply of ECEC staff today and tomorrow. Public responsibility for the rearing of children and, by extension, the shaping of a common future are reflected in the quality of child day care. Quality is diverse and dynamic. From human resources over the qualification of ECEC staff to the room facilities and interaction between the stakeholders – the most diverse characteristics and aspects work together and determine the quality of child day care.

¹ “The German ECEC system is shaped by the holistic socio-paedagogical approach mandated by the Social Code Book VIII (Achtes Sozialgesetzbuch). This approach is based on the deeply intertwined concepts of education, upbringing and care which convey the idea that children are nurtured best when these three principles are kept in balance. In the international context, however, it is common practice to “only” refer to early childhood education and care (ECEC). Since the English version of this report is intended for a non-German audience, the term ECEC is used in most instances in order to avoid any irritation when reading the text. This does not imply any failure to acknowledge the holistic approach based on the three pillars of education, upbringing and care.”

Safeguarding and developing the quality of day child care in a responsible community

The massive expansion has – contrary to what had been expected in many cases – not led to a deterioration in the quality of child day care. The federal government, federal states, municipalities and providers have made efforts to safeguard and develop quality. Each federal state has its own strengths. But what is clear is that each federal state has further development needs.

The goal of the federal government and federal states is to open up equal development and education opportunities to all children. The qualitative development must keep pace with this social expectation and the high dynamics of expansion. What is needed here is a major commitment.

Expenditure on ECEC provision has risen enormously across Germany. In 2000 EUR 10.7 billion were channelled into child day care but by 2013 this sum had climbed to more than twice as much - EUR 23.8 billion. The federal states and municipalities have to cover the lion's share of expenses and increases in this expenditure. The federal government has taken over part of this expenditure and continues its commitment. The private providers also contribute. There is no end in sight to this dynamic development of expenditure. This takes federal states and municipalities to their contribution limits, also against the backdrop of the cap on debts.

Only within the framework of joint efforts by the federal government, federal states and municipalities can further qualitative improvements be made and the potential for good child day care fully exploited. An example has been set by the successful story in the case of quantitative expansion. That is why the federal government and federal states launched a joint quality development process in November 2014 and approved the Communiqué "Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education".

The Interim Report: basis for the next steps

The working party "Early Education" hereby presents the Interim Report agreed in the Communiqué. In this Communiqué the joint goal and development perspectives for quality are set out for the first time. The report is a good foundation for the further development of quality in child day care and for the further actions of the federal government, federal states and municipalities. It pegs out a clear framework for quality developments in child day care on all levels of the system, calculates the costs of various quality measures, and

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highlights concrete implementation options for the involvement of the federal government.

The goals can only be achieved in a long term and graduated process. The differing starting positions of the federal states are to be taken into account when it comes to the desired implementation of the quality goals. Against this backdrop the Interim Report can be seen as the foundation for a “toolbox” which identifies a large number of quality development projects on which the federal government and federal states can reach concrete agreements in line with the specific development needs of each federal state.

The implementation of the goals requires additional funding amounting to several billion euros – in an ongoing manner every year. It is clear that the further development of quality will only be possible against this backdrop if the federal government assumes more responsibility by clearly increasing its prior financial commitment in an ongoing manner and giving more support to the federal states and municipalities. In this context it must be ensured that the funds made available by the federal government are used in a binding and purpose-specific manner for the qualitative further development of early childhood education and care. This would require monitoring in order to render the qualitative developments transparent.

It is above all the federal government which will profit from the expansion of good child day care. It is the main beneficiary of improved education, greater participation in gainful employment, more tax and social insurance contributions, a lower poverty rate and much more.

With the Interim Report as a joint framework and a far greater financial commitment by the federal government, the potential of good child day care could be exploited better in order to achieve the goal, step by step, of opening up good development and education opportunities to all children in Germany.

Procedure and Stakeholders

The implementation of the Communiqué: a quality development process

Ensuring and developing the quality of day child care is a task for society as a whole and can only be jointly carried forward with the support of all stakeholders. Hence, the Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Manuela Schwesig, and the federal state (Länder) ministers have agreed on a binding, graduated, long-term process for the development of joint quality goals in child day care and the ensuring of their financing. To this end, they adopted the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” on 6 November 2014 at the first Federal Government/Federal State Conference on Early Education.

In the Communiqué nine action areas are identified for the further development of quality. At the second Federal Government/Federal State Conference in November 2015 agreement was reached on adding another topic - the integration of children with a refugee background into the quality development process. Ensuring the financing of qualitative development is an essential element.

The diversity of the perspectives was taken into account in the process for the implementation of the Communiqué. The municipal umbrella organisations were closely involved and the associations and organisations responsible for child day care also participated on a systematic basis. At the second Federal Government/Federal State Conference held on a rota basis on 15 November 2015 the focus was on the importance of good ECEC provision for the economy and the world of work. The federal government, federal states, municipalities, employer organisations and trade unions signed the joint declaration “Investments in early education are worthwhile”.

At the end of 2014 the working party “Early Education” was set up. Its mandate was to elaborate perspectives for the implementation of the Communiqué and to submit a draft Interim Report by the end of 2016. The working party consisted of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), the federal states and three municipal umbrella organisations. Associations and organisations from practice were involved in the expert dialogues as were scientific experts and representatives from practice. Furthermore, the working party enjoyed the constant backing and support of the German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut – DJI), the unit Child and Youth Services Statistics of the Technical University Dortmund and Ramboll Management Consulting. In the nine action areas of the Communiqué quality goals derived from expertise and devel-

opment perspectives deemed to be necessary are formulated in this Interim Report. Special consideration was given to the integration of children with a refugee background in the action field - Contextual challenges. At the same time cost estimates are made and financing foundations and options examined.

Structure of the Interim Report

In line with the title and structure of the Communiqué, the Interim Report addresses aspects of the further development of early education and ensuring its financing in two parts.

In the first part each of the nine contextual action areas of the Communiqué is addressed in its own chapter. The chapters have a uniform structure:

- The action area is outlined.
- The importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care is presented.
- The identified and necessary need for action is described.
- Action goals are formulated.
- Aspects to be taken into account when implementing the action goals are listed.
- Finally, sources are given which are referred to in the respective chapter.

In the second part the Interim Report addresses the topic of financing. Here the expenditure and returns on child day care are presented, cost estimates on selected quality aspects are made and possible options for a financial contribution by the federal government are outlined.

The main terms used in the Interim Report are explained in a glossary.

The Interim Report has an annex. It contains:

- the Communiqué (2014) and
- position papers of the associations and organisations represented in the expert dialogue.

Furthermore, other relevant documents are posted on www.fruehe-chancen.de/zwischenbericht including a collection of materials on the Interim Report. This encompasses:

- the joint declaration “Investments in early education are worthwhile” (2015),
- presentations from the expert dialogue and
- methodological explanations on the cost estimates in the Interim Report.

Stakeholders

The working party consisted of representatives of BMFSFJ, the federal states and the three municipal umbrella associations. Participation in the working party “Early education” was open to all federal states. Nine federal states in total were involved: Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Hamburg, North Rhine Westphalia, the Rhineland-Palatinate, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein und Thuringia.

The following organisations participated in the expert dialogue that accompanied the working party: Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband (Federal association for workers’ welfare - AWO), Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Elterninitiativen (Federal working group parents’ initiatives - BAGE), Bundeselternvertretung der Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege (Federal parent’s representation of children in ECEC centres and family day care - BEVKi), Bundesverband für Kindertagespflege (Federal association for family day care), Bundesverband privater Träger der freien Kinder-, Jugend- und Sozialhilfe (Federal association of private sponsors of free children’s, youth and social welfare - VPK), Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (Confederation of German employers’ associations – BDA), Bundesvereinigung Evangelische Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder (Federal association of Protestant day care centres for children - BETA), dbb beamtenbund und tarifunion (German civil service federation), Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendmedizin (German academy for children and youth medicine - DAKJ), Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German trade union confederation - DGB), Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband – Gesamtverband (German joint welfare association – Confederation), Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (German Red Cross - DRK), Diakonie (Social service agency of the Protestant church in Germany), Gewerkschaft für Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Union of teaching and scientific workers - GEW), Verband katholischer Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder (Association of Catholic day care centres for children - KTK), Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (United services union - verdi), Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland (Central board of Jewish welfare in Germany - ZWST).

Furthermore, the working party enjoyed the ongoing support of the German Youth Institute (Prof. Dr. Bernhard Kalicki, Dr. Nicole Klinkhammer), the unit Child and Youth Services Statistics of the Technical University Dortmund (Dr. Matthias Schilling, Christiane Meiner-Teubner) and Ramboll Management Consulting.

PROCEDURE AND STAKEHOLDERS

Other experts from science and practice supported the working party and the expert dialogue: Dr. Joachim Bense (research group human behavioural biology), Dr. Dieter Dohmen (Forschungsinstitut für Bildungs- und Sozialökonomie – Research Institute for Educational and Social Economics), Sandra Fink (leader of the Clara-Grunwald Kindergarten, Leonberg), Prof. Dr. Kirsten Fuchs-Rechlin (Fliedner Fachhochschule Düsseldorf – Fliedner University of the Applied Sciences), Gerrit Hermans (Caritas Centrum Geldern), Dr. Ulrike Horacek (Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendmedizin e.V. – German Academy for Child and Youth Medicine), Dr. Christa Preissing (Berliner Kita-Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung – Berlin ECEC Institute for Quality Development), Dr. Carsten Schlepper (Bremische Evangelische Kirche, Landesverband Evangelische Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder – Bremen Protestant church, federal state association of Protestant ECEC centres), Prof. Dr. Petra Strehmel (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg), Prof. Dr. Mathias Urban (University of Roehampton, London), Prof. Dr. Susanne Viernickel (Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin), Prof. Dr. Dörte Weltzien (Evangelische Hochschule Freiburg – Protestant University Freiburg) and Prof. Dr. Joachim Wieland (Deutsche Universität für Verwaltungswissenschaften Speyer – German University of Administrative Sciences).

Part 1 – Developing Early Education: Action Goals in the Action Areas of the Communiqué



1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

1. Need-based ECEC Provision

“Education and care services are to be oriented towards the needs of children and parents bearing in mind children’s well-being, and early encouragement of children in line with the stage of their development and a good balance between family and working life.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 3

1.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

Need-based child day care is a major quality characteristic and makes a very substantial contribution to greater equal opportunities and educational equity for all children.

It helps:

- to implement each child’s right to ECEC provision;
- to promote the development of children irrespective of their social origins, handicaps or their cultural background;
- to implement the parents’ right to choose in line with their wishes, and
- to facilitate the reconciliation of family and working life.

All state levels and further institutions like, for instance, the social insurance funds benefit from the national return on need-based ECEC provision.

1.2 Description of the identified and required action

Strengthening the ECEC mandate

ECEC provision in child day care must be oriented towards children’s welfare and should always implement the promotion mandate of education, upbringing and care.

1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

Access to ECEC provision for all children

Need-based early childhood education and care should be available to all children and their parents. The expansion of child day care is governed by an ongoing dynamic and must, therefore, be continued.

Children from educationally deprived families, socially disadvantaged families or families with a migration background benefit in particular from ECEC provision. However, up to now, they tended to make use of this less frequently, at a later stage or on a lower scale.

Inclusion in ECEC provision

All children are to have access to inclusive ECEC provision (→ Glossary) and individual encouragement.

Need-based attendance hours and scope tailored to families' needs

Child day care should facilitate the reconciliation of family, work and education. The main criteria for need-based provision in child day care are the scale of provision and attendance hours. When necessary, this encompasses flexible provision and provision during holiday periods that go beyond regular childcare services with due consideration of children's welfare (→ Glossary).

Targeted and professional governance of services and identification of needs

ECEC provision can only be tailored to actual needs when the planning of the provision is based on a professional calculation of needs and the provision – especially during periods with a high expansion dynamic – is managed in a targeted manner. This requires the implementation of the legally defined right to this provision.

Need-based ECEC provision in rural and urban areas

Need-based ECEC provision must be offered close to where people live irrespective of whether children and families are resident in urban or rural areas.

1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

1.3 Action goals

1.3.1 Ensuring the implementation of the support mandate

Implementing the support mandate in line with Sozialgesetzbuch VIII (Book VIII Social Code -SGB VIII) is one of the preconditions for an operating licence pursuant to Section 45 SGB VIII. The control powers of the public youth welfare agencies should be strengthened to enable them to verify the requirements for the operating licence. Local inspections should be possible to regularly monitor quality also irrespective of the occasion.

The legal right to early childhood support for children aged three up to school entry age should be aligned with the legal entitlement to children from the end of the first year of life set out in SGB VIII.

1.3.2 Dismantle hurdles to access

By means of various instruments and measures, incentives can be created for the taking up of ECEC services and obstacles to access can be dismantled. Parent contributions are an important lever: a socially compatible structure of contributions up to exemption from contributions can encourage the taking up of extra-familial ECEC provision particularly by educationally deprived families, socially disadvantaged families and families with a migration background. Furthermore, these families should be given need-based support by youth welfare offices, for instance when applying for a place in or during interviews in an ECEC centre. Family centres can provide low-threshold services in this context.

1.3.3 Envisage inclusive ECEC provision as regular provision

Inclusive ECEC provision (→ Glossary) – whether in an ECEC centre or in a family day care setting – should be available to every child. To implement inclusive ECEC provision the preconditions should be put in place in ECEC centres – as far as possible - in order to be able to take in, in principle, all children. Furthermore, training programmes should be offered which help the ECEC staff and centre leaders to implement inclusive education. Inclusion is promoted by means of multi-professional teams. The ECEC teams should also be supported inter alia by professional services.

1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

1.3.4 Put children's needs and interests centre stage

ECEC provision must be oriented first and foremost towards children's welfare and the support mandate. Therefore, the lower and upper limits for the scale of ECEC provision should serve as an orientation – tailored to the children's age and support needs (→ Glossary). The focus must be on children's welfare. Particularly in the case of young children excessively long and very irregular attendance hours are to be avoided.

1.3.5 Support the reconciliation of family and working life

In order to facilitate the reconciliation of family and working life, places must be provided in line with needs. The expansion of child day care is subject to an ongoing dynamic. Hence, the expansion of day care places must be continued.

There is a need for customised scales of ECEC provision to ensure improved reconciliation. The number of full day places should be increased in line with demand. For parents and families with children under the age of three, the need for shorter attendance hours should, therefore, be taken into account.

Where there is a need, flexible and holiday provision should be put in place beyond regular child care services. Here attention should always be paid to the needs of the children in line with their stage of development. Special attention should be given here to regional specificities and individual arrangement options. In this context particular consideration should be paid to family day care. The arrangements for this provision should be based on regional demand analyses.

Employers also benefit from need-based ECEC provision for working parents. Industry should, therefore, play a greater role in local ECEC provision, for instance through in-house company provision or by financing places in ECEC centres. Municipalities, providers and industry should enter into local cooperation for more and good child day care. ECEC provision close to work is something many parents of very small children would welcome.

1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

1.3.6 Ensuring demand analysis and provision planning on the local level

Demand analysis can only be done on the regional or local level. Demand analysis and planning processes should take into account the social milieu, population structures, employment, income, education and living situation of the population, urban planning and infrastructure, in addition to the needs of children, adolescents and individuals with a duty of care. The transition and cooperation between educational institutions should be planned and steered by means of framework provisions in a superordinate manner, too. Analysis of the social milieu should be done on the basis of a small-scale and up-to-date planning information system. It should provide indicators for all planning bodies thereby creating the empirical foundations for professional action.

The needs of parents and children should be recorded in a complete and differentiated manner in the demand analysis of the local provider of public youth welfare services. Here are some examples:

- the number of desired places in the respective age group,
- the desired form of ECEC provision,
- the location of the places (distances),
- the desired attendance hours and
- the desired educational orientation or provider of the services.

The governance of provision and the design of demand analysis (e.g. parent survey, involvement of parent representatives and providers) should be left to the municipalities because of the different support systems (e.g. voucher or demand-oriented systems).

1.3.7 Consider the social milieu when planning requirements

Requirements planning oriented towards the social milieu should establish child day care as close as possible to place of residence but, at the same time, ensure social heterogeneity.

Wherever a social milieu is shaped by rapid changes in population structure and by the need for ECEC provision, a high degree of flexibility is recommended when planning requirements, for instance by envisaging short timespans in planning updates.

1. NEED-BASED ECEC PROVISION

The providers of ECEC services should also, if possible, be able to react and adapt quickly to these change processes. The precondition for this is that the support system permits these adjustments and operating licence procedures are speedy. In this context voucher or demand-oriented systems can be suitable governance instruments particularly for larger cities or conurbations.

Furthermore, it should be made easier for parents and families to access ECEC centres close to where they live that are located, in terms of administration, in other parts of the town or youth welfare office districts.

In rural areas and against the backdrop of demographic change, family day care services can be customised and should – wherever necessary – be expanded. Furthermore, additional ECEC provision can be created in social centres (e.g. family centres, multi-generational houses).

2. Contextual Challenges

“ECEC provision is oriented towards a professional aspiration. Based on the ‘Joint framework of the federal states for early education in ECEC centres’ (JMK & KMK 2004), developments and empirical developments call for ongoing specialist continuing training.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 4

2.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

In Germany child day care plays an important role in the everyday life of children, their parents and families. Children are being placed in extra-familial child day care at an increasingly early age and the time they spend their both during the day and in terms of their age is constantly on the rise. Contextual challenges for educational work in child day care result from the life situations of the children and their families, social expectations and constantly evolving specialist expertise. Diversity and divergence shape child day care. There are developments which affect the entire day-to-day practices across Germany. Others are determined by regional and centre-specific perspectives.

2.2 Description of the identified and required action

Current contextual challenges for ECEC provision for children are presented below in order to raise the awareness of and strengthen the responsible parties on all levels of child day care, and to continue the reflection and development processes that are already up and running. Some of these challenges have already been recognised as such in the child day care system but require further extensive examination.

2. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

2.3 Action goals

2.3.1 Raise awareness for the growing importance of publicly accountable education

The goal is for publicly accountable child day care to be fully aware of its joint education and upbringing mandate that it assumes together with parents. The care and upbringing of children are the natural right of parents and an obligation incumbent on them (Article 6(2) Grundgesetz [Basic Law] - GG). It is the task of child day care (cf. Section 1 in conjunction with 22 SGB VIII) to strengthen the child in its development into a responsible and socially viable personality. Hence, the responsibility and challenge for the stakeholders involved is to openly embrace the diversity of family ideas of upbringing and values on the basis of our free democratic basic order and to reconcile them with the specific value profile of the respective provision.

2.3.2 Ensure greater involvement of children and child protection

One goal is to ensure, on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the involvement of children in line with their developmental stage in all aspects of daily life in ECEC centres and family day care settings. This expressly includes children under the age of three. The involvement of children also helps to ensure institutional child protection. In order to uphold the rights of children called for in Section 45(2) SGB VIII, suitable procedures for involvement and complaints with regard to personal matters are to be anchored in practice. The related expectations of ECEC centres are to be catered for in family day care settings, too.

2.3.4 Anchor inclusive education in child day care

The goal is to integrate inclusive education (→ Glossary), which was launched by the UN Disabled Persons Convention, into the concepts of child day care and to implement this in everyday educational practice. Inclusive education refers to all educational areas like the shaping of the learning environment, interaction with children, cooperation with parents and families, and teamwork (Prengel 2014).

2.3.5 Integrate children with a refugee background

Child day care supports the integration of children with a refugee background and

2. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

their parents and families. The goal is, therefore, to dismantle obstacles to access, for instance by means of bridging provision in addition to the necessary supply of places in ECEC centres, to envisage specific language development courses in ECEC centres and to prepare and support ECEC staff in child day care and family day care settings.

2.3.6 Ensure cooperation with parents and families

The goal is to ensure cooperation with parents and families. This includes individual cooperation between ECEC staff and child minders and parents, the structural anchoring of organised parent representation and support for paedagogical staff in the pursuit of this goal. Allowance is to be made for the heterogeneity of parents and families, and the different social and ethnic upbringing cultures, models and strategies are to be taken into account (cf. Keller 2013).

2.3.7 Make greater use of the potential of the social milieu

ECEC staff in ECEC centres and child minders should make greater use of the offerings and potential of the social milieu. The aim here is for children to input their experiences from their life world into daily educational life. At the same time, this opens up opportunities for children, parents and families to play a role in shaping the social milieu.

Furthermore, the goal is to set up or expand specific types of facilities like family centres or parent-child centres. These facilities are characterised by a reliable and friendly family-oriented infrastructure and a friendly network of advisory services, family education, health services etc. The corresponding spatial, material and staff framework conditions are to be ensured, too.

2.3.8 Strengthen the incorporation of educational opportunities into daily life

The goal is to help ECEC staff and child minders incorporate educational opportunities into daily life. This applies in particular to language training incorporated into daily life. Conceptual projects supplement paedagogical work incorporated into daily life.

2. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

2.3.9 Ensuring quality assurance and development

The commitment to quality assurance and quality development anchored in Section 22a SGB VIII should be consistently implemented in ECEC centres on the basis of their paedagogical concept. For this methods and instruments are needed to engage in ongoing reflection about paedagogical work.

2.3.10 Update the “Joint framework of the federal states for early education in ECEC centres” of 2004

The goal is to update developments in child day care and the related design of the ECEC mandate since the publication of the Joint Framework. The Joint Framework² sets out an understanding of the federal states on early education in ECEC centres and is reflected in the educational plans and curricula which are specific to each federal state. Whereas the curricula specific to each federal state have been regularly updated in recent years, the Joint Framework has not. Its update should, therefore, be envisaged and the work area of family day care is to be included in an appropriate manner.

2.4 Aspects that are to be taken into account when implementing the action goals

The goals described illustrate the complex requirements that have to be met by ECEC staff when shaping everyday paedagogical life. The latter also involves tasks that are first and foremost administrative tasks (correspondence, statistics, accounting, charging of contributions, etc.) or household tasks (e.g. changing and washing bed linen, monitoring of hygiene rules). In order to reduce the burden on ECEC staff and centre leaders but also from the economic angle, attention should focus on the extent to which these requirements (a) impede the ECEC staff in the carrying out of their paedagogical mandate, (b) could already today or in the future be taken over by non-ECEC staff (e.g. administrative staff, housekeepers and service staff, caretaker services, etc.).

² http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2004/2004_06_04-Fruehe-Bildung-Kitas.pdf (last access: 16.06.2016)

2. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

2.5 Sources

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3. A Good Staff-child Ratio³

“The staff-child ratio is an important aspect of the paedagogical work of ECEC staff with children in the education and upbringing partnership with parents and of the necessary indirect paedagogical work and leadership in child day care. The goal must, therefore, be to establish robust nationwide foundations with good staff framework conditions.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 4

3.1 Importance of the action field for ensuring and developing good child day care

A good staff-child ratio (→ Glossary) is one of the main preconditions for paedagogical staff being able to carry out their professional mandate of education, upbringing and care in ECEC centres. Besides other structural characteristics like the qualifications of ECEC staff and systematic quality development processes, staffing levels (→ Glossary) have a major impact on the quality of child day care. Furthermore, they affect the work situation and, by extension, the health of paedagogical staff.

3.2 Description of the identified and required action

Each child has the right to benefit from good framework conditions and developmentally-enhancing ECEC provision everywhere in Germany. The expansion of ECEC provision for children under the age of three has not led to the feared worsening of staffing levels – average staff allocation (→ Glossary) has even improved slightly in recent years. Nevertheless, there is still a need for action and further development. There is empirical evidence that the quality of paedagogical work is closely linked to the differentiated staff-child ratio. In order to shape the action and further development needs in a professional and economically responsible and future viable manner, the necessary parameters must be identified for staff allocation (→ Glossary).

³ Definition (see also Glossary): staff-child ratio - used as the generic term in the Communiqué - is differentiated further in this Chapter.

3.3 Action goals

3.3.1 Ensure an appropriate differentiated staff-child ratio

In the final instance the determining factor for the paedagogical reality in child day care in terms of staffing levels is the answer to the question: how can it be ensured that appropriate staffing levels are also in place in reality, i.e. through the concrete presence of ECEC staff in relation to the concrete presence of children (differentiated staff-child ratio)? This leads to two challenges:

a) There needs to be clarification of what can be described as an “appropriate” staff-child ratio for ensuring and developing paedagogical quality and how it is justified.

b) ECEC service providers need suitable parameters on which they can base their staff planning and work rosters in order to be able to guarantee the required staffing levels to ensure an appropriate staff-child ratio.

The parameters listed below offer a paedagogically justified guideline framework for the design and structuring of staff allocation in ECEC centres. They are based on the recommendations of several studies in the German and international context which were the subject of a synthesis evaluation in the expertise by Viernickel and Fuchs-Rechlin (2015).

It should be borne in mind that other aspects are also of importance when it comes to paedagogical quality in child day care, in addition to the staff-child ratio.

Establishing an appropriate staff-child ratio

The following table lists the recommendations derived from scientific studies for the staff-child ratio. They set out indicative values which are of relevance for the establishment of paedagogical quality in early education. There are all oriented towards the age of the children. Scientific studies indicate that failure to meet specific threshold values for staff-child ratios can impair the quality of the paedagogical process. Favourable staff-child ratios can lead to an increase in paedagogical activities and more frequent interaction between paedagogical staff and children which are deemed to stimulate development and encourage education. Conse-

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quently, particularly during activity phases which require a high level of attention and a high degree of involvement of pedagogical staff and the possibility of direct communication between pedagogical staff and individual children, the staff-child ratio should be oriented towards these threshold values. The actual effects of the staff-child ratio depend on other framework conditions in an ECEC centre (impact on the professionalism and competences of the team, centre leader and provider, social milieu, variables of children, parents and families as user groups, support systems, etc.) which can enhance, delay or weaken the impact of these effects. By way of clarification it is, therefore, pointed out that it is not the number of ECEC staff present alone that guarantees good quality in an ECEC centre. This is dependent on complex interaction between diverse factors. Hence, there are diverse cross-links to the systematised and individually developed action areas in this Interim Report.

The following table provides guidance for the quality improvement process.

TABLE 1: Scientifically derived pointers for threshold values for age-specific staff-child ratios in line with the expertise by Viernickel und Fuchs-Rechlin (2015) by way of guidance for the quality improvement process

Parameters: Age of children	Indications of threshold values below which pedagogical work can be impaired	Explanations
1. Under three years of age	Staff-child ratio: 1.3 to 1.4	The links between the staff-child ratio and the design of interaction are particularly stable in groups of children under the age of three. The sensitive design of interaction and relations improves in groups with children aged 0 up to 3 years in a linear relationship to the staff-child ratio.
2. Up to end of first year of life	Staff-child ratio: 1:2	
3. From age three up to school entry	Staff-child ratio: 1:9 ⁴	

In contrast to the staff-child ratio, no scientific indications of threshold values could be derived for group sizes in ECEC centres, the exceeding of which could impair pedagogical quality.

⁴ Definition (see also Glossary): staff-child ratio - used as the generic term in the Communiqué - is differentiated further in this Chapter.

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Parameters for staff allocation

The staff-child ratio is implemented in the statutory context of regulations on staffing levels. For this, parameters to measure staffing levels are needed. On this basis the providers of ECEC centres can do their staff planning and draw up their work rosters. The following parameters provide guidance in establishing staffing levels. As outlined above, the effects of a staff-child ratio are dependent on other framework conditions in the ECEC centre. These framework conditions should be taken into account when determining and justifying staff allocation. Hence, the parameters listed below take into account both professional-contextual as well as organisational-structural aspects.

TABLE 2: Parameters for measuring staffing levels in ECEC centres

Important parameters	Empirically proven guidance values	Explanations
1. Social milieu of the centre		Specific characteristics of the social milieu which may be of relevance for staff
2. Specific concept of the centre		e.g. wider tasks as a family centre
3. Children with special support needs (→ Glossary)		e.g. children with (imminent) disability, children from families with a family language other than German, children in poverty
4. Size of the centre		In very small centres, more staff are needed in order to compensate for the absences of paedagogical staff
5. Opening hours of the centre		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • during the day • during the year
6. Attendance times of the children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • during the day • during the year

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Important parameters	Empirically proven guidance values	Explanations
7. Absence of children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> illness/holidays and other occasions
8. Indirect paedagogical working time of ECEC staff	Between 10 percent and 23 percent of weekly working time (corresponds on average to 16.5 percent)	This time is allocated for co-operation with parents and families, team discussions, collaboration with the co-operation partners, planning of services with children, documentation, etc.
9. Absence periods of staff like, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of illness and prescribed health resort stays Consideration of holidays Consideration of continuing training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-5 percent of required working days (10 to 13 working days) Depending on the collective agreement 5 days/year (based on educational leave) 	In total: between 14 percent and 18 percent of required working days; 15% set as the guidance value
10. Effects of an above-average proportion of part-time staff		Higher level of coordination within the team; proportion of overarching work higher than in the case of full-time staff Besides a good staff-child ratio, reliable bonding is of key importance. The younger the children, the greater the emotional strain (stress) caused by fluctuations in the team, also during the course of the day.
11. Time allocated to leadership tasks		(cf. Chapter 5)

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3.4 Aspects to be borne in mind when implementing the action goal

The administrative implementation of an appropriate staff-child ratio can be done in various ways. The concrete shaping of the parameters listed in Table 2 depend on specific conditions in the federal states and concrete settings. Depending on this respective starting situation an appropriate staff-child ratio can only be achieved gradually and by working with the available ECEC staff and financial resources. This will make it easier for the providers to undertake the necessary organisational and staff adjustment processes.

3.5 Sources

Viernickel, Susanne/ Fuchs-Rechlin, Kirsten (2015): Fachkraft-Kind-Relationen und Gruppengrößen in Kindertageseinrichtungen. Grundlagen, Analysen, Berechnungsmodell. In: Viernickel, Susanne/ Fuchs-Rechlin, Kirsten/ Strehmel, Petra/ Preissing, Christa/ Bensele, Joachim/ Haug-Schnabel, Gabriele: *Qualität für alle. Wissenschaftlich begründete Standards für die Kindertagesbetreuung*. Freiburg i. Brs.: Herder. pp. 11-130.

4. Qualified Staff

“Well-trained and happy staff are the foundation for paedagogical work in ECEC centres. The occupational field of child day care must, therefore, be attractive to potential applicants and training must be optimised in line with the stiff requirements. This also includes strengthening the ECEC centres as practical learning venues. Within the framework of, preferably team-oriented and process-accompanying, further and continuing training, it must be ensured that ECEC staff can continue to undergo training in a comprehensive manner and on the basis of the latest scientific findings in order to continue to improve, in particular, paedagogical work oriented towards the developmental processes of children in child day care. For the purposes of inclusion what are needed are multi-professional teams with qualified remedial staff, too. Within the system of support for quality development processes in practice and particularly given the growing complexity, professional advice takes on an increasingly important role which must be taken into account in an appropriate manner. Preventive healthcare measures for ECEC staff are part of the care responsibilities of the providers vis-à-vis their employees. “

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 4

4.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

The qualifications and the competences, the attitude and professionalism of ECEC staff (→ Glossary) in ECEC centres play a central role in fulfilling the ECEC mandate. Parents trust in the best possible care of their children. They hope for value-oriented education and rely on a respectful education and upbringing partnership. The ECEC staff encourage, on the basis of the curricula of the respective federal state, the education processes and the development of the personality of each individual child and they lay the foundations for school-based learning. At the same time, they design and promote social coexistence in a respectful manner and contribute to the basic democratic stance of children. Another key task of the ECEC staff is to develop an education and upbringing partnership with parents. ECEC staff cooperate in teams with different professional qualifications and are increasingly active in multi-professional and culturally diverse team structures. Team development processes, cross-institutional cooperation and an opening into the social milieu, therefore, supplement these core tasks.

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4.2 Description of the identified and required action

The required action extends to the recruitment, initial training, further qualification and retention management of paedagogical staff as well as the further qualification and professionalisation of the leadership staff (centre leader, deputy) and the support structures like expert advice.

Increased need for ECEC staff

Since the end of the 1990s a clear increase in employees can be observed. In 1998 there were 333,598 paedagogical staff members in ECEC centres. By 2015 this number had climbed to 550,024. The need for qualified staff increases in line with expansion, the wider spectrum of tasks and qualitative developments.

Competence requirements for ECEC staff

In addition to personal skills, staff working in the field of ECEC provision need skills for their paedagogical work with children, parents and families as well as for institutional networking and cooperation in the field of child and youth welfare services and in the centre's social milieu. The centre team must have these skills. When it comes to recruiting ECEC staff, training, further qualification and staff management, these requirements must, therefore, be taken into account. This reveals firstly the major importance of high-quality guidance, professional team development and the clear assignment of functions and tasks within the team and secondly the high degree of responsibility borne by the leadership and provider level for staff development and team quality.

Support systems for ECEC staff

Besides the original training, the support systems make a major contribution to securing and developing the skills of ECEC staff.

This includes the system of further and continuing training and process support through supervision and coaching which takes on different forms and financing modes. It must, therefore, be possible for staff to have access to further and continuing training and process support. The corresponding framework conditions must be put in place.

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Professional advice is another structural precondition for a high level of quality in child day care. At the present time professional advice is very heterogeneous (cf. Preissing/Berry/Gerszonowicz 2015). In order to fully tap into the potential of specialist professional advice as a support instrument, a profile of professional advice, appropriate framework conditions and ongoing qualification are needed.

4.3 Action goals

4.3.1 Promote ECEC staff recruitment, qualifications, further training and transparency

Recruitment of ECEC staff

In order to be able to meet the growing demand for qualified staff resulting from the further expansion and qualitative improvements to staffing resources, additional qualified staff must be attracted to the occupational field of child day care. Under the joint responsibility of the federal states, providers and training venues, the interest of potential professional staff in training must be awakened or stepped up. To this end, measures, must be designated and implemented.

Optimising the training of ECEC staff

Technical college training: The classical technical training at technical colleges and technical academies for social paedagogy was adapted to the requirements of this occupational field as a consequence of the resolution “Competence-oriented qualification profile for the training of educators at specialised technical colleges/academies” of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) of 1 December 2011.⁵ The qualification profile supplements the framework agreement on technical colleges (resolution of the KMK of 7 November 2002 in the version of 3 March 2010⁶). It refers to the Joint Orientation Framework “Education and Upbringing in Childhood” (resolution of the Youth and Family Ministers’ Conference of 14 December 2010 and of the KMK of 16 September 2010⁷). This qualification profile envisages the mutual crediting of qualifications obtained in specialised technical colleges or universities and therefore aids transparency. The qualification profile is a description of the professional standards and helps comparability and overall transparency. The goal is the systematic updating of these framework resolutions on the basis of changing requirements and further developments in ECEC provision and their consistent implementation.

⁵ http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2011/2011_12_01-ErzieherInnen-QualiProfil.pdf

⁶ http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2002/2002_11_07-RV-Fachschulen.pdf

⁷ http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2010/2010_09_16-Ausbildung-Erzieher-KMK-JFMK.pdf

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Remunerated training as a supplement to classical training in a specialised technical college: In addition to the classical training in a specialised technical college, training models are to be developed which guarantee the pupils in these schools a regular income. This could be remunerated practice-integrated training or in-service training. This involves the linking, from the very outset, of an occupational activity or practice and training. The steady increase in programmes of this kind and the high uptake make it possible to attract additional trainees and, by extension, professional staff. Furthermore, these schemes facilitate lateral entry to the occupational field of child day care.

Universities: The proportion of staff with an academic occupational qualification for example in social paedagogy, education sciences, remedial paedagogy or childhood paedagogy has steadily increased over the last 10 years. In Germany it amounted nationwide to 5.4 percent of employees with major variations between the federal states. In recent years the professional competences required in many areas have increased considerably like, for instance, planning of educational processes, systematic quality development in the ECEC centre, team development and the integration of language training into daily practice (Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2014). This requires a corresponding mix of competences of ECEC staff that also includes academic skills.

The goal is to markedly increase the number of academic staff members and to ensure that each centre has academic skills in the competence mix of its team, too. Learning venue practice: Practical instruction is a core task which must be assumed by the ECEC centres. In practice the up-and-coming ECEC staff can gain important experience and develop action competences. The learning venue practice is, therefore, an essential element in the training of ECEC staff. The goal is to strengthen ECEC centres as learning and training venues. For this the practical instructors, who are seen here as practical mentors, need the corresponding qualifications and sufficient time for this activity. Dedicated further training schemes should, therefore, be a mandatory precondition for practical instruction or corresponding training modules should already be part of training in specialist technical colleges or universities.

Support for multi-professional teams

The composition of teams with different professions, different competences and perspectives facilitates the high-quality further development of child day care centres, the expansion of specialist competences and greater professionalism. Multi-professional teams – consisting of qualified staff with traditional training and staff

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with further paedagogical training from other professional groups – are increasingly shaping the ECEC landscape. The wider range of tasks in the ECEC sector calls, on the one hand, for individual further and continuing training schemes and, on the other, for a change in the way team structures are viewed. One major conclusion from the empirical findings of Weltzien et al. (2016) on multi-professional teams is that new occupational groups in ECEC teams are a real gain because, thanks to their specific competences, they drive paedagogical work forward in a qualitative manner. As competences supplement and build on each other, “multi-professional work” can provide important stimulus for the conceptual implementation of holistic education, upbringing and care (DV 2016: 8f.). However, this can only succeed if the necessary specific framework conditions are in place. The goal is, therefore, to drive forward work in multi-professional teams and support this through corresponding framework conditions. This requires specific induction and staff development concepts which lead to rapid integration without abandoning specific knowledge and skill reserves. The providers are called on to create the framework for “multi-professional work”, to make support structures available by means of professional advice and to back in-service and professional support as well as team development processes. The centre leaders play a decisive role in successful team development. A staff mix consisting of traditional employees like educators, social assistants, child carers as well as other qualified staff like childhood paedagogues and lateral entrants with further paedagogical qualifications (e.g. from healthcare and caring professions) and the related concepts should be in place in the ECEC centres in order to accommodate this growing range of tasks.

Strengthening the support systems

Specialist staff and managers have the right and obligation to engage in further and continuing training. Like the opportunities for supervision and coaching, this should be anchored in the specific regulations of each federal state.

Each centre is entitled to professional advice. The goal is, therefore, to extend the professional adviser systems of the federal states by building on the existing structures in a demand-oriented manner and to develop them into competence-based professional advice systems. This involves firstly defining the core tasks of professional advice. It also encompasses direct professional advice for the centre providers, leaders and ECEC staff, support for quality development processes and the transfer of scientific expertise, specialist practice, policies and professional practice. Secondly, it likewise involves developing and shaping different task profiles (e.g. pro-

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cess support, professional advice, practical instruction, additional staff for language instruction, inclusion staff). The different structural links of professional advice are to be borne in mind here.

Professional advisers should, as a rule, have completed a relevant course of study and have several years' experience in early childhood education and care. Professional advisers have the right and the obligation to take part in ongoing further training. This is to be ensured along with the appropriate framework conditions for professional advice. This also includes the appropriate professional adviser ratio adapted to the respective profile of professional advice.

4.3.2 Optimising work processes and job satisfaction

In terms of the quality of work of ECEC staff, the responsibility of the centre provider as the employer is decisive for staff management.

Besides the necessary staff resources and corresponding framework conditions, a respectful atmosphere, regular feedback and preventive healthcare measures are particularly important for this field of work. The goal should be to strengthen awareness for this and to envisage corresponding measures.

In-house functions in addition to the leadership function like, for instance, a practical mentor or cooperation officer for the ECEC centre-primary school are opportunities for further development within the centre. They facilitate staff development and increase the job satisfaction of ECEC staff. The goal is to create conditions which facilitate these changes and offer prospects for further qualification in the field of early childhood education and care.

4.4 Sources

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Fröhlich-Gildhoff, Klaus et al. (2014): *Kompetenzentwicklung und Kompetenzerfassung in der Frühpädagogik*, Volume 13. Freiburg: Verlag Forschung – Entwicklung – Lehre.

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5. Strengthening Leadership

“The implementation of the paedagogical concept, the ongoing development of the centre along the lines of a learning organisation, the guaranteeing of good cooperation within the team and the representation and opening of the centre towards the outside world are leadership tasks. The centre leaders play a key role in developing and ensuring the quality of the centre. Leadership positions are, therefore, to be assigned enough time for leadership tasks and are to be staffed with individuals who have undergone the corresponding initial or continuing training, who continuously keep abreast of current developments and requirements, and who obtain further qualifications in line with needs.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 4f

5.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

Centre leaders (→ Glossary) play a key role in ensuring and developing quality in ECEC centres. They organise the paedagogical work in the centre on the basis of the stipulated framework conditions. They ensure the successful implementation of the paedagogical concept and its further development and the related guiding principles and values. They manage staff and promote good team development. They work closely with parents, families and providers. They network with the relevant stakeholders and institutions in the social milieu and represent the centre to the outside world.

The requirements for paedagogical work in ECEC centres have increased steadily and are aligned with political and social developments and expectations. The integration of children with a refugee background into the ECEC centres is currently one of the major challenges facing centre leaders and their teams. It is likewise the responsibility of the centre leaders to take on board these tasks, to communicate them to the team and to support paedagogical staff in their implementation.

Given their key position, centre leaders exert major influence on the quality of the paedagogical work and the further development of the ECEC centre as an organisation.

5.2 Description of the identified and required action

Professional leadership (→ Glossary) is needed for the effective exercise of this important key position which can only succeed within the framework of a support system. This calls for sound framework conditions and competent and respectful support from the provider.

In principle, there is a wide range of ECEC centres, their respective requirements and specificities. The spectrum of tasks, framework conditions and qualification requirements for the leaders of ECEC centres are shaped in very different ways. In 32 percent of centres in 2015 there was one leader who concentrated full-time on leadership tasks (→ Glossary), 7 percent of the centres had a team of leaders and in 47 percent the leadership tasks were tackled alongside other tasks (Statistical Office 2015).

This divergence has to do with the wide range of providers which is mirrored in the German ECEC system, too. For instance the centres and providers differ in terms of size and degree of professionalism. Consequently, the distribution of tasks between provider, centre leader and ECEC team varies in practice. This heterogeneity must be borne in mind.

At the same time, there is a core set of leadership tasks which have to be tackled in every ECEC centre. Supportive framework conditions and resources and the corresponding qualification of centre leaders are the preconditions for the professional performance of these tasks.

The concrete design of the leadership activity calls for ongoing understanding between service providers and centre leaders on site. The provider is responsible for shaping the framework conditions of the leadership activity and, by extension, the centre leader's scope of action. From this angle the quality of the provider is of major importance too and is, therefore, to be strengthened (cf. Chapter 9).

5.3 Action goals

5.3.1 Reaching agreement on the core leadership tasks

The goal is to reach agreement on the various levels of responsibility in ECEC practice by clearly defining the distinction between core leadership tasks and provider tasks.

With reference to the expertise of Strehmel (2015), the following provider and leadership tasks are deemed to be the main ones, for instance:

- paedagogical leadership (e.g. concept development, coordination of paedagogical work, quality development and management);
- centre management (e.g. administration, attending to occupational health and safety, marketing and public relations);
- staff management (e.g. staff planning, management, development);
- initiation and shaping of various forms of cooperation (e.g. cooperation with the provider, within the team, with parents and families, networking with cooperation partners on the social level and within the child and youth welfare system);
- organisational development (e.g. governance and further development of the organisation, shaping of the organisational culture, ensuring a good organisation climate);
- monitoring of framework conditions, current developments and challenges (e.g. identification and analysis of changes, strategic planning) and
- self-management (e.g. professional positioning, self-reflection, work organisation, stress and crisis management).

The provider must ensure that these core leadership tasks can be carried out. There must be clarification of how the tasks and responsibilities are to be allocated in detail between the competent provider, centre leaders and the paedagogical and non-paedagogical staff, and how this is to be dealt with in cover situations.

5.3.2 Define uniform qualification requirements for centre leaders

Certain competences are needed to tackle core tasks. The objective is, therefore, to have a uniform definition of qualification requirements for centre leaders.

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The following requirements should be met:

The precondition for the assumption of leadership tasks is relevant professional experience in the field of child day care, training as an educator or equivalent training combined with (in-service) continuing training or university studies that prepare for the leadership activity in line with the defined core tasks.

In future, the centre leaders should ideally have a bachelor level qualification. Besides the availability of courses of study, the transparency of training courses and the sufficient degree of practical experience must be ensured, too. High-quality in-service continuing training schemes contribute to this.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the centres vary considerably in terms of size and orientation. The leadership activity in ECEC centres with a large number of children imposes additional requirements on leadership staff that go beyond the core tasks of all centres. This also applies to centres in areas with social development needs or with a high number of children with special support needs. These special requirements are to be met on site through the definition of customised qualification requirements.

5.3.3 Ensure the ongoing further and continuing training of centre leaders

Furthermore, there is a need for the ongoing continuing training of centre leaders. The goal is, therefore, to specify an obligation for the regular further and continuing training of centre leaders in the respective laws of the federal states. The precondition for this is that corresponding further training schemes are available and that periods of mandatory further training for the centre leaders themselves are exempt from contributions.

5.3.4 Ensure sufficient time for leadership tasks and specify the parameters for this

The goal is to allocate sufficient time for the assumption of leadership tasks and the specification of the corresponding parameters.

To this end, each ECEC centre is to establish a baseline value for leadership activities. The time allocated to the pedagogical leadership and administration of ECEC centres is to be calculated separately as some of the administrative tasks could be undertaken by staff with the relevant administrative training. The expertise by Stre-

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hmel (2015) can offer guidance on this. It recommends allocating 28 percent of a full-time position to paedagogical leadership and 14 percent of a full-time position to administrative tasks.

Furthermore, the aim is to realistically depict the heterogeneity in the centres by means of variable time units for the leadership activity. Based on the expertise of Strehmel (2015) the following parameters are to be taken into account:

- number of children looked after,
- number of staff,
- special support needs of children or special challenges of the social milieu.

5.4 Sources

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6. Room Design

“Rooms and facilities are the basis for paedagogical work. Stimulating, appealing and, if possible, barrier-free rooms and diverse, high-quality facilities accessible to children are the necessary preconditions for good education and care. At the same time, appropriate room facilities take into account the preconditions for cooperation with parents and networking in the social milieu. They are the major precondition for the health of ECEC staff and the possibility of growing older in their profession.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 5

6.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

Room design is a very important determining factor when it comes to the opportunities for development and action or also the limitations of the ECEC centres. The room facilities and design have a major impact on the play and movement of children and the interaction both between ECEC staff and children, and amongst the children, too. The arrangement of play and activity areas both inside and outside the centre either encourages or hampers the children’s interaction and play. For this reason the Reggio Emilia approach also talks about space as the “third teacher”. Children need space to move around as well as space for quiet time and relaxation. The arrangement and design of the centre and its facilities are equally important for the working conditions of the paedagogical staff. Furthermore, room design has an impact on the health and well-being of the children and staff (for instance by reducing noise pollution in the centre). Hence, the assessment of the suitability of the rooms is always to be undertaken against the backdrop of the envisaged use and the needs and requirements of its users.

Consequently, well-designed and equipped rooms encourage diverse and stimulating paedagogical practices as well as age-appropriate demands in the profession. Room design plays an important role in ensuring the paedagogical quality and the well-being of the children and ECEC staff.

6.2 Description of the identified and required action

The spatial design requirements of ECEC centres vary considerably from federal state to federal state. There are also major differences in terms of the scale and type of regulation or governance of room design. Most of the federal states regulate the room requirements for ECEC centres in laws or administrative provisions. In individual federal states ministries or youth welfare offices merely issue recommendations. Other federal states do not impose any requirements at all.

There are also differences between the federal states in terms of the recommendations or requirements for the minimum area per child or group room. Although a link between concrete area size and paedagogical quality was established in scientific studies, it has been demonstrated that regulations of this kind alone do not do justice to the concrete conditions in the ECEC centres. Requirements about minimum areas, alone, do not say anything about the stimulation quality or the use options of the rooms. Hence, in the context of the action goals it makes sense to focus, in addition to area size, on the qualitative requirements for room design and facilities in ECEC centres which take adequate account of the needs of the children and staff and their health and well-being. Guidelines of this kind offer ECEC centres firstly professional guidance for room design and secondly they ensure the required flexibility in order to be able to cater for the specific framework requirements in the centres (e.g. centre design or structural preconditions).

6.3 Action goals

6.3.1 Ensure appropriate indoor and outdoor areas that can be used for paedagogical purposes

In order to ensure good paedagogical quality and cater for children's needs to move around and withdraw for some quiet time, appropriate indoor and outdoor areas should be guaranteed in ECEC centres. No scientifically-backed threshold values are available. There are, however, expert opinions with suggestions for area sizes that are presented in the expertise by Bensel, Martinet and Haug-Schnabel (2015). For indoors they range from 4 to 6 m² per child and for outdoors from 6 to 15 m² per child (without any age differentiation). Depending on the local situation usable outdoor areas (like for instance playgrounds, school courtyards or parks) may be taken into account too. Special consideration is to be given to densified spaces.

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For the purposes of clarification it is stated that the quality of rooms is determined not only by the area size but by a range of further determinants.

6.3.2 Facilitate child-friendly, educationally stimulating room design and facilities

ECEC should be designed with children's interests in mind and from the children's perspective. The quality of the rooms is determined by the degree to which children can contribute to the design, make their own independent experiences, whether the subjects of interest to them are covered and their differing needs for movement, discovery, play, encounters or quiet time can be met. This means that children should have a say in the design of the rooms. The rooms and facilities should promote the children's education and development processes in diverse ways and help children to hone their creative skills.

Furthermore, the concrete room design and facilities should be tailored to the respective pedagogical concept of the centre so as to ensure that it can be implemented in the everyday pedagogical activities. At the same time, the rooms in all ECEC centres should lend themselves to flexible and multi-functional use and development. The following elements seem to be important in concrete terms for the rooms with child-friendly basic facilities: rooms for pedagogical work with the children (e.g. group rooms and additional rooms), sleep room, sanitary area (including care area for infants), multi-purpose or movement room, outdoor areas and sufficiently large halls, corridors or entrance areas.

The health protection of children is also to be borne in mind when it comes to child-friendly room design and facilities. Health relevant aspects here are, for instance, accident prevention, noise reduction, sufficient ventilation and lighting, the use of safe materials, the ensuring of sufficient sun protection and the upholding of hygiene standards (sanitary area, kitchen and food, cleaning).

6.3.3 Ensure staff-appropriate room design and facilities

The design and facilities of ECEC centres must likewise be tailored to the professional and ergonomic needs of staff so as to enable them to carry out their work in a professional manner and not harm their health. The health protection of staff is, therefore, of key importance in room design. For instance care is to be taken to en-

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sure the reduction of noise pollution and facilities that are ergonomic and suitable for adults.

Furthermore, both ECEC staff and children should participate in planning room design and facilities and their needs taken into account. Staff-friendly room design also entails the making available of rooms for staff which facilitate their work and offer them space for breaks (like for instance an office for the centre leader, rooms for downtime and for indirect paedagogical activities like, for instance, chats with parents).

6.4 Aspects to be borne in mind when implementing the action goals

Room design and facilities are dependent on the respective paedagogical concept of the centre and the structural conditions and requirements on site. Sufficient scope should, therefore, be envisaged for centres, their providers and the competent municipalities when it comes to the customised planning of room design.

Room design and facilities should be looked after, replaced and, where appropriate, adapted to changing requirements on an ongoing basis.

The prerequisites for room design that is of a high quality, promotes learning and health, and is the result of a multifunctional and participatory process are the qualifications of the centre leaders, ECEC staff and the provider that are to be ensured through suitable measures.

6.5 Sources

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7. Education, Developmental Support and Health

“Health promotion is to be anchored as a cross-sectional task in everyday paedagogical activities and is to be intermeshed with the education mandate. A balanced diet, sufficient physical exercise and support for a healthy lifestyle are the main contributory factors to the well-being, cognitive, socio-emotional and motor development and learning success of children. As joint mealtimes in ECEC centres or family day care settings are already an everyday experience even for infants, there is a social obligation to ensure they are of a high standard. At the same time, eating and care situations are to be seen as important educational situations which should be shaped in a paedagogical manner. “

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 5

7.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

The support mandate of child day care encompasses the education, upbringing and care of a child. It refers to a child’s social, emotional, physical and intellectual development (Section 22 Social Code –SGB VIII). This action area focuses on this support mandate along the lines of greater dovetailing of education and health and is, therefore, a cross-reference to the action area 2 “Contextual challenges”. The physical and emotional health of children is a precondition for the successful taking up of education services. On the other hand, appropriate education services support preventive health promotion. Given the high and growing uptake of child day care, it is likely that institutionally anchored health-promoting measures will reach almost all children in Germany. Health-promoting measures in child day care can, therefore, develop a compensatory and preventive effect.

7.2 Description of the identified and required action

Health promotion has already been anchored in the majority of the education and orientation plans of the federal states. What is needed, however, is a definition of the related requirements for the centres and the paedagogical work of ECEC staff. ECEC staff should be adequately prepared, during their training, for implementing health promotion as well.

Up to now, not all children have partaken of meals in ECEC centres. When it comes to meals, the needs of all children are to be taken into account.

In Germany more and more children are growing up in socially disadvantaged life circumstances. As we know from the KiGGS study of the Robert Koch Institute, these children are more frequently overweight or are at a high risk of developing obesity (cf. Lampert/Kuntz/KiGGS Study Group 2015). Here, compensatory measures are to be developed, preferably together with the parents and families, which could be implemented in cooperation with partners from the areas of education and health.

7.3 Action goals

7.3.1 Anchor health promotion as a cross-sectional topic in everyday paedagogical life

The goal is to anchor health promotion as a universal principle and cross-sectional topic in everyday paedagogical life and to establish it as an integral part of academic and non-academic initial, further and continuing training.

In child day care health-promoting measures draw together education and health and should take note, in particular, of the following aspects:

- hygiene;
- nutrition education;
- physical and mental health promotion, preventive health care and education;
- promotion of oral health;
- motion education;
- road safety education and accident prevention and
- resilience development.

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Suitable practical and supportive qualification schemes should be developed for ECEC staff, for instance for dealing with traumatised children. The ECEC staff should be made aware during their training of the fact that they set an example to children when it comes to a healthy lifestyle.

Furthermore, health promotion must also be taken into account in the design of the centres. High quality rooms should be seen as a contributory factor to successful health promotion.

7.3.2 Develop cooperation with partners in the fields of education and health

The goal is to strengthen and develop cooperation between stakeholders in early childhood education and care and cooperation partners in the cross-sectional area of education and health. What is needed is the establishment and strengthening of structured cooperation between educational staff and public health services and paediatricians. Cooperation between the centres and other local health partners should likewise be encouraged. Furthermore, cooperation and the networking of the education and the health sectors should be intensified on the federal government, federal state and municipal levels. Attention should also focus on obstacles resulting from the provisions of SGB V. This applies both to individual services and to cooperation with hospitals in preventive health measures.

Cooperation with the parents and families should be developed into an education and health partnership. Here examples of low-threshold services, particularly for the involvement of parents and families from socially disadvantaged situations, should be supported as should the development of parent material for health promotion for distribution in child day care centres.

7.3.3 Ensure a high quality, healthy and balanced diet

Measures to improve infrastructure should be carried out in order to ensure a high quality diet in ECEC centres (for instance with the help of investment programmes). Externally recognised quality standards should be put in place for catering in ECEC centres. The taking of meals should also be anchored in the pedagogical concept. In child day care the future prospect must be guaranteed that all children can enjoy a high quality, healthy and balanced lunch in the ECEC centre irrespective of their

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families' financial situation. A first step could be the inclusion of the funding of lunch in child day care in Section 90 SGB VIII.

The needs of all children should be taken into account when selecting and preparing food.

7.3.4 Ensure sufficient encouragement of physical activity

Movement is a basic need of children and is the foundation for diverse learning processes. It is the precondition for development not only of motor but also of linguistic, cognitive and socio-emotional skills. Sufficient physical activity is, therefore, to be ensured in ECEC centres. This should not just mean specific programmes and activities. Physical exercise should be integrated into daily paedagogical life as a cross-sectional task. The design of an outdoor area that encourages movement and a learning experience, of indoor movement areas and facilities that stimulate movement in ECEC centres are the essential preconditions for this.

7.4 Sources

Lampert, Thomas/ Kuntz, Benjamin/ KiGGS Study Group (2015): *Gesund aufwachsen – Welche Bedeutung kommt dem sozialen Status zu?* Ed. Robert Koch-Institut, Berlin. GBE kompakt 6(1).

8. Quality Development and Assurance in Family Day Care

“Family day care is governed by the same education and upbringing mandate as ECEC centres. Particularly for children under the age of three, it offers services alongside institutional care which are of equal value in the eyes of the law. Family day care has requirements and framework conditions that differ from those of institutional child day care. What is needed above all here is further professionalisation and support, for instance in the areas of the advice infrastructure, paedagogical support, professional-organisational integration and performance-based remuneration. Extending cooperation between family day care settings and ECEC centres is worthwhile and can help to put in place need-based provision.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 5

8.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

ECEC centres and family day care settings have the same statutory education, upbringing and care mandate (cf. Sections 22ff SGB VIII). With the adoption of the Child Day Care Development Act (TAG) and the Act on the Further Development of Child and Youth Services (KICK), diverse developments have been launched in the field of family day care. First of all, this applies from the quantitative angle. With the introduction of the legal right for children aged one upwards on 1 August 2013, the expansion of the number of places in this segment of provision has been driven forward dynamically in many places. At the same time, the quality of family day care has improved, too. Throughout Germany different qualification approaches and programmes have been introduced and disseminated which seek to support the profiling of this area of activity in ECEC provision.

Despite the statutory equivalence of the support mandate of the two types of provision, family day care settings have their own profile. Parents and families who consciously opt for family day care frequently do so because it consists of individual care in a small group of children in a family-like situation. Furthermore, family day care provision offers major potential for catering for special or local circumstances. Particularly in rural areas it can constitute a customised offering. This also applies to

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the flexible expansion of the regular provision in ECEC centres or the additional care of school children. Family day care can likewise be used as a low-threshold bridging scheme for children with a refugee background.

8.2 Description of the identified and required action

The structure of actual family day care provision is highly diverse. The qualifications held by child minders in family day care extend from training as qualified staff to qualifications obtained in preparatory courses.

There will still be child minders who are only available from the outset for a limited period of time and normally only accept a few children. They should not be subject to overly stiff qualification requirements. They, too, make a valuable contribution to family day care.

For child minders who exercise this activity on a permanent basis and for whom their child minder remuneration makes up a large share of their income, higher qualification requirements can be imposed. They should be given opportunities for additional qualification particularly when it comes to access to further qualification as child carers, other social assistance occupations or as educators. In this context, improved remuneration and social security should be tied to qualifications and regular further training. A corresponding performance incentive leads overall to improved quality in the field of family day care.

For all forms of family day care there is a need to strengthen the advice infrastructure, paedagogical support and networking.

By treating family day care as a peer offering to ECEC provision, family day care should also offer inclusive education, upbringing and care.

8.3 8.3 Action goals

8.3.1 Encourage qualification in family day care

Child minders fulfil the same education, upbringing and care mandate as ECEC centres. To enable them to carry out this support mandate in a professional and competent manner, further improvements must be made to their basic qualifications, further and continuing training. The following points apply in particular to child minders who exercise this activity on a permanent basis and whose remuneration is a major part of their income.

The competence-oriented qualification manual of the German Youth Institute (DJI) offers sound guidance for basic qualification (Schuhegger/Baur/Lipowski/Lischke-Eisinger/Ullrich-Runge 2015).

Furthermore, remuneration should be used to create an incentive and opportunities to ensure regular further and continuing training of child minders.

Moreover, in-service training as an ECEC staff member should be supported and recognised in order to improve mobility and the transition to existing paedagogical training schemes. These measures also contribute to the professional profiling of family day care.

8.3.2 Ensure a child-friendly child minder-child ratio

Basically, the threshold values mentioned in Chapter 3 for staff-child ratios can also be used as a guidance framework for the organisation of family day care. The number of children registered in the care licence who are present at the same time to receive care should be reduced correspondingly. This kind of improvement to the child minder-child ratio could be compensated by adapting the current cash benefit to ensure that quality improvements do not lead to income losses for child minders. Furthermore, the presence of children with special support needs and the scale of care should be seen as important parameters when calculating the total number of children to be looked after and the current cash benefits.

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8.3.3 Ensure reliable cover provision

In order to ensure the care of children and the child minder-child ratios, reliable and child-friendly cover must be ensured (also for holiday or further training periods) through the local provider of the public child and youth welfare services. Funding of cover in family day care is to be ensured.

8.3.4 Improve work conditions in family day care

One important aspect of improving quality is the structure of remuneration. The parameters for performance-based remuneration are:

- remuneration aligned with the number and characteristics of the children (age, special support needs, scale of care);
- time-based remuneration, including indirect paedagogical work⁸, (for instance preparation and follow-up of paedagogical work, cooperation with parents and families);
- remuneration during the induction phase;
- bonus for special care times (e.g. off-peak hours, weekends);
- consideration of the qualifications of the child minders and
- (pro rata) assumption of contributions to accident, sickness, long-term care, pensions insurance.

The material costs (e.g. costs for meals, cost of premises) are to be reimbursed appropriately bearing in mind tax deductibility.

8.3.5 Review local responsibility for the issuing of care licences

Up to now, the local provider of public youth welfare services in the area in which the carer was normally resident was responsible for issuing licences for family day care services. In the case of family day care provided on different premises, it is frequently the case that the premises come under the competence area of a different youth welfare agency. The rules regarding responsibility in this area have proved to be inappropriate and complicated (cf. federal government/federal state working group on legal issues in family day care 2015). The goal should, therefore, be to amend section 87A SGB VIII and assign responsibility for issuing a licence for family

⁸ Concrete empirical data on the amount are not available for family day care settings but they are for ECEC centres.

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day care to the youth welfare agency in whose area of responsibility the child minder works.

8.3.6 Ensure room quality in family day care that is child-friendly and conducive to development

As in ECEC centres, the rooms and facilities in family day care settings should promote children's education and development processes in a diverse manner and encourage children to be creative.

8.3.7 Ensure qualitative development and professional advice in family day care

Quality development is just as important for family day care settings as it is for ECEC centres. For this, the corresponding tools are to be further developed and made available (e.g. self-assessment tools). In family day care, support by way of professional advice in particular is to be ensured in accordance with Section 23(4) p.1 SGB VIII for child minders and parents. As child minders are normally self-employed, professional advice takes on major responsibility for the quality of family day care. The precondition for the efficacy of the tool is an appropriate professional adviser ratio. Preissing and colleagues (2015) and Viernickel (2015) considered a professional advice ratio of 40 consulting relationships per professional adviser in a full-time position to be appropriate.

To ensure the quality of professional advice and support, the professional advisers should also have the appropriate qualifications. Professional advisers should have normally completed relevant courses of study and have several years' experience in ECEC provision.

8.3.8 Expand cooperation and networking in family day care

The goal is to build on and strengthen cooperation between the stakeholders in family day care, institutional child day care and the providers of child and youth welfare services. For that reason, cooperation and networking services should be promoted (1) between family day care settings and ECEC centres, (2) between family day care and youth welfare offices and (3) amongst child minders themselves.

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The willingness to cooperate with the youth welfare office should be seen as a suitability criterion pursuant to Sections 23, 43 SGB VIII.

8.3.9 Set up equal access opportunities for all children

Children from lower income families should have the same access opportunities to publicly funded family day care as children from higher income families. For that reason, the law should clearly specify that parents and families are, in principle, only expected to pay the parental contribution laid down by the public youth welfare agencies. Should child minders provide additional services, this should only be permitted outside of publicly sponsored family day care.

8.4 Sources

Bund-Länder-Arbeitsgruppe zu Rechtsfragen in der Kindertagespflege (2015): *Arbeitspapier zu möglichen gesetzlichen Änderungen im Bereich Kindertagespflege* (status 19.11.2015).

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9. Governance in the System

“The further development of quality is dependent on the respective stakeholders and responsible parties having at their disposal the corresponding information and capacities for evaluation and governance from the local level up to international comparisons. This is about continuing to use and building on existing tools. “

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 5

9.1 Importance of the action area for ensuring and developing good child day care

The education, upbringing and care of children in ECEC centres and in family day care settings takes place in a complex and dynamic network of interactions. Good quality in paedagogical practice can, therefore, only be seen in a multidimensional context. It is the result of a “competent system”. Competence in child day care is not, therefore, simply the result of the formal qualifications of individuals and statutory framework conditions. It is far more the case that competence develops in mutual relationships between individuals, teams, facilities, providers and in the broader context of community affairs and society. Professionalisation processes take place on all system levels (individuals, institutions and teams, inter-institutional cooperation, governance) (European Communities 2011).

When developing the quality of child day care it is, therefore, about an ongoing learning process for skill building and sustainable quality assurance on all the above levels.

Consequently, the question of governance in the system (→ Glossary) also touches on all action areas mentioned in this Interim Report and in the Communiqué. The process that was initiated with the Communiqué is itself based on the idea that good quality in child day care can only be achieved in interaction between the stakeholders.

9.2 Description of the identified and required action

When ensuring and developing good paedagogical quality in child day care, it is therefore about seeing the system of child day care as a learning organisation and drawing the necessary conclusions. Good educational quality in child day care is not only made possible through framework conditions and standards but also through their implementation and successful interaction between the stakeholders in the system.

The high level of responsibility of the providers of ECEC centres goes hand-in-hand with the professionalism requirements for the provider. There is assumed to be a major need for a high degree of professionalism particularly of small providers or the integration of small providers into professional structures. Furthermore, the governance competence of the public youth welfare agency is to be optimised.

The prerequisite for the continuous development of the system is sufficient knowledge about child day care. This can be generated through tools like monitoring, evaluation or research.

9.3 Action goals

9.3.1 Encourage and facilitate discussion

The tried-and-tested structures in the child day care system are to be used and oriented, as in the past, towards supporting and ensuring the goals of this action area. There is a need here, inter alia, for an understanding of how the stakeholders, who need to be involved, can participate on the respective governance level in the debates to be held. In this context, existing quality assurance and quality development processes should be included.

9.3.2 Anchor quality development and assurance

To strengthen a “competent system” on the levels of the centre and the centre provider, binding processes for quality assurance and development are to be anchored. They should be shaped in a participatory and discursive manner in the centre and between the centre and provider and given professional support. Quality agree-

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ments between the provider of the centre and the local provider of public youth welfare services could serve as the basis. Besides the internal centre and provider stance, the external perspective is important too (e.g. internal and external evaluation). In particular the education plans and curricula of the federal states and the design of the respective centre and provider constitute the professional framework for this.

Aggregating cross-centre results can serve as a valuable basis for processing on other system levels. This could be a meaningful addition to monitoring and promote understanding about further processes.

For the purposes of governance on the levels of the centre and the provider of the centre, there is a need for support systems which, by means of encouragement, critical-constructive support and the transfer of knowledge, promote quality assurance and the further development of professional practice. The following elements are essential for a competent system and are, therefore, to be strengthened:

- qualified further and continuing training, supervision and coaching;
- professional advice also as a tool for implementing professional policy measures or quality development measures and
- exchange and networking (between centres but also between providers of centres and other responsible parties and cooperation partners in the social milieu).

9.3.3 Strengthen the governance competence of the public youth welfare services provider

The goal is to strengthen the governance function of the providers of public youth welfare services. Here, special mention should be made of youth welfare planning and the advisory and supervisory functions. For this, appropriate framework conditions and resources for the assumption of these tasks are to be provided.

This also applies to the assumption of tasks by the senior youth welfare authorities of the federal states and the competent senior federal authority.

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9.3.4 Ensure systematic monitoring on all levels

The goal is to develop the existing data collections as the basis for systematic monitoring (→ Glossary). The results should be made available and used on all levels. In this context the following aspects should be examined:

- Steady further development and quality assurance of Children and Youth Services Statistics and their ongoing evaluation as a public task.
- Development of a joint framework for monitoring on the federal government, federal state, municipal and provider levels. Here the reflections should also examine to what extent the children's perspective could be given greater consideration in future.
- Efforts should focus on establishing a joint database beyond all federal states, municipalities and providers in which the results of relevant pilot projects, research, evaluated materials can be collected and made available in processed form.

9.3.5 Intensify research in Germany with due consideration of the international perspectives

Basic and practical research constitute an important basis for the functioning of a "competent system" to ensure that the empirical relevance of the necessary discourses can be evaluated, too. In this context the European and international perspectives are to be taken into account. In research projects influencing factors are also to be examined and the validity of assumptions and hypotheses reviewed.

There is a need for research that draws on quantitative and qualitative methods. Longitudinal studies take on major importance particularly ones which are oriented towards the overarching educational level, refer to the social milieu and also specifically address certain groups (e.g. children with a migration or refugee background).

Against this backdrop encouragement and support from research networks and the promotion of junior researchers are necessary.

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9.4 Sources

European Commission (2011): *Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (CoRe): Final report*. Public open tender EAC 14/2009. Cass School of Education and University of Ghent, Department for Social Welfare Studies London and University of East London. Available on <https://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/Web-Depot/CoReFinalReport2011.pdf> (access: 23.06.2016).

Part 2 – Ensuring Financing



“The quantitative and qualitative expansion of child day care will also require a high level of financing in future. The necessary funds must be made available to meet the requirements for early childhood education and to ensure a family day care segment that is on a par with the school and university sector and is commensurate with the economic location Germany. This encompasses both solid basic financing and targeted backing for special support needs. High-quality early childhood education is without doubt a good investment from the economic and tax angle, too. The financial returns benefit all levels of government and all levels of government should, therefore, be involved in its funding. The federal states expect a greater and lasting commitment particularly from the federal government.

ECEC centres and family day care settings must fulfil their education mandate in addition to their care and upbringing mandate. Neither the plurality of the provision nor the uptake of the services may be impeded by financial obstacles.”

Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”, p. 6

1. Importance

Sufficient funds are needed to improve the quality of child day care and this can only be achieved in the long term in a step-by-step process. Implementation within the framework outlined here will only be possible if the major financial commitment already entered into by the federal states and municipalities is backed by a substantial increase in the contribution from the federal government. This is particularly relevant given that the distribution of financial burdens and benefits has been unequal up to now. The child day care system has mainly been borne and ensured up to now by the federal states and municipalities. However, one of the main beneficiaries is the federal government.

Clarification of the financial issue will, therefore, be of central importance for the entire further quality development process which is linked, both from the professional and financial angles, to the dynamic developments in the federal states and municipalities.

In order to establish the solid foundations for the necessary political decisions, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) commissioned two expertises and a cost assessment in consultation with the working party “Early Education”. In a constitutional expertise Professor Joachim Wieland, German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer, examined possible financing options for a contribution from the federal government (Wieland 2016). In a second economic expertise Dr Dieter Dohmen, FiBS Research Institute for Education and Social Economics, outlined the different financing systems of the federal states, elaborated proposals for commensurate federal government involvement, examined the implementability of financing options for a sustainable government participation, gave an overview of the economic returns from good child day care, and made cost estimates on the basis of selected quality characteristics (Dohmen 2016). Furthermore, the unit Children and Youth Services Statistics at the Technical University Dortmund was commissioned to undertake cost simulations to estimate the costs of qualitative improvements in staff and leadership resources and to make cost estimates on further quantitative and qualitative aspects. The main results of these expertises and cost estimates are presented below.

2. Expenditure on child day care

The expertise by Dohmen (2016) shows that expenditure on child day care has increased enormously over the last 15 years. This confirms the existing major efforts to expand and develop the quality of child day care (cf. Fig. 1).

The expenditure on early childhood education and care (excluding after-school care) increased across Germany between 2000 and 2013 from EUR 10.7 billion to EUR 23.8 billion. The public contribution rose, during this same period, from EUR 8.1 to EUR 18.2 billion. In the ensuing years up to 2015 a further increase in total expenditure to EUR 26.9 billion (target) can be assumed.

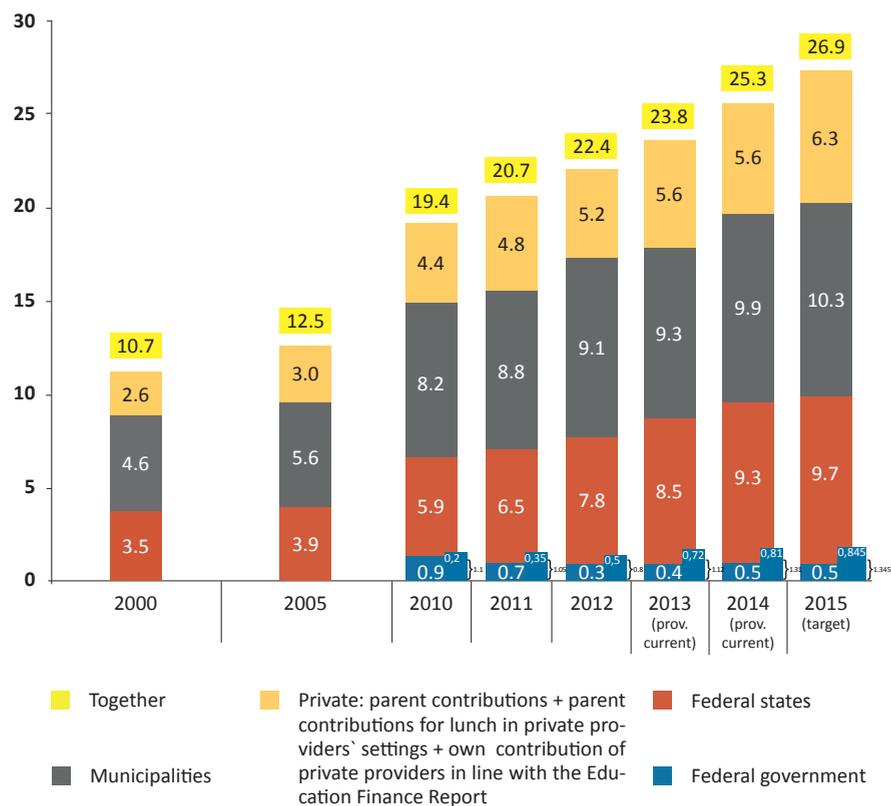
The federal states and municipalities bear the lion’s share of this public expenditure. In this context, the municipalities contributed, according to the target calculation for 2015, EUR 10.3 billion, the federal states EUR 9.7 billion whereas the federal government had a far lower share of EUR 0.5 billion. This federal government share, however, only contains the funds invested by the federal government in the U3 (under-three-year olds) expansion. If the funds made available by the federal government to the federal states via the redistribution of turnover tax points for the pro-

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motion of operating costs within the framework of the U3 expansion are also taken into account, then this results in a total federal government contribution of EUR 1.345 billion and a contribution by the federal states from which the turnover share has been deducted. It is depicted in the figure by the second blue column. The same applies to the previous years 2010–2014.

Other sources of funding are parents (parent contributions, contributions for lunch) and private providers (providers' own shares).

FIG. 1: Expenditure on child day care (including family day care) without the expenditure for school children in after-school care/after-school care groups/mixed-age groups (estimated) by financing level 2000 up to 2015 in Germany in EUR billions⁹



Data for the federal government, federal states and municipalities are annual calculation results of the public budgets from the Education Finance Report 2015 Table 4.1.1-1, minus the estimated expenditure for after-school care. The private shares for 2012 are taken from the Education Finance Report Table 2.4.1 (education budget) and from 2013 from the education budget 2016. The retrospective and prospective private shares are estimated on basis of 2012/2013 (lightened colours). For the U3 enlargement from 2008 to 2014, the federal government made available a total of EUR 2.675 billion via the redistribution of VAT points for ongoing operating costs. From 2015 it is to make EUR 845 million available on an ongoing basis for the further funding of the operating costs of child care places.

⁹ Not included in the graph are the additional EUR 100 million made available by the federal government via turnover tax points to the federal states for operating costs in conjunction with the U3 expansion in 2017 and 2018 and the funds made available from child care benefit from 2016 to 2018 to improve child care.

3. Effects and returns on (higher quality) child day care

Studies and analyses, particularly from the Anglo-American regions, are available on the yields and returns (→ Glossary) of early childhood education. They demonstrate that investments in early childhood education are worthwhile and generate higher returns than investment in later education phases. This result is attributed to the self-productivity of skills. Skills acquired at a young age are the basis for learning additional skills more easily at an older age (Spieß 2013). In early childhood the foundations are laid for the further cognitive and non-cognitive development of children. If children are given the right stimulation, they have better development and education chances. This can have a positive impact on their later school career and work history. It has knock-on effects for public budgets as a consequence of higher tax and social insurance income and lower social expenditure. The concrete level of the returns on investment in early childhood education varies in the mainly international cost-benefit analyses and is dependent on which factors are considered in detail. In these studies the returns range from approximately 1:2 to 1:16 (Spieß 2013). Many of the cost-benefit analyses explicitly took into account high-quality care programmes. Hence, it is likely that a high level of profitability can only be achieved in conjunction with good quality (Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina 2014 - German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina 2014).

Very little information is available on how the return on early childhood education investment in Germany is distributed across the respective public levels. In order to be able to estimate this more accurately, calculation simulations were undertaken in the expertise by Dohmen (Dohmen 2016). Calculation simulations estimated, by way of example, the impact on the expected costs and benefits when the changes that were the basis for the assumptions were to actually happen in terms of the education effects.

From these exemplary calculation simulations the following conclusion can, in principle, be drawn: the federal government, federal states and municipalities benefit to very differing degrees from the returns on early childhood education. The main beneficiary (besides social insurance funds) is the federal government, followed quite a long way behind by the federal states and municipalities. This result can be attributed to the fact that, up to now, the federal government has had comparatively low cost expenditure in the field of ECEC provision but, at the same time, derives a high level of income particularly from elevated tax revenues.

For instance, Dohmen conducted calculation simulations with various scenarios in order to estimate the return on improved quality child day care compared with non-improved child day care. A return of 1:53 was estimated for the federal government for one of the scenarios of possible improvements in staffing levels that would involve cost expenditure of EUR 11.4 billion in total (cf. Point 4) assuming the allocation of expenditure between the federal government, federal states and municipalities stays the same (2015). According to this, each invested euro would generate a return of EUR 53. The estimated returns for the federal states and municipalities for possible quality improvements were far lower than the return for the federal government.

The calculation simulations revealed that the current allocation of expenditure does not correspond to the returns of the public levels. In order to distribute the costs of the further development of early childhood education and care more fairly between the federal government, federal states and municipalities (measured in terms of the respective returns), a greater involvement of the federal government would be necessary.

4. Cost estimates

The unit Child and Youth Services Statistics of the Technical University Dortmund was commissioned by the BMFSFJ, in consultation with the working party “Early Education,” to undertake cost simulations to estimate the costs of quantitative and qualitative improvements to centre staff and leaders and cost estimates of further quantitative and qualitative aspects. Further cost estimates were undertaken in the expertise by Dohmen. The main results are presented here. As far as possible the costs of quality improvements were estimated in the respective action areas. Cost estimates were undertaken for the following action areas (see Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8).

Need-based ECEC provision (see Chapter 1)

The attendance hours for children from age three up to school entry vary considerably from federal state to federal state. The share of full day care with more than seven hours’ daily attendance ranges from 29 percent in Lower Saxony to 94 percent in Thuringia. The expansion of half-day or three-quarter day provision into full day care would entail additional staff costs. If, for instance, full day care were to be extended

in all federal states to at least 50 percent of all ECEC provision, then 8,000 full-time positions would have to be created in six federal states. According to estimates of the Technical University Dortmund this would lead to costs of around EUR 440 million. If this were increased to at least 60 percent then the costs would amount to EUR 810 million a year. In these calculations the improved staff allocation outlined in Chapter 3 has not yet been taken into account.

The total amount of parent contributions for the use of ECEC centres or family day care settings is not fully listed either in the Children and Youth Services Statistics or in the annual statistics. Only the income of public providers is taken into account. Assuming that the parent contributions specific to the federal states are similarly high for public and private providers on average in the federal states, then the total amount of parent contributions can be estimated on the basis of the proportion of services made available by private providers. The estimate for budget year 2014 is around EUR 3.5 billion. If a full exemption from contribution were to be introduced, this would lead to additional expenditure of up to EUR 3.5 billion according to estimates of the Technical University Dortmund. If, in contrast, an exemption from contributions were only to be sought for low-income parents in order to facilitate their children's access to early childhood education, then additional expenditure of around EUR 29.6 million is to be expected according to estimates of the Technical University Dortmund. Low-income parents can be defined as follows: low-income parents whose benefits are provided in accordance with SGB II, SGB XII and the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (AsylbLG) can apply for the assumption of their parent contributions as specified in Section 90 SGB VIII. According to this there are no further costs. Families with a slightly higher income, who obtain benefits according to the Housing Benefits Act (WoGG) or Section 6a Federal Child Benefit Act (BKGG) must, however, pay the specified parent contributions. This applies to around 55,000 children. The assumption of their fees would probably generate annual costs of approximately EUR 29.6 million.

The quantitative expansion of provision for children under the age of three has not yet been completed. Parent surveys conducted by the German Youth Institute (DJI) point out that not all childcare wishes of the parents have been met. The most recent parent survey came to the conclusion that if all parent wishes were to be met this would result in a total demand for approximately 910,000 places. The federal government has made funds available for government backing for around 810,000 places through the three investment programmes for child care financing 2008–2013, 2013–2014 and 2015–2018. If the remaining 100,000 places should actually

be required then, based on cost estimates of the Technical University Dortmund, this would result in additional financial requirements of around EUR 913 million for the operating costs of family day care settings (share 14.4 percent) and ECEC centres and approximately EUR 2.6 billion investment costs for the construction, extension or conversion of existing centres. Furthermore, there will be additional care needs for children from age three up to school entry as well. On the one hand not all three-year-olds take up the family day care provision. On the other, last year saw far more births than had been anticipated which means that if the trend continues more provision will have to be put in place and financed.

Contextual challenges (see Chapter 2)

In particular further demand is also to be expected for the care of children from families seeking protection and asylum (children with a refugee background). Estimates were made in this context in the National Education Report 2016. The basis for this are the initial reception data (EASY figures – figures for the initial distribution of asylum seekers to the federal states) for 2015. As it is not to be expected that all families registered for the first time will stay in Germany, two scenarios were calculated: scenario one assumes that 60 percent and scenario two that 80 percent of children registered for the first time with a refugee background will stay in Germany in the medium term. On this basis the group of authors of the Education Report assume that between 44,000 (scenario one) and 58,000 (scenario two) places will be needed for children under the age of six in ECEC centres. Between 7,100 and 9,400 additional ECEC staff will be required for these additional places. This would result in additional costs of EUR 320 million to EUR 420 million. The group of authors did not, however, take into account the above-mentioned quality improvements (group of authors Education Reporting 2016).

The Education Report does not make any estimates about how many children with a refugee background will probably come to Germany in 2016 because of the unclear data situation. Nor are there any estimates about the reunification of families. At the present time, the data situation does not permit any reliable statements.

A good staff-child ratio (see Chapter 3)

When it comes to improving the staff-child ratio, various aspects can be taken into account which are presented in Chapter 3. Depending on the scale of improvements desired, annual operating costs of EUR 5.7 billion up to EUR 11.4 billion will be incurred based on the cost estimates of the Technical University Dortmund.

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The elements mentioned in Chapter 3 are taken into account when estimating the follow-on costs:

1. staff-child ratios for under-three-year-olds,
2. staff-child ratios for children from age 3 up to school entry,
3. child minder-child ratio for under-three-year-olds in family day care settings,
4. indirect paedagogical working time,
5. absences (illness, further training, etc.).

In the field of provision for the under-three-year-olds further expansion demands are to be expected over the course of the next few years. All the same, there is uncertainty about how many of the wishes expressed by parents can actually be met under the local framework conditions (amount of fees, suitability of the provision). Because of this uncertainty three development scenarios have been calculated. In the first scenario the current expansion level of 32.9 percent is taken into account. This basic scenario reveals how high the additional costs for improving the quality of the existing provision would be. In the second scenario medium-level further expansion is assumed which would correspond to an increase in the enrolment rate from currently 32.9 percent to 38.5 percent for under-three-year-olds. This would take the number to 811,000 places. In the third scenario the parental wish amounting to 43.2 percent determined by DJI in 2015 is taken into account which would result in 908,000 places.

In the following calculations only the additional costs for qualitative improvements to staff allocation vis-à-vis the current staffing situation are listed. The costs for the regular operation of places that are not yet currently available in ECEC centres and family day care settings are not part of these cost estimates but part of the cost estimates in Chapter 1 (see next page).

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TABLE 3: Cost estimate for improvements to staff allocation by age of children (annual costs in EUR billions). Three expansion scenarios based on the assumption of three different enrolment rates for children under the age of three

Staff allocation	Indirect paedagogical work (IPA) Absences (AB)	Direct paedagogical work (staff-child ratio)	Expansion scenarios in EUR billion annual (approx.)		
			Expansion status 32.9 percent	Expansion status 32.9 percent	Expansion status 32.9 percent
Improvement in staff allocation for under-three-year-olds from currently 1:4.3 to 1:3.0	IPA 16.5 percent of working time and AB of 15 percent of annual working time	Results in a staff-child ratio of 1:4	3.0	3.4	3.7
Improvement in staff allocation for children aged 3 years up to school entry from currently 1:9.6 percent to 1:6.8 percent	IPA 16.5 percent of working time and AB of 15 percent of annual working time	Results in a staff-child ratio of 1:9	3.5	3.5	3.5
Staff allocation cannot be presented for family child care	IPA 16.5 percent of working hours and AB 15 percent of annual working time	Staff-child ratio of 1:4	0.37	0.44	0.5

Amount rounded up 6.9 7.3 7.7

If the desired staff-child ratio for under-three-year-olds is 1:4 and for children aged three years up to school entry 1:9 and the desired indirect paedagogical working time based on Viernickel and Fuchs-Rechlin (2015) is 16.5 percent and absences of ECEC staff amount to 15 percent¹⁰, then this means a staff-child ratio of 1:3 for under-three-year-olds and 1.6 for over-3-year-olds up to school entry. The costs incurred for these staff improvements, depending on the selected expansion goal, will be approximately EUR 6.9 billion (32.9 percent), approximately EUR 7.3 billion (38.5 percent) or approximately EUR 7.7 billion (43.2 percent).

¹⁰ Based on the absence periods of ECEC staff on a scale of 15 percent of total working time, it should be borne in mind that staffing requirements can also be lower in the event of a low level of staff illness, more extensive closure days of the centre but also as a consequence of the "absences" of children when it comes to achieving the desired staff-child ratio. To illustrate the scale of expenditure, the amount of expenditure is calculated in the event that the absences do not amount to 15 percent but only 5 percent. This then means expenditure for the public providers, depending on the expansion goal, of EUR 5.1 billion, EUR 5.3 billion or EUR 5.5 billion. Should there not be any absences for ECEC staff, then this means increased expenditure of EUR 4.2 billion, EUR 4.4 billion or EUR 4.5 billion.

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If one takes indirect paedagogical working time of only 10 percent of working time coupled with no changes in the staff-child ratio and the same absence period, then this results in follow-on costs, depending on the expansion goal, of EUR 5.57 billion, EUR 6 billion or EUR 6.2 billion.

Should the staff-child ratio be improved in the case of care for children with support needs, for instance children whose family language is not German or children who are affected by poverty, for instance to 1:3 in the case of under-three-year-olds and to 1:6 in the case of children aged three up to school entry, then the expenditure with regard to the current expansion status will increase by a further EUR 2.7 billion, with the expansion goal of 38.5 percent by EUR 2.8 billion and with an expansion goal of 43.2 percent by EUR 2.9 billion.

Should the staff-child ratio for children with integration support be improved to on average 1:2, then this would result in conservatively estimated additional costs of around EUR 0.8 billion for public budgets.

If these improved staff-child ratios for children with support needs were to be taken into account, in addition to the staff-child ratios including indirect paedagogic working time and absences outlined above (see table), this would result in total costs, depending on the expansion status, of EUR 10.3 billion (32.9 percent), EUR 10.9 billion (38.5 percent) or EUR 11.4 billion (43.2 percent).

Explanatory comments about the cost estimate model of the Technical University Dortmund: The basic idea behind the cost estimate model is that changes to the staff-child ratio, the share of indirect paedagogic working time and absences will lead to higher staffing requirements than in the current situation. The full-time equivalents of paedagogical staff (without trainees, persons doing their voluntary service and persons doing their voluntary social year) are deducted from the calculated target staff in full-time equivalents (FTEs) as at 1 March 2015. The additional staffing requirements determined as FTEs are multiplied by the costs of a position in line with the collective agreement for the public service 8a level 3 (Tarifvertrag für den öffentlichen Dienst – TVÖD) or TVÖD 3 level 3 for child carers and social assistants. In order to calculate public expenditure, the parent contributions or fees of an average 15 percent are also deducted. When estimating the additional costs for family day care, it is assumed that a child minder has gross income in the case of the full day care of four children which is comparable to a salary in accordance with TVÖD SuE (Sozial- und Erziehungsdienst – SuE [social and education services]) S2

level 2. In addition, in the case of child minders the material costs of EUR 1.80 per child and hour and the costs of professional advice (a full-time position for providing professional advice for 40 family day care places) are taken into account. Bearing in mind the cost factors for family care this means a cost rate of EUR 7.85 per child and hour (see below).

Qualified staff (see Chapter 4)

Professional advice should be extended to improve the quality of ECEC centres. As, at the present time, the number of professional adviser positions, which will be available, is not known, it can merely be pointed out here that, for example, an additional 500 to 1,000 professional adviser positions would lead to annual staff costs at TVÖD SuE 15 level 3 of between EUR 33 million and EUR 66 million based on the cost estimate of the Technical University Dortmund.

Further training is an important support tool for ECEC staff. According to Dohmen (2016) average expenditure of EUR 300 per ECEC staff member and year is estimated. As no information is available about how much providers currently spend on further training, it is not possible either to calculate the additional financial needs generated by introducing average support of EUR 300 for further training.

Strengthening leadership (see Chapter 5)

The requirements in terms of the framework conditions for high-quality leadership were presented in the action area “strengthening leadership”. If the conditions listed there for determining the time allocated to the leadership activity based on the expertise by Strehmel (2015) are to be implemented, then an additional 9,653 full-time positions would have to be created, in addition to the staff currently engaged in centre leadership tasks (28,769 full-time equivalents). In the case of costs for a staff position based on the TVÖD SuE 11a level 3 amounting to EUR 59,508 annually, additional annual costs of around EUR 574 million would be incurred based on the cost assessment by the Technical University Dortmund.

On the one hand there are lower costs when a centre leader (SuE 11a) is not currently fully released and his/her involvement in group services is reduced by topping up the leadership activity. This activity in group service would then probably be taken over by an educator or a staff member with similar training whose remuneration would only have to be calculated as S8. On the other hand, there will also be situa-

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tions in which ECEC staff with a lower leadership share and current payment as S8 would be classified through the expansion of their leadership activities as S11a. This would mean that their entire activity (including the remaining time in group service) could be remunerated as S11a. These mutually neutralising trends would have to be estimated for each of the 54,000 ECEC centres. This is not possible and it is likely that the contradictory trends of reduced and additional costs would offset each other which means that costs of around EUR 575 million would have to be assumed.

Education, developmental support and health (see Chapter 7)

Healthy food is the basis for health. A study by Arens-Azevêdo, Pfannes and Tecklenburg (2014) was used as the basis to calculate the costs of a healthy lunch based on the standards of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährungswissenschaft (German Nutrition Society - DGE). It comes to the conclusion that lunch in line with the DGE standards in ECEC centres would lead to average costs of EUR 4.07 per meal. It is not possible to estimate the additional costs that would be incurred for lunch in line with these standards as no details are available about how much is currently spent by parents on lunch or what costs are incurred by the centres for additional staff and premises.

Quality development and assurance in family day care (see Chapter 8)

In order to improve quality in a similar manner to the staff-child ratio in centres, additional annual costs are necessary for family day care for under-three-year-olds which were already taken into account in the improvement of the staff-child ratio in action area 3 (approximately EUR 374 million). The following factors were used as the basis for the cost estimate in line with the cost assessment model of the Technical University Dortmund: (1) improving the family day care-child ratio in conjunction with the care of children under the age of three to 1:4, (2) 16.5 percent of remunerated working time for indirect paedagogical work and (3) 15 percent for absence periods. In the case of the full day care of four children the remuneration reaches the amount of TVÖD SuE 2, level 2. In addition, material costs of EUR 1.80 per child and hour and costs for professional advice (one full-time professional adviser position for 40 family day care places) are taken into account. Bearing in mind these cost factors, this results in a cost rate of EUR 7.85 per child and hour. This target cost rate is set against the current empirical hourly costs from the Children and Youth Services Statistics (Germany EUR 4.54) and this is how the additional costs are calculated.

Further training is an important support tool for child minders. Here, too, average expenditure of EUR 300 per child minder and year is to be envisaged. The additional costs cannot be estimated here either as no information is available about what level of further training costs will be borne by the provider or the public purse.

5. Possible constitutional financing options for federal government involvement

According to the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law - GG) the federal states are, in principle, responsible for financing family day care as they execute the federal statutory provisions on child day care pursuant to Section 22 ff SGB VIII. The expenditure burden follows the task burden (Articles 83, 104(a) para 1 Basic Law [GG]). At the same time, child day care is generally a mandatory task for municipal self-administration. The participation of the federal government in financing must, therefore, be justified legally and admissible under the constitution.

When it comes to the possible participation of the federal government, this therefore raises the question about a constitutional financing option. In his constitutional expertise Wieland (2016) identifies possible constitutional financing options for the permanent involvement of the federal government in the financing of quality-oriented child day care.

On the one hand, he examines the option of an amendment to the constitution. The task of child day care could be added to Article 91a GG or Article 91b GG.

On the other hand, he looks at financial options of the federal government which would be possible within the framework of the current constitution. The federal government may grant the federal states financial assistance for child day care in line with Article 104b GG. This financial assistance would, however, be restricted to investment, i.e. measures for the construction and maintenance of child day care provision. This does not, therefore, include any operating costs and would also be limited in time.

The federal government could contribute in a permanent manner to the costs of child day care by readjusting the shares of the federal government and federal states in revenue from turnover tax (Article 106(4) GG). In the case of this financing option it would have to be ensured in addition through binding agreements between the

federal government and federal states that the funds would be used specifically for qualitative improvements in child day care.

Permanent, purpose-specific federal financing could be undertaken by setting up a foundation for high-quality child day care (Article 87(3) GG). The foundation would either have to be assigned very high foundation assets to allow the support funds to be financed from the interest revenue of these assets or would have to be assigned the necessary funds for the performance of its tasks through an annual budgetary act. The latter would mean that financing would be subject to the reserve of existing budgetary funds. The foundation funds could then be allocated to the federal states, ECEC centres or associations in line with the rules laid down in the foundation establishing act. In this context, the use of different ratios from the ones used for the distribution of the turnover tax points would be possible. For instance, the apportionment of funds to the federal states could also be tied to the expenditure of the federal states and municipalities in the respective federal state.

Another purpose-specific albeit only indirect financing option for permanent federal government involvement would be a money grant act pursuant to Article 104a(3) GG. In this act parents could be granted a legal entitlement to money grants in the form of vouchers to help finance the costs of high quality child day care in their children's ECEC centre. This would mean that the purpose-specific financing of costs of child day care could be done indirectly via the parents. The federal government could then make the money grant specified in the act dependent on it being used to finance child day care which meets minimum quality standards. It may not, however, itself clearly set out these standards in the money grant act as the subject of settlement is the money grant and not the service in return. The qualitative pre-conditions of the child day care provision which is to benefit from support would, therefore, have to be regulated elsewhere. This kind of option would also involve major administrative costs.

Another indirect financing option of the federal government via the parents would be an increase in child benefits or child allowances. However with this option it would not be possible to dictate to parents what the increased amounts should be used for. Furthermore, because of the linking up of the fiscal child allowance and child benefit, an increase of this kind would lead to a bigger advantage for the more economically well-off.

In the opinion of Wieland (2016) the financing competence of the federal govern-

ment could also be justified by means of an unwritten support competence by virtue of the nature of the matter. In its judgment on the Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz (Youth Welfare Act - JWG) of 18 July 1967, the Federal Constitutional Court recognised this kind of support competence of the federal government in the field of youth welfare services in the case of expenditure with a clear supraregional character. The same reasoning could also be applied to quality-oriented child day care. It is not, however, clear whether the Federal Constitutional Court would extend its jurisprudence to child day care. Hence, this option would entail certain legal risks. A political agreement between the federal government and the federal states would be needed to ensure the purpose-oriented assignment of funds.

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Glossary

- » **Average staff allocation:** Staff allocation is a theoretical amount. For instance in publications based on the child and youth welfare services, the full-time care equivalents of employees are compared with the full-time care equivalents of children.
- » **Centre leader/centre leaders:** The term centre leader/centre leaders describes a person or group of persons who undertake leadership activities in the ECEC centre.
- » **Children with support needs:** An (imminent) disability, a family language other than German, a refugee background or growing up in poverty in particular are deemed to constitute special support needs.
- » **ECEC staff:** The term ECEC staff refers to the pedagogical staff in an ECEC centre who engage in the education, upbringing and care of children and who directly interact with the children. The way in which the federal states (Länder) define this term varies in line with their statutory provisions.
- » **Governance:** In this report the term governance is understood in conjunction with the conditions for putting in place and ensuring a “competent” system of child day care. This means that responsibilities within and between the various government levels and the providers of child day care are distributed and coordinated in such a manner that the centres and staff have framework conditions and support structures at their disposal which enable the provision of high-quality early childhood education and care. Effective governance, therefore, encompasses a coordinated, coherent and purposeful interaction between all levels and stakeholders across the entire system of child day care.
- » **Inclusion:** Inclusive child day care is based on the fundamental idea of unlimited participation and is, therefore, intended for all children. It avoids any discriminating form of differentiation and exclusion in the structure of its provision and pedagogical work. Early childhood education and care oriented towards the fundamental idea of inclusion paves the way for the inclusive practice of social, ethnic, cultural and individual diversity in everyday life. It sees this as potential for the promotion of individual learning and education processes of children and their families.

GLOSSARY

- » **Leadership activity/leadership/leadership tasks:** The terms leadership activity, leadership and leadership tasks describe the complex action areas which cover activities to lead and fulfil the mandate of the ECEC centre. The leadership activity or leadership can be assigned to different areas of responsibility or to different individuals. This means the tasks can be assumed by one or more centre leaders. Furthermore, certain leadership activities can be assigned to individuals who are entrusted with specific tasks (e.g. specialist for language education, practical mentors, etc.) A leadership team may, therefore, consist of several individuals. Furthermore, the provider can also assume specific leadership tasks.
- » **Monitoring:** In the field of child day care the term monitoring is understood to mean the systematic approaches and processes of quality observation and/or quality assessment. Both quantitative and qualitative data can form the foundation for this. The quality of a child day care system or areas of this system are evaluated on the basis of the analysis of these data. One precondition for the implementation of these processes is an agreement on quality standards or goals, guide values or indicators which, at the same time, can be modified or developed further.
- » **Regular child care services:** The term regular child care services refers to the regular care periods (in line with the respective regulations of the federal states) in child day care. The regular child care services are, therefore, to be considered separately from the provision of care services during off-peak hours and holidays.
- » **Return:** The term return indicates the ratio between the monetary gains and the costs of a measure. It can be expressed as a percentage or as a ratio. For instance a return of 1:10 would mean that one invested euro generates a return of ten euros.
- » **Staff allocation:** Arithmetic allocation of staff to a certain number of children, group size or the like which is normally laid down in ECEC legislation, staff ordinances or the like.
- » **Staff-child ratio:** The staff-child ratio aims to depict the actual ratio of ECEC staff to the children present in their direct paedagogical work.
- » **Staffing levels:** Generic term for staff-child ratio, average staff allocation, staff allocation

Annex

- Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education”
- Positions of associations and organisations from the expert dialogue on the Communiqué and the quality development process of the federal government and federal states (Länder)



Communiqué

“Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education“

A. The quality of publicly accountable education and care is a major determining factor for the future of Germany.

The system of early childhood education and care (ECEC) has been highly dynamic for years. Thanks to the joint efforts of the federal government, federal states (Länder) and municipalities, the number of children enjoying this care and staff looking after them is continuously rising. The private providers likewise play an important role here. Public expenditure, too, is increasing in line with the growth in the volume of ECEC services provided. Social change is underway leading to the education and care of children, in parallel to the family, increasingly becoming the norm.

Whereas energies and attention are still focused on extending provision for the under-three-year-olds, there is increasing recognition of the potential of this segment of education and there are calls for additional public equipment, quality-assuring measures, governance and regulation, also from the angle of inclusion in education.

(1) The encouragement of young people to grow into independent and socially competent individuals can only be done on the basis of comprehensive early education and care. The family is and continues to be the most important point of reference for children. However, it is still the case that the social environment very much determines children’s education opportunities. Consequently, good support services are extremely important for families. Early education is the foundation stone of a society in which considerable importance is attributed to equal opportunities for every child. ECEC centres for children or family day care settings support parents and families in their responsibility for education and upbringing, and make a substantial contribution to facilitating independence and social participation. Early, high-quality education improves children’s future prospects.

(2) In order to balance family and working life parents are dependent on the social support of high-quality child day care which is on a par with the economic location. Reliable child day care also pursues the goal of securing livelihoods and gender equality. Economic growth is dependent on a high level of labour market participa-

tion of mothers and fathers and prerequisites like flexibility, mobility, professional qualifications and lifelong upskilling.

(3) Early education and care also means prevention. It makes a key contribution to relieving the strain on the social systems.

The responsibility of our society for our future is reflected in the quality of child day care. This responsibility is expressed in quality requirements and financial commitments. It is imperative that qualitative development can keep pace with the highly dynamic quantitative expansion which has been ongoing for many years and, at the same time, with the specialist requirements imposed by society. The Youth and Family Ministers' Conference and the Federal Minister, therefore, believe there is a need for action.

B. Safeguarding and raising the quality of child day care is dependent on a coordinated and binding procedure.

The starting situations in the federal states are very different. Each federal state has specific strengths as well as further development needs. When it comes to the further development of child day care different foci have, therefore, been selected in the federal states. The federal government and federal states have already taken numerous steps. To build on and take this into account, efforts should be made to decide on concrete goals for the assurance and further development of quality between the federal government and federal states. In the medium and long term this should lead to all stakeholders in the financing system reaching agreement, within the framework of their respective responsibility, on a system of solid principles in primary school education. The goal is for children to have access, from the very outset, to equal education opportunities in Germany irrespective of where they live, their gender, their origins, their language, their home country or background.

High-quality child day care can be measured particularly in terms of the following aspects:

1. Need-based ECEC provision

The education and care services are to be oriented towards the needs of children and parents bearing in mind children's well-being and early encouragement of children in line with the stage of their development and a good balance between family and working life.

2. Contextual challenges

ECEC provision is oriented towards a professional aspiration. Based on the “Joint framework of the federal states for early education in ECEC centres” (JFMK & KMK 2004), developments and empirical findings call for ongoing specialist further development.

3. A good staff-child ratio

The staff-child ratio is an important factor in the paedagogical work of ECEC staff with children, in the education and upbringing partnership with parents and in the necessary indirect paedagogical work and leadership responsibility in child day care. The goal must, therefore, be to establish robust nationwide foundations with good staff framework conditions.

4. Qualified staff

Well-trained and happy staff are the foundations for paedagogical work in ECEC centres. The occupational field of child day care must, therefore, be attractive to potential applicants and training must be optimised in line with the stiff requirements. This also includes strengthening the ECEC centres as practical learning venues. Within the framework of, preferably team-oriented and process-accompanying further and continuing training, it must be ensured that ECEC staff have access to further training in a comprehensive manner and on the basis of the latest scientific findings. The objective is to continue to improve, in particular, their paedagogical work oriented towards the developmental processes of children in child day care. For the purposes of inclusion what are needed are multiple-professional teams with qualified remedial staff where appropriate. Within the system of support for quality development processes in practice and particularly given the growing complexity, professional advice takes on an increasingly important role which must be taken into account in a suitable manner. Preventive health care measures for ECEC staff are part of the care responsibilities of the providers vis-à-vis their employees.

5. Strengthening leadership

The implementation of the paedagogical concept, the ongoing development of the centre along the lines of a learning organisation, the guaranteeing of good cooperation within the team and the representation and opening of the centre towards the outside world are leadership tasks. The centre leaders play a key role in developing and ensuring the quality of the centre. Leadership positions are, therefore, to be assigned enough time for leadership tasks and are to be staffed with individuals who have completed the corresponding initial or continuing training, who continuously

keep abreast of current developments and requirements, and who obtain further qualifications in line with needs.

6. Room design

Rooms and facilities are the basis for paedagogical work. Stimulating, appealing and, if possible, barrier-free rooms and diverse, high-quality facilities accessible to children are the necessary preconditions for good education and care. At the same time, appropriate room facilities take into account the preconditions for cooperation with parents and social networking. This is a major prerequisite for the health of ECEC staff and a way of ensuring they can continue to pursue this occupation as they grow older.

7. Education, developmental support and health

Health promotion is to be anchored as a cross-sectional task in everyday paedagogical activities and is to be dovetailed with education mandates. A balanced diet, sufficient physical exercise and support for a healthy lifestyle are the main contributory factors to the well-being, cognitive, socio-emotional and motor development and learning success of children. As joint mealtimes in ECEC centres or family day care settings are already an everyday experience even for infants, there is a social obligation to ensure they are of a high standard. At the same time, eating and care situations are to be seen as important educational situations which should be shaped in a paedagogical manner

8. Quality development and assurance in family day care

Family day care is governed by the same education and upbringing mandate as ECEC centres. Particularly for children under the age of three, it offers services, alongside institutional care, which are of equal value in the eyes of the law. Family day care has requirements and framework conditions that differ from those of institutional child day care. What is needed above all here is further professionalisation and support, for instance in the areas of the advice infrastructure, paedagogical monitoring, professional-organisational integration and performance-based remuneration. Extending cooperation between family day care settings and ECEC centres is worthwhile and can help to put in place need-based provision.

9. Governance in the system.

The further development of quality is dependent on the respective stakeholders and responsible parties having at their disposal the necessary information and capacities for assessment and governance tasks from the local level up to international comparisons. This is about continuing to use and build on existing tools.

C. Ensuring the financing of child day care in Germany.

The quantitative and qualitative expansion of child day care will also require a high level of financing in future. The necessary funds must be made available to meet the requirements for early childhood education and to ensure a child day care segment that is on a par with the school and university sector and is commensurate with the economic location Germany. This encompasses both solid basic financing and targeted backing for special support needs.

High-quality early childhood education is without doubt a good investment from both the economic and the tax angle. The financial returns benefit all levels of government and all levels of government should, therefore, contribute in an appropriate manner to its funding. In this context the federal states want to see a greater and lasting commitment particularly from the federal government.

ECEC centres and family day care settings must fulfil the education mandate in addition to their care and upbringing mandate. Neither the plurality of the provision nor the uptake of the services may be impeded by financial obstacles.

D. Implementation

The ministers and senators of the federal states and the Federal Minister are highly committed to working towards delivering the goals in this Communiqué. Given the extremely heterogeneous situation in the federal states, there is a need for agreement on a step-by-step process over a longer period. This will be borne by the joint objective of all the stakeholders of ensuring an enduring and high level of quality in child day care thanks to joint quality standards and a solid financial basis.

(1) The implementation of the goals is done in a binding, step-by-step process with the involvement of municipal umbrella associations and in a dialogue with the associations and organisations responsible for child day care.

(2) The federal states and the federal government will continue to develop early childhood education at joint conferences held on a rota basis with the participation of the municipal umbrella associations. For the purposes of preparation representatives of the federal states, the federal government and the municipal umbrella associations will be appointed to a working party. The representatives of associations and organisations will be included in the dialogue in a suitable manner.

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(3) The federal states and the federal government will present a first initial interim report by the end of 2016 detailing the progress made in delivering the goals.

Manuela Schwesig
Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Irene Alt
Chair of the Youth and Family Ministers' Conference
Minister for Integration, Family Affairs, Children, Youth and Women of the Federal State
Rhineland-Palatinate

Positions of associations and organisations from the expert dialogue on the Communiqué and the quality development process of the federal government and federal states (Länder)

AWO Federal Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt)

The *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (Federal association for workers' welfare – AWO) welcomes the dialogue between the federal government, federal states and municipalities initiated by the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” with a view to considerably improving the quality of child day care. The AWO likewise stresses the need to continue support for the implementation of need-based ECEC provision. In this context the Federal Ministry specifies on its website, “The quantitative expansion of provision for children under the age of three has not yet been completed since the need for places in ECEC centres has not yet been met across Germany. For instance the proportion of parents who expressed a need for care was 43.2 percent in 2015”. Also the volume of full day care places available does not yet fully correspond to demand. At the same time, the right approach is indeed to now focus on quality after the expansion of ECEC centres and family day care.

The interim report, which is due to be published at the end of the year, gives the federal government and the federal states an opportunity to assess the nine aspects set out in the Communiqué for improving the quality of ECEC provision and to start rolling them out. In the opinion of AWO the following aspects are of key importance:

- Major improvement to the differentiated staff-child ratio in ECEC centres and in family day care settings
- Strengthening leadership as one of the key aspects of good quality
- The system of professional advice for ECEC centres and family day care
- Review of the funding of child day care.

At the present time the contribution of municipalities to public net expenditure on child day care is around 60 percent whereas the share of the federal states is just under 40 percent. Up to now the federal government has participated in the funding of child day care via the pro rata financing of the costs for the expansion of places for the under-three-year-olds. We now call for the permanent and secure financing of operating costs with contributions not only from the municipalities and federal states but also from the federal government.

The authors have formulated the yardstick for the success of the federal government/federal state dialogue themselves:

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“The responsibility of our society for our future is reflected in the quality of child day care. This responsibility manifests itself in qualitative requirements and financial commitments. The qualitative development must keep pace with the highly dynamic quantitative expansion and, at the same time, with the specialist requirements imposed by society.” The decisive factor for the success of this process is now that binding steps towards implementing qualitative improvements can be seen and felt in practice.

The term ‘interim report’ also indicates that the process has not yet been completed. We assume that this will be continued in a suitable form over the next few years. Aside from the process initiated by the Communiqué, the AWO together with the Gewerkschaft für Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Education and science workers’ unions – GEW) and the Deutscher Caritasverband (German Caritas Association – DCV) will continue to call for a Bundesqualitätsgesetz (Federal Quality Act). We are still of the opinion that this approach, which is based on a major assumption of responsibility by the federal government for the system of child day care and family day care, is the best option for the federal states, municipalities and children.

The AWO would like to express its thanks for the work undertaken up to now and declares its willingness to continue contributing to a joint dialogue.

Federal working group parents' initiatives – BAGE (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Elterninitiativen e. V.)

BAGE is a group of 29 contact centres, advice centres and federal state working groups for parent initiatives in Germany. It sees itself as representing the interests of this special provider form - parent initiatives.

This provider form has been established in Germany for almost 50 years and has more than 4,500 centres according to the federal statistics for 2015 (and a few more which are not recorded there, for instance in settings for school children). It has evolved and adapted to changing life and family realities. It has always thrived on the commitment of the families and stakeholders involved. Given its associative nature it can be described as a “living” democracy.

We have the following positions on the action areas in the above-mentioned Communiqué:

1. Need-based ECEC provision

Need-based provision is already specified in the Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII). The question of need should not just be oriented towards attendance hours but also towards, for instance, the accessibility and size of the centre. The manageable size

of the majority of parent initiatives (they normally have between 12 and 30 places) guarantees “this” satisfaction of families’ needs. Youth welfare planning should also keep these factors in mind – along with the parents’ right to choose (something that doesn’t happen everywhere in our experience). At first sight large centres may seem to be the more economically viable models but parent initiatives are no more expensive than larger centres because of the commitment by parents (assumption of administrative and janitor activities, cleaning, cooking, etc.). The high degree of identification by families with “their” centre fosters commitment. Smaller centres are also in the interests of children, parents and ECEC staff. They are very widespread in Germany – in 2015 43.4 percent of all ECEC centres had fewer than 50 places.

2. Contextual challenges

In recent years child day care has undergone major changes – provision for the under-three-year-olds has become standard and this means that childhood itself (particularly in western Germany) has also changed. In terms of content the child day care system in Germany faces the challenge, on the one hand, of underlining its social importance and of doing this with sufficient funding. On the other, it must defend child day care as a different and special educational venue, whose distinguishing feature is “random” play as opposed to economic considerations. Against this backdrop the harmonisation of standards in the federal states must be undertaken in a highly sensitive manner. The diverse provider landscape and federalism have also produced quality which must be maintained and developed further.

3. A good staff-child ratio

The staff-child ratio is the most important factor in structural quality. The huge differences between the federal states in terms of the staff-child ratio cannot be evened out in the short term. Without the financial participation of the federal government (which benefits greatly in terms of tax from child day care) many federal states and municipalities (particularly in eastern Germany) are overwhelmed when it comes to substantially increasing the very cost-intensive staff-child ratio. A reduction of the “good” ratio can no longer be defended from the professional angle.

In the medium term we believe that a substantial participation by the federal government in the funding of ECEC centres is essential. We also feel it makes sense for the federal states to document the use to which these funds are put. The partial steps towards improvements must be negotiated for each federal state and must be transparent for all stakeholders (including providers).

4. Qualified staff

The number of ECEC staff has increased rapidly in recent years. In larger cities de-

mand often exceeds supply and parent initiatives have felt this, too.

This means training has to be made more attractive, training capacities must be increased and, nationwide, the abolition of school fees in specialised technical colleges must be pushed through – which means 100 percent funding of private, specialised technical colleges. Overall thought must be given to whether the unremunerated school-based training, which is only to be found in social, education-related and health occupations, should be replaced by remunerated training integrated into practice. We also believe there is an urgent need for the further development of lateral entry – men in particular do not tend to opt for the profession of educator until they are older. The proportion of male ECEC staff in parent initiatives (10 percent) is twice as high as the figure recorded for Germany as a whole. The recognition of foreign qualifications and possible later qualification is dependent on adult-appropriate and remunerated qualification paths. There is, therefore, a basic need for improved support for the learning venue practice – the centres must be assigned resources, for example, for helping lateral entrants.

The constructive coexistence of universities and specialised technical colleges with paedagogical training courses should be encouraged and access to universities for individuals with prior paedagogical training should be made easier. The desired standard also includes more in-depth professional knowledge and specialisation at universities for educators with a qualification from a specialised technical college.

5. Strengthening leadership

Leadership tasks have to be tackled in all forms and sizes of centre. Parent initiatives must also perform these tasks – often they are done by the educator team and parents also take over some of these tasks. Leadership tasks must be better remunerated in general. There should be no specification of how they are to be assigned within the centre, this should be left to the competent centre.

6. Room design

As a rule, the goal should be high room standards. However, prudence should be shown in determining whether they make sense and whether there is a margin of discretion. Parent initiatives in particular are dependent on this. As they often use commercial premises, the issues of open spaces and the design of kitchens are often sticking points for new parent initiatives. Rising commercial rents in conurbations and cities increase the pressure. Specific concepts like, for instance, the widespread forest kindergartens are dependent on special and flexible framework conditions. Here, too, paedagogical considerations and the parents' right to choose should have priority over excessive safety requirements.

7. Education, developmental promotion and health

Here we are in favour of the establishment of self-catering kitchens as the standard in child day care centres (irrespective of their size). These kitchens facilitate the desirable participation of children in the planning and preparing of meals.

It should, therefore, be possible to define and design kitchens in child day care centres as open venues particularly for the children whilst complying with all the necessary safety measures. Kitchens in small centres like parent initiatives cannot meet professional catering standards (or the related financial requirements).

9. Governance in the system

As described above there is a highly diverse landscape of child day care which has grown historically. As a rule systems have their own dynamic – they are not easily accessible. Across Germany there must be trust in the structures on site, and in the competences of the educators, parents, centres and administration. The support system of professional advice takes on major importance here. Specialist advice acts as an interface between the child day care centres and scientific, policy and administrative circles. As parents organise child day care centres under their own responsibility, the provision of advice to parent initiatives also encompasses, to a large degree, advice on organisation and provider. Overall, professional advice must be extended and given secure financial backing. For parent initiatives the right to professional advice must be recognised and funded throughout Germany.

Nationwide standardisation in the area of ECEC centres should, in principle, be limited to core aspects and leave room for manoeuvre.

An appropriate and flexible assessment of the work of ECEC centres should not be understood as a measurement and comparison criterion but as a support and an instrument for further development. The special provider forms must be taken into account. BAGE has, for instance, issued its own “Framework concept on the special quality of parent initiatives”.

ECEC centres do not need any ranking but rather an assessment which demonstrates an appreciation of their work and shows them their development potential. Hence we are not in favour of a quality label for ECEC centres.

Quality in ECEC centres is generated not by red tape but is encouraged through good supportive framework conditions – which must be financed in a solid and permanent manner by society as a whole.

Confederation of German employers' associations – BDA (Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände)

Empirical studies like PISA und “Education at a Glance” of the OECD demonstrate that the success of the entire education system very much depends on the quality of early childhood education. Consequently, it is important for children to experience education, to learn in a targeted manner and to enjoy systematic encouragement as soon as possible. There is a need for a further expansion of early childhood education.

Expanding early childhood education as the first stage of the education system

ECEC centres for children are to be understood as part of the education system and must, therefore, be expanded into real educational institutions. The education and upbringing plans support this. There is a need for binding and assessable standards for the learning processes and learning goals. The culture ministers are called on to agree joint education standards and implement them in their federal states. Child-appropriate, explorative learning taps into and systematically promotes children's natural curiosity. Age-appropriate learning and playing are interactive processes.

Individual support from the outset

All children – particularly children from educationally deprived households – should be given support as early as possible and should, therefore, attend an ECEC centre. Targeted and systematic individual support is the key to overcoming initial disadvantages and ensuring that all children have, if possible, a good start to their education and, by extension, to their life path. The main components of early childhood education are the promotion of language ability, skill in dealing with numbers, sizes and dimensions, the first experience of natural and technical phenomena, the development of gross and fine motor skills, exposure to music and art, movement and health, strengthening independence and social skills and the child's experience of being a learning individual. A portfolio can document the child's development and this can be continued at school. Parents are to be actively involved in developing and fostering this education because sustainable results can only be achieved together with the families.

Extending infrastructure, setting priorities

The earlier resources are introduced into the education system, the more effective they are. Instead of increasing child benefits and child allowances or care allowances, i.e. individual payments, there should be investment in education and care facilities and a steering of funding flows into infrastructure.

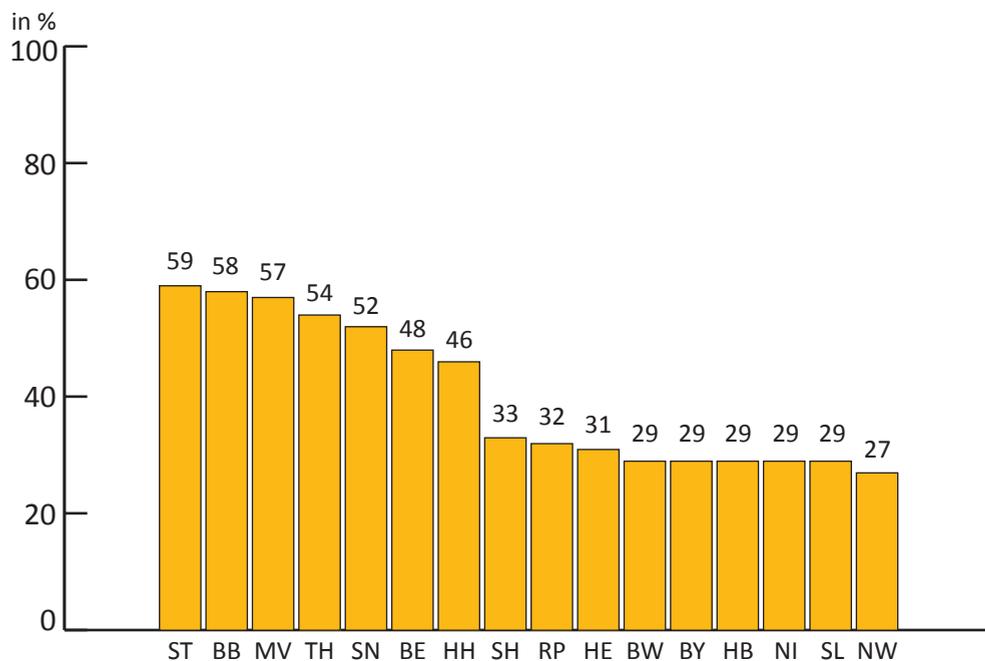
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Further improvements to the care situation are needed

Around 700,000 state funded places in ECEC centres and family day care settings are available for the 2 million children under the age of three. The German Youth Institute has recorded a need for 42 percent of children in this age group. This means there is a shortfall of approximately 150,000 places around Germany. In particular the federal states in western Germany have a lot of catching up to do when it comes to expanding care for the under-three-year-olds. Nine out of ten federal states are below the federal average, only Hamburg fares much better. In the new federal states the situation looks better: 55 percent of one- to three-year-olds go to an ECEC centre. There is, therefore, a need for further efforts by the federal states and municipalities to ensure that employees who are looking for a place for an under-three-year-old will indeed find one. If the savings in terms of care allowances of the federal government were to be channelled into expanding ECEC centres, this would release EUR 900 million for investment in quality or in an additional 26,000 ECEC staff positions.

Care quotas in the federal states vary considerably

Cared for children as a percent of all children under the age of three (in state-funded ECEC centres and with child minders)



Source: IW Köln 2015

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The resource freed up by the dwindling numbers of children (“demographic returns”) must be invested above all in early childhood education. The extension of early childhood support has priority particularly in socially disadvantaged areas.

Attracting and keeping ECEC staff

The ongoing quantitative and qualitative expansion of ECEC centres is dependent on more qualified staff for early pedagogics. Assessment and remuneration must be in line with the stiffer requirements of this activity.

The realignment of ECEC centres as educational centres is dependent on the corresponding training of ECEC staff in the child day care centres. The new qualification profile encompasses the necessary competences for the occupational profile and must be rapidly implemented. This applies to a scientifically based, practical university course of study for centre leaders and to high-quality training in specialised technical colleges for ECEC staff whose graduates are eligible for higher education. High-quality continuing training schemes are equally important. Assessment and remuneration of work must be in line with the increased requirements of the activity.

For further, also qualitative expansion, more ECEC staff for early pedagogics are needed than are available. The Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (Confederation of German employers’ associations – BDA), therefore, recommends short-term effective measures like, for instance, the return to work by ECEC staff after a family break, recognising foreign qualifications of ECEC staff, attracting individuals from similar occupational groups and sourcing staff abroad. Furthermore, medium and long term measures are needed like remunerated, practice-integrated training and retraining of people swapping occupations and part-time training schemes. The ECEC centre providers are called on to integrate staff through an induction phase, to keep staff by offering development measures and, where appropriate, to add new positions.

Initiatives of the BDA

- German employers’ prize for education in cooperation with Telekom and Deutsche Bahn (German railways): Award for outstanding educational work in pre-school and other educational centres facilities
- Cooperation partner in the federal government programme “KitaPlus – Weil gute Betreuung keine Frage der Uhrzeit ist” (ECEC centre plus – because good care is not a question of the time of day)
- Cooperation partner in the corporate programme “Erfolgsfaktor Familie” (Success factor family)

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Publications

Investitionen in frühe Bildung lohnen sich

Declaration by BDA, DGB, Deutscher Städtetag, Bundesfamilienministerium, inter alia, November 2015

Familie und Arbeitswelt – Die NEUE Vereinbarkeit

Memorandum mit dem Bundesfamilienministerium, inter alia, September 2015

Mehr qualifizierte pädagogische Fachkräfte für die Kitas

Position paper, May 2014

Bildung inklusiv. Potenziale entfalten durch Inklusion

Position paper, January 2014

kompakt:

Family policy

Federal Association of Protestant Day Care Centres for Children – BETA (Bundesvereinigung Evangelischer Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder e. V.)

For BETA quality development in ECEC centres is one of the key challenges. After the major quantitative expansion, particularly for infant care, quality questions are undoubtedly on the agenda. There are federal states in which the differentiated staff-child ratio urgently needs to be improved, elsewhere non-contact time is lacking. The topic, time regulation for centre leaders, is still a major building site for many federal states. A Federal Quality Act would possibly lead to a levelling of quality standards throughout the federal states – with the risk of a standstill or lowering of quality in federal states that have already achieved high standards. BETA is very much in favour of quality improvements. Given the different starting situations in the federal states we believe it would, however, be better if the need for action were to be addressed there. Even if – and this is the conclusion of the expert report by Professor Wieland from the *Universität für Verwaltungsrecht Speyer* (German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer) – a Federal Quality Act is legally feasible, the question remains about how it is to be funded. Federal and municipal responsibility structures should not be taken over by the federal legislature.

BETA was already intensively involved from 2014 in the dialogue workshops in which experts from the sciences, associations and political circles discussed the opportunities and risks of a Federal Quality Act. It became very clear that we will have to adjust several key

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factors in order to advance quality throughout Germany. The work process between the federal government and the federal states is an opportunity to lay down benchmarks for quality improvements in the interim report. The individual federal states can then work towards achieving them. However it is not enough to formulate new standards, the bases for funding must be clarified, too.

Here there are clear expectations that the federal government should support the federal states when it comes to raising individual quality standards.

The overall conclusion in our opinion on the interim report of the federal government/federal-state working group on the Communiqué is that it is absolutely essential for new funds to be channelled into the child day care system. It would be completely unacceptable for new standards and requirements to be formulated without clarifying with the providers how they are to be funded. We believe that a step-by-step plan which extends into the next legislative period must also be coupled with binding rules on funding. The conditions for good quality are very well known thanks to various studies. Depending on how urgent the need for action is in the federal states, they can be implemented in the course of the further work process.

When we improve the conditions for pedagogical quality, we improve at the same time the working conditions of ECEC staff – smaller groups, higher staff-child ratios and time set aside for leadership tasks. But it is equally clear that the topic “quality assurance and quality development” cannot be reduced to a description of standards in structural quality. Our protestant quality label BETA attaches major importance to the quality of core pedagogical processes from the familiarisation of children over religious education up to cooperation with parents. It's all about welcoming children and ensuring that children feel secure in our centres, enabling them to develop their talents, and about parents experiencing the ECEC centre as valuable support in their lives with their children.

Federal parents' council of children in ECEC centres and family day care settings – BEVKi (Bundeselternvertretung der Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege)

The *Bundeselternvertretung der Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege* (Federal parents' council of children in ECEC centres and family day care settings - BEVKi) welcomes the efforts of the Federal Family Ministry and the participating federal states to agree on what a good ECEC centre is. Following the expansion – which was decided at the summit for the under-three-year-olds in 2007 and had progressed mainly thanks to federal

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funding and the legal right to a place in an ECEC centre from age one which entered into force in 2013 – there is now a need for joint efforts to improve the quality of ECEC centres. ECEC centres have undergone further development everywhere but parents' experiences of ECEC centres are very different.

Quality assurance

This is because quality in ECEC centres and family child care settings varies markedly. In the one federal state the staff-child care ratio is good, in another quality development is more binding. In one federal state the fees are low, in another they have already been abolished. In one region parental participation is specified by law, in another it is voluntary. BEVKi wants to help raise the quality in ECEC centres and in family day care settings to a high level throughout Germany and keep it there. To this end the federal government, federal states, municipalities and associations should jointly come up with a description of what the ECEC centres and family day care settings should look like in the future. Along the way there will be a need for a binding agreement. Quality costs money. It requires financial support on all levels in order to equip early childhood education in such a way that it will live up to its reputation.

The federal government, federal states and municipalities should agree on the financing steps. BEVKi is of the opinion that, similar to the funding of the expansion of ECEC centres in recent years, a special fund should be set up enabling the federal government to provide financial support for improvements to quality. But unlike the situation with the expansion of ECEC centres, the federal states should also agree on binding financing pathways and set up a special fund. Improvements to quality in ECEC centres and in family day care settings should, in our opinion, be financed as a community task with roughly one-third of funding from the federal government, one-third from the federal states and one-third from the municipalities.

What should qualitative expansion entail? From the parents' angle this must primarily be about fundamental improvements to the staff-child ratio in ECEC centres and family day care settings in order to free up more time for each child. But it must also be about improving indirect paedagogical work (non-contact time) for ECEC staff. This will largely determine how the education partnership will be experienced by ECEC staff and parents and how much paedagogical quality can be secured for our children through good preparations.

From the parents' angle the legal right to a place in an ECEC centre should be formalised into a legal right to full day care. The closing times of centres should be laid down with due consideration of family and work, and parental input.

In addition, we suggest setting up a Federal Institute for Quality Development in ECEC Centres to support qualified staff in ECEC centres and in family day care settings, and to take

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into account the existing efforts of the federal states. In this context they will be shown how to conduct annual internal assessments and how to identify development potential by means of an external assessment every five years. The assessment of ECEC centres and family day care settings should be subject to binding regulations. Parents are also to be informed about the results of the assessment. Federal states that would like to obtain financial resources from the special fund will first have to sign a quality agreement which obliges them to take concrete steps towards putting in place the jointly described qualitative ECEC centre. The quality development process should be professionally assessed and steered by a permanent working group.

Parents know best how good an ECEC centre is. They are the ones who go in and out every day - alongside the children and ECEC staff. However parents are sometimes hesitant about saying anything for fear of causing problems for their child or of losing their children's place. Parents should, therefore, be freed from this predicament of being the contractual partner and the "controller".

The solution is a neutral arbitration body based on the Dutch example which is the central contact point for information, questions and complaints. It should be the place to go for information about the legal specificities of the individual federal states. Thanks to its knowledge of regional contacts this body will be able to assist parents.

If certain problems cannot be resolved through discussion, then this body can, on the basis of its statutory remit, also take decisions in procedures based on arbitration rules.

We call for the launch of a class action to protect statutory quality in all ECEC centres and in family day care settings. Up to now, neither children nor parents could effectively pursue systematic violations of quality provisions seeking to protect children in early childhood education by taking legal action. We want to strengthen children. Just like in consumer protection, environmental protection and, in the meantime, also in animal welfare, we want to establish genuine active legal protection of children by introducing the option of a class action.

A high-quality ECEC centre has not only sufficient but also very well trained staff. The ECEC staff ensure that the best early education and care are guaranteed. Additional ECEC staff in child day care centres and in family day care settings (trainees, people doing their federal voluntary service, assistants) can be called on for additional support but must not replace ECEC staff nor should they be included in calculations of the staff-child ratio.

However, the supply of ECEC staff in the federal states varies and has come under pressure due to the shortage of qualified staff. The federal states should not, however, enter into competition for the remaining ECEC staff but should launch a joint initiative to attract ECEC

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staff and encourage them to stay on in the early childhood education facilities.

Educator training should be of a high quality and standardised. The length of training as an educator and how the practical part of training is shaped very much depends on where the educator does his/her training. As a rule no remuneration is paid during training. In order to increase the attractiveness of this occupation for young people, a training allowance should be introduced and remuneration for the later pursuit of this occupation improved. At all events training should be free of charge.

The setting out of the basic conditions for up-to-date and good training conditions throughout the Federal Republic is essential. Furthermore, BEVKi recommends the introduction of a training place levy oriented towards the number of paedagogical staff employed.

To ensure that educators can pursue their occupation up to retirement, the health and prevention programmes must be considerably expanded and improved. Career advancement and further qualification must be strengthened, thereby increasing the attractiveness of staying on in this occupational area. In addition to the educator training, there must be qualified centre leader training which is offered above all as continuing training.

Parents should not have to pay anything for a good ECEC centre.

What parents pay for a place for their child in an ECEC centre or family day care setting very much depends on where they live. Even within one federal state the parental contribution varies enormously. Houses may be just a few metres apart but this contribution may differ by EUR 500. Contributions may vary by as much as several hundred euros not only between federal states but differ also from municipality to municipality in one and the same federal state. We parents want fees for ECEC centres to be abolished everywhere.

A stop should also be put to parents having to cover hidden costs. Parents are being asked to provide materials more and more frequently. What started as a request for nappies has now been extended today to bread money, breakfast subsidy, sun cream and winter cream, toothpaste and toothbrushes, craft contribution, group cash fund, contributions for excursions and daily fruit donations. Just like parental fees, the hidden costs must also be abolished. Education must be free of charge from the ECEC centre up to university. Every price increase, every rent increase, every increase in energy costs leads in many places to an increase in fees. The spiral of mounting fees must be halted.

Playing the quality characteristics of ECEC centres and family day care settings against the charging of no fees can no longer be accepted by parents. We need good ECEC centres for everyone. Society benefits.

Federal Association for Family Day Care (Bundesverband für Kindertagespflege)

From the angle of family day care the quality process, the related discussions and the developments have gone well. A summary is given below again of the key criteria in a few action areas for ensuring and developing quality in family day care.

Action area 1: Need-based ECEC provision

To ensure need-based ECEC provision there must be a sufficient number of places available in family day care outside the opening hours of ECEC centres, too. To achieve this, the corresponding framework conditions must be in place and incentives must be created for child minders. For children whose parents need unfavourable care hours because of their occupational activities, family day care should be provided for all age groups, not just in addition to ECEC centres.

According to section 22 Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII) family day care has the same education, upbringing and care mandate for all children. A child's legal right to developmental support up to its third birthday is to be implemented from 1 August 2013 on the same scale in ECEC centres and in family day care settings. For children over the age of three and of school-age, family day care is unfortunately still only envisaged in addition to institutional child day care or when "there is a special need". Parents do not have the right to choose whether they would like their child to be looked after in a family day care setting or in an ECEC centre. Against the backdrop that family day care has the same mandate and that one-third of child minders are ECEC staff, this has to change.

Action area 2: Contextual challenges

Inclusion, i.e. the care and support of each child in line with its needs, is an approach which is self-evident in family day care. This already results from the starting situation that the children generally arrive in family day care when they are very young and often it is too early to identify any special developmental needs. Children with a handicap, an illness or special developmental needs as well as children from disadvantaged families, in particular families with a refugee background and children from other cultures, are given optimum support and care in the small groups to be found in family day care. For this child minders need suitable qualification programmes and intensive monitoring, advice and supervision by means of sufficient and correspondingly competent professional advice. These special care services should be remunerated separately.

Action area 3: A good staff-child ratio

The filling of approved places should be undertaken carefully when it comes to implementing the relevant and EU-wide recommendations for age-appropriate staff-child ratios. Ac-

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According to section 23 Social Code Book VIII remuneration is to be performance-based. It already states there that when it comes to remuneration the number and the support needs of the children are to be taken into account.

Action area 4: Qualified staff

Training to become a child minder encompassing 160 hours of instruction is now seen as the standard. Nonetheless, it has not yet been implemented in all federal states. The introduction of the Kompetenzorientiertes Qualifizierungshandbuch Kindertagespflege (Competence-Oriented Qualification Manual Family Day Care - QHB) specifying 300 hours of instruction is very much welcomed by the Federal Association for Family Day Care. The implementation of the QHB was monitored in a project funded by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFG). Furthermore, family day care is to be introduced as a topic and occupational field in the all-round paedagogical training courses.

The Federal Association for Family Day Care is of the opinion that not only the qualification level of staff but also that of professional advice should be addressed in this action area. Here it is important to develop and offer professional initial and further training curricula for professional advisers. In addition to this qualitative aspect of development it is necessary to implement an appropriate staff-child ratio and make sufficient resources available for professional advice.

Action area 6: Room design

To comply with the education and support mandate in family day care, public youth welfare agencies are to supply the furnishings and equipment for family day care settings or finance their procurement.

Action area 7: Education, developmental support and health

In order to comply with the education and support mandate, child minders implement the educational plans of the federal states. The preconditions for this are firstly the formulation of education principles for the youngest children and for family day care, and adequate, free-of-charge qualification programmes for child minders. Corresponding time budgets or additional funds should be made available for the additional activities which are necessary to implement the education plans,

The child minder is responsible for children's nutrition in a family day care setting. He/she should be familiar with the basic principles of healthy nutrition and comply with them. In order to guarantee this, further training and information courses on healthy nutrition for children are necessary. They should be provided free of charge. The lump-sum material costs should be measured in such a way that it is possible for children to have a healthy and balanced diet in family day care. A nationwide guidance value should be established

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as the standard for healthy nutrition and the costs should be calculated. They should, of course, be taken over by the public youth welfare agencies. The stakeholders in the field (child minders, professional advice, supervisory bodies) should be familiar with and apply the guidelines for good food hygiene practice in family day care.

Action area 8: Quality development and assurance in family day care

For more than 40 years – since the first pilot project “Child minders” in 1974 – family day care has been an area of activity that has attracted the attention of policymakers and the expert community. Its education, upbringing and care mandate and the promotion of children are on a par with that of the ECEC centre. However, this occupational activity has still not been recognised as an occupational profile and the specific profile has not yet been described in sufficient detail. The development of a recognised occupational profile is long overdue in the opinion of the Federal Association for Family Day Care. Furthermore, ways must be found of opening up access to paedagogical training occupations. The introduction of the Competence-Oriented Qualification Manual Family Day Care (QHB) could be a first step in this direction.

Professional advice is a decisive contributory factor to quality assurance and development in family day care. This is sufficiently well known and scientifically substantiated. To do justice to this and to meet the legal entitlement to advice on all questions of family day care for child minders and also for parents, quantitative and also qualitative resources are to be made available and tailored to clients’ needs.

Since 2005 the concept of the “performance-based recognition of support services”, bearing in mind timeframe, number of children and their support needs, has been specified in section 23 Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII). More than 10 years later this concept has still not been implemented across Germany. A definition has yet to be given of what “performance-based” actually means. In the same way the concept “recognition of support services” still does not indicate what a service within the meaning of Social Code Book VIII should really entail. The term “remuneration” would be more appropriate and clearer in this context.

Family day care provides 15 percent of places, a by no means insignificant share of child day care in Germany. The overall system of child day care could cater more effectively and more harmoniously for the needs of families and fulfil the education mandate if cooperation between ECEC centres and family day care settings were to be improved. This is even already formulated in Social Code Book VIII. All stakeholders could then enjoy major advantages.

Section 43 Social Code Book VIII already specifies that a licence must be renewed after five years to ensure paedagogical quality. This should be supplemented by the introduction of a quality assessment procedure (“quality label”) as is already the case in the ECEC centres.

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To ensure the quality of education providers which offer basic training, the “quality label for education providers”, that has already been introduced in 12 federal states as part of the action programme family day care, should be maintained and the nationwide standards should be continued, too.

A consensus decision of the KMK/JFMK should be obtained for the introduction of a quality label for paedagogical quality in family day care and a quality label for education providers.

Committee “Early Care and Children’s Health” of the German Academy for Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine – DAKJ (Kommission “Frühe Betreuung und Kindergesundheit” Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendmedizin)

The Committee would like to express its thanks for this opportunity to input its views and expertise as recommendations in this Communiqué. In this respect it follows its guiding principle of “seeing things from the child's perspective”, i.e. placing the child’s development and health requirements centre stage. This by no means disregards the fact that a child’s family of origin still has the greatest impact on its development, health, values and prospects. As children are starting institutional care earlier and for longer periods, this leads to a new challenge and special responsibility. The options of preventive health and social care, in terms of health and development, are on the increase. Partnership-based communities of responsibility can be encouraged early on between educators and child minders, parents and support systems of all kinds. Thanks to access and the (multi)professional stance there is an opportunity to offer families support tailored to their needs and, where appropriate, to avoid overburdening parents. ECEC centres and care settings can, at the same time, take on important functions when it comes to identifying risk families, charting a course – for instance by sourcing early assistance.

Action area 2: Contextual challenges

Tap into existing expertise with an evidence base

The curriculum of the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Federal Centre for Health Education – BZgA) “Growing up healthily in the ECEC centre – strengthening cooperation with parents” evolved against the backdrop of the reflections set out in the preamble. The Committee would explicitly like to input the framework recommendations contained in this basic document.

The same applies to the curriculum for health promotion for children under the age of three in day care which was prepared with the decisive contribution of Professor Koletzko (committee member).

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For contextual recommendations on nutrition and food for children, the current recommendations of the Forschungsinstitut für Kinderernährung (Research Institute of Child Nutrition – FKE) should be referred to. They are scientifically based, but at the same time practical and undogmatic and aim to achieve an optimised mixed diet.

Improve the data situation on inclusion needs

Descriptive statistics only are available on children with special needs. They support the definition from the classification in Social Code Books VIII and XII. However there is no sufficient outline of which health needs and care inputs exist in individual cases and overall. In order to better depict the contextual challenges of inclusion, a more in-depth glance makes sense and is possible. As the integration aid agencies mainly undertake their social law classification on the basis of medical ICD 10, DSM-IV or ICF diagnoses, they could be taken over, with a reasonable amount of effort, into the official Child and Youth Services Statistics and presented in the federal state report.

Draw on the special opportunities of multi-professional teams

From the socio-paediatric angle, pursuing a multi-professional approach to the complex health and development needs of children has been shown to be both in line with needs and offer advantages. Drawing on the positive experiences with multi-professional teams in ECEC centres in Baden-Württemberg, the Committee is in favour of extending this model. The inclusion of the expertise of a health officer, paediatric nurse or carer might be beneficial in many inclusion-based constellations.

Action area 6: Room design

The highest level of child safety is to be guaranteed in the ECEC centre and family day care setting. The benchmark should be the recommendations of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Mehr Sicherheit für Kinder e. V. (Federal working group more safety for children). They should be familiar on a wide scale and taken into account when designing indoor and outdoor areas. In the Committee's opinion the certification of facilities by this working group as "ECEC centres: Safe for children", similar to what is done for children's clinics, would make sense. This initiative might perhaps attract the support of the providers of statutory accident insurance.

Action area 7: Education, developmental support and health

Use the opportunities of the Prevention Act

Care institutions today can have a particularly timely and lasting impact on health opportunities, on prevention orientation and on training in health-promoting behaviour. Given their core position they must assume a special responsibility. With regard to the setting of

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early institutional care, the Committee subscribes to one of the guiding principles of the Präventionsgesetz (Prevention Act) that stresses the relevance of preventive measures and aid for a life setting. It places its hopes in the prospects of financial support as, in future, prevention is to receive annual funding of EUR 7 per insured party in the settings ECEC centre, school and company. The Committee offers ECEC centres and family day care settings support in the shape of need-based investments with, as far as possible, a broad and sustainable impact.

Identify risks and resources

Based on the possibility of early access, the early identification of individual development and health risks by means of trained, systematic observation and screenings should definitely be used and carried forward. Here, if desired, the Committee could provide professional socio-paediatric support. But individual talents, resources and resilience factors can also be identified and used to benefit the setting context.

Action area 8: Quality development and assurance in family day care

Increase the number of male ECEC staff

In the opinion of the Committee there is an urgent need to increase the number of male ECEC staff. This should be encouraged by effective incentives like performance-based remuneration, i.e. appropriate bonuses and social standing. Female-dominated paedagogics, particularly in early childhood development phases, are no longer appropriate given the diversity and complexity of family scenarios and lifestyles today. The vast majority of single parents are mothers which means that their male offspring often lack the corresponding role models and support when it comes to tackling gender-specific developmental tasks. This also increases the likelihood that these male children will adopt stereotypical, less differentiated behavioural patterns, early on.

Drive research and look for (new) partnerships here as well

The inadequate study situation with regard to framework conditions in Germany is unfortunate: knowledge about the links between early care (quality) and the development- and health-related outcomes of the children in care is not sufficient. Scientific investigations, designed as longitudinal cohort studies, should accompany the quality development and the results should be taken over into the concepts.

As overlaps of epistemic interest can be assumed, strategic partnerships for epidemiological research initiatives, like for instance in the KiGGS studies of the Robert Koch Institute, the federal state health reports and the evaluations of the Nationales Zentrum Frühe Hilfen (National Centre for Early Prevention) could generate synergistic and enhancing effects.

German Civil Service Federation (dbb beamtenbund und tarifunion)

First of all we would like to ask for your understanding that the *dbb*, in its capacity as the umbrella trade union, focuses here on the staffing aspects of the action areas.

In conjunction with the action area “Need-based ECEC provision” we welcome the support for viable concepts for need-based attendance hours that was introduced with the new federal programme “KiTa Plus” (ECEC centre plus) at the beginning of the year. The federal programme is scheduled to run for three years. The attendance hours can be extended through longer opening hours, the provision of care during the night, at the weekend and on public holidays if there is a need on site. The federal programme finances the costs for additional staff or equipment which are needed to extend the opening hours.

However it is not yet clear what will happen when the three-year support period comes to an end. What must be avoided, in the opinion of *dbb*, is a lowering of the staff-child ratio and the extended care hours being left in place. Even after the end of the project the pre-conditions and standards laid down in the programme must be maintained.

dbb explicitly welcomes the fact that, in the action area “good staff-child ratio” in the federal government/federal states Communiqué, it states that efforts are to be made to establish secure foundations nationwide with good staffing conditions. In recent years the framework conditions for ECEC centres have steadily worsened. As a consequence of the enforcement of the legal right to a place from the first year of life, “overcrowding” places were provided in some municipalities when this Act was introduced, should parents assert their right before a court of law. The ECEC centres had and often still have to accommodate these overcrowding places without any additional ECEC staff hours. The influx of refugees will lead to further overcrowding as there were not enough ECEC places even before the arrival of the refugee children.

Against this backdrop *dbb* is of the opinion that the introduction of a nationwide valid child-appropriate care ratio is necessary to ensure that, in contrast to the situation today, early education across all federal states is possible under comparable conditions and does not just involve mere care.

The Communiqué underlines the key role of staff in the action area “qualified staff”. From this *dbb* derives the demand to raise the standing of the occupational profile “educator”. This includes appropriate remuneration in line with comparable pedagogical occupations and more attractive framework conditions by offering, for example, permanent employment contracts, further and continuing training, sufficient staff capacities and a health-promoting work environment.

If efforts are to be made to counter the shortage of ECEC staff, then raising the standing of the occupational profile is just as essential as a health-promoting work environment and fostering all ECEC employees' ability to work.

The aspects of paedagogical action and the health of ECEC staff touched on in the action area "room design", are of central importance. dbb is concerned that the situation is continuing to worsen and that the goals set out in this connection in the Communiqué are receding into the distant future. Overcrowding for various reasons leads to the space situation in ECEC centres becoming increasingly constrained. Space is needed not just for the children and their educators during care periods. There must also be sufficient space for staff, for instance, to enjoy an undisturbed break.

German Red Cross – DRK (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz)

Already in 2014 the *Deutsches Rotes Kreuz* (German Red Cross – DRK) called, amongst other things, in its "Position paper on quality in child day care"¹ for the federal states to reach agreement on joint, nationwide quality benchmarks and a common understanding of quality. Hence, DRK explicitly welcomes the federal government/federal state initiative "Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education". DRK's core demands have been taken up in this initiative. They include, amongst other things, improvements in staffing, also in terms of staff for professional advice activities and qualification opportunities for ECEC centre leaders. As a follow-up to previous cooperation in the expert dialogue on the federal government/federal state working party, we would like to set out the main points of the further qualitative development of the child day care system.

Children are independent individuals with inalienable rights and a claim to co-determination. The agreements and implementation plans jointly adopted by the federal government and the federal states should be examined by all stakeholders in terms of their impact on children's well-being.

ECEC centres offer a growing number of children in Germany a place to experience, learn and try out things in addition to the family environment. In the DRK's 1,446 ECEC centres more than 103,000 children are currently looked after by just under 16,000 ECEC staff. In their work they help children to feel at ease and tap into their curiosity to develop their own image of the world.

Bonds and relationships are dependent on a reliable inner circle, in child day care too. In particular children with a difficult prior history need adults who give them their unconditional support, see them first and foremost as children and show esteem for what they have

¹ DRK Generalsekretariat e. V., Positionspapier Qualität in Kindertageseinrichtungen, Berlin 2014

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achieved. On the basis of reliable relationships children have an opportunity to correct their bonding experiences. The precondition for this are ECEC staff who can take time with the individual children and cooperate with parents, the experts on their children. Consequently, staff allocation oriented towards children's well-being must be the medium-term goal in all federal states. DRK welcomes that the fact that the federal government/federal state working party has focussed extensive attention on this topic and has taken over the results into the report. Highly qualified ECEC staff give children the security and space for exploration. Given the diverse requirements in the field of early childhood education and development, ongoing reflections on paedagogical work are essential. The instruments and tools for this should already be identified during training and in cooperation with the learning venue, the ECEC centre.

All children have a right to inclusive education, upbringing and care. No matter where they live, they are entitled to equally good framework conditions. Interdisciplinary cooperation in multi-professional teams is the prerequisite for all children being able to assert their right to child day care in line with their individual needs. Work in (multi-professional) teams is dependent on the competent observation of paedagogical work and its further development and on good management, staff management and staff development. The leaders of ECEC centres must be qualified for this and have sufficient assigned time for these activities. As the leadership of ECEC centres is an increasingly complex area of action, DRK is of the opinion that there must be least a 0.5 full-time position set aside for leadership activities only. In larger centres, from 10 staff members upwards, a full-time centre leader should be able to devote his/her entire working time to this activity.

Given that this system is constantly evolving, there is a need for professional advice and support for the system, particularly of centre leaders. Professional or practical advice accomplishes this task, and fosters the quality development of the centres and providers. For the qualitative development of the child day care system, it is necessary and makes sense to define professional and practical advice in federal government and federal state laws, to anchor this in legislation and to provide the corresponding financing.

Children live and learn holistically, using all their senses and their entire bodies. Care, indoor areas and outdoor areas in child day care must take this into account. In everyday life in child day care, children experience models for dealing with health, in addition to the life environment of the family. The ECEC centres create a setting that promotes healthy developments. In the ECEC centre as a "venue for healthy growing up", protective factors can be enhanced and risk factors remedied. In an ECEC centre health promotion, therefore, means creating spaces which promote children's independent activity and self-learning processes. Spaces of this nature correspond to the children's needs by, amongst other things, facilitat-

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ing movement and rest, promoting communication and encounters, encouraging research and experimentation, inviting children to enjoy aesthetic and physical experiences, to look after themselves and, last but not least, to engage in pleasurable eating. Pedagogical work also includes close examination of the origins and creation of food. Healthy and sustainably responsible handling of food can, with the right equipment, be demonstrated in child day care in addition to what the families do themselves. The trend towards the external outsourcing of food preparation for cost reasons should be re-examined in the opinion of DRK.

Paying attention to children's well-being also means noticing when they need our special protection. Children with a difficult prior history are dependent on ECEC staff who know what they're doing, who offer them a safe place and stand by them. Consequently, centre providers, centre leaders and ECEC staff in child day care centres also bear responsibility for developing protective concepts for their centres and inviting children to participate in shaping them.

These quality benchmarks require discussion about funding of the child day care system. The precondition for this is finding financing models which look at all relevant stakeholders and ensure appropriate funding. Equal opportunities for children in Germany means reaching agreement on common nationwide comparable standards. DRK, therefore, welcomes the interim report of the federal government/federal state working party "Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education" as a milestone on this path.

Union of Teaching and Scientific Workers – GEW (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft)

The *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft* (Union of Teaching and Scientific Workers – GEW) explicitly welcomes the fact that the Communiqué "Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education" has triggered a serious dialogue between the federal government, federal states, municipalities and experts with a view to markedly improving quality in child day care centres and family day care settings. In the opinion of GEW, the basic idea, after the expansion of ECEC centres and family day care settings, of now focussing on quality will be pursued as a constructive process after the meeting of the federal government/federal state committee, and will include experts on ECEC centres and family day care settings.

The interim report, which is now to be prepared, gives the federal government and the federal states an opportunity to assess the nine aspects described in the Communiqué and to start putting them into practice.

GEW believes that an interim report should include the prioritising of the most diverse aspects. For daily practice it is extremely important to make tangible improvements to the staff-child ratio as none of the federal states complies with the scientifically backed ratios.

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Strengthening leadership is a core aspect in terms of quality.

We believe that system governance is another aspect that needs regulating. Here, in particular, a new binding distribution mechanism in the financial architecture must be put in place between the federal government/federal states and municipalities to allow systematic qualitative improvements to the ECEC centres and family day care settings.

Another aspect that must be borne in mind is considerably strengthening the system of professional advice both for the ECEC centres and family day care settings.

The challenges facing ECEC centres and family day care at the present time cannot be tackled in an optimal manner under the existing framework conditions.

The four aspects touched on by GEW reflect the expectation of practice vis-à-vis policymakers. The expert reports drawn up for the federal government/federal state dialogue point in this direction, too.

The interim report should first concentrate on these points, submit a timeframe for their implementation and focus on the question of governance in the system (funding).

“The responsibility of our society for our future is reflected in the quality of child day care. This responsibility is expressed in quality requirements and financial commitments. It is imperative that qualitative development keep pace with the highly dynamic quantitative extension which has been ongoing for many years and, at the same time, with the technical requirements imposed by society. The Youth and Family Ministers' Conference and the Federal Minister, therefore, believe there is a need for action.” This core sentence from the Communiqué (p. 3) must now be put into practice. The minute improvements in a few federal states in recent years in order to enhance the quality of child day care have largely gone unnoticed in the centres.

GEW explicitly points out the need for increased funding from the federal government. As agreed in the EU Member States, from 2013 one percent of gross domestic product is to be channelled into early childhood education. According to all the calculations the Federal Republic of Germany is below this agreed level.

Aside from the process triggered by the Communiqué, GEW, together with AWO and DCV, will continue to work on a Federal Quality Act. We are still of the opinion that this approach of clearly integrating the federal government into responsibility for the system of child day care and family day care is the best option for the federal states, the municipalities and the children.

GEW expresses its thanks for this process which was chaired professionally and managed respectfully on the basis of mutual esteem for each of the assigned functions.

Association of Catholic ECEC Centres, Federal Association – KTK (Verband Katholischer Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder, Bundesverband e. V.)

In the opinion of the KTK Federal Association the Communiqué “Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” is an important document for the future of child day care. The action areas set out in the Communiqué touch on topics that are of decisive importance for the further development of both contextual-conceptual and structural conditions in child day care. The express wish linked to the Communiqué of focusing on qualitative aspects, following the quantitative expansion of child day care, and of elaborating quality goals in a joint dialogue between the federal government, federal states, municipalities and associations is seen as an important political signal.

In the opinion of the KTK Federal Association the following aspects should play a special role or should be stressed in an interim report of the federal government/federal state working party;

Action area:

Need-based ECEC provision

In the opinion of the KTK Federal Association one of the most important quality goals is to support the ongoing development of the socio-spatial work of ECEC centres by means of good structural framework conditions. Failing this, it will be impossible for ECEC staff to cater for the diverse needs of parents.

Action area:

Contextual challenges

The education plans of the federal states systematise paedagogical work in ECEC centres and offer a good professional framework for the assessment and further development of the paedagogical concepts and everyday paedagogical life. The support service for paedagogical staff and their providers, which in the opinion of the KTK Federal Association is essential for the implementation of the contents of the education plans, is indeed in place when the ECEC centres can be regularly assessed on the basis of their respective education plan.

Action area:

A good staff-child ratio

The staff-child ratio is of decisive importance for good quality in child day care. Education, upbringing and care can only succeed if the education and upbringing processes are facilitated through relationships and bonds between the ECEC staff member and the child. The

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staff-child ratio indicates how many ECEC staff members are available for the children. For this, it is necessary to recalculate the guaranteed presence of the ECEC staff member vis-à-vis the registered children in each centre. In order to do this, the previous average staff allocation calculations must be reassessed on the basis of the recommendations made in scientific expertises.

Action area:

Strengthening leadership

The leaders in child day care centres take on a large number of different and, in some cases, highly complex tasks. They are responsible for the paedagogical leadership and management of a centre. They are in charge of staff development, coordinate team work, and work together with parents and cooperation partners. They drive the organisation forward, monitor trends and framework conditions, and implement them in their centre.

Health, job satisfaction and motivation of centre leaders are influenced by resources and framework conditions which are put in place by policymakers and administrators. Demands have been made for binding time contingents for the leadership of ECEC centres. They should be calculated on the basis of a general core budget. Variable shares are to be taken into account for which the number of children and staff members and other weighting factors like, for instance, the special needs of children and families play a role.

In addition to these aspects the KTK Federal Association is of the opinion that it is essential for the professional advice system to be considerably strengthened, for paedagogical staff to be assigned sufficient time for their indirect paedagogical working time and for the importance of further and continuing training to be raised by means of stiffer requirements.

In this overall context the KTK Federal Association believes it is important to bear in mind that increased funding is necessary in order to secure, in a binding manner, the quality of child day care and continue to develop it. The recommendation in this context is for at least 1 percent of gross domestic product to be invested in early childhood education. However, this investment can only be made if the federal government takes on more responsibility. This is one of the reasons why the KTK Federal Association, together with the German Caritas Association (DCV), the Union of teaching and scientific workers (GEW) and the Federal association for workers' welfare (AWO) will continue to jointly advocate a Federal Quality Act in child day care.

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Ver.di Federal administration Division Municipalities, Expert Group social, children and youth welfare

Based on the structure of the Communiqué and from the angle of the professionals organised within ver.di (United services trade union) the following comments are made:

Section	Opinion or position
A	<p>The reference points are the basic rights (education, personality, family) of the child and its parents.</p> <p>Binding nationwide minimum standards, professional work and framework conditions are needed to implement them in a professional manner.</p> <p>For this early education and upbringing are dependent on sufficient resources both in terms of qualified staff and suitable rooms and equipment.</p>
B	<p>The condition for offering children, irrespective of their social origin and place of residence, the same foundations is that all provision is of the same standard. Nationwide uniform binding minimum standards can promote this.</p>
B.1	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Scientific underpinning of children's needs</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Targeted scientific examination of which tasks in child day care must be met from the children's perspective</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>The children's perspective must not take second place behind a good family-work balance.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.2	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Harmonise education plans</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Harmonisation of existing education plans, education recommendations in order to adequately implement the right to education in each federal state</p> <p>Implementation measures:</p> <p>Drawing up a synopsis of existing education plans and agreement on minimum standards</p> <p>Reason/Comments:</p> <p>Children's education must not depend on origin and status but must be of the same quality and standard in publicly funded centres in every federal state.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.3	<p data-bbox="427 544 1388 651">Demands of the trade union ver.di with regard to the average staff allocation (based on the recommended minimum standards of the European Commission)</p> <p data-bbox="427 674 1273 707">For children up to age 1.5 – three children for each staff member</p> <p data-bbox="427 730 1388 763">For children aged between 1.5 and 3 – four children for each staff member</p> <p data-bbox="427 786 1388 848">For children aged between 3 and school entry age – eight children for each staff member</p> <p data-bbox="427 871 1182 904">From school entrance – 10 children for each staff member</p> <p data-bbox="427 927 1388 1344">Provision must be made for additional non-contact time in this average staff allocation. ver.di demands that at least one-third of individual working time be set aside for this. In addition 10 days of release per year must be included in the calculations for qualification in the staff allocation. Trainees and additional professional staff are not included in the average staff allocation. Release for leadership activities must be aligned with the growing requirements for centre leaders. Sufficiently qualified domestic staff for basic activities in this area of work must be available. Fixed-term contracts of employment go against the paedagogical need for staff continuity in ECEC centres. ver.di calls for the conversion of employees' fixed-term contracts into permanent contracts of employment.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1366 584 1400">Action goal:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1422 967 1456">Laying down of uniform calculation bases</p> <p data-bbox="427 1478 576 1512">Sub-goal 1:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1534 1388 1597">One-third of working time is for preparatory and follow-up work by the paedagogical staff.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1619 895 1653">Possible implementation measures:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1675 1388 1709">Agreement amongst the federal states in cooperation with advocacy groups</p> <p data-bbox="427 1731 671 1765">Reason/comment:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1787 1388 1910">The education mandate of the ECEC centres can only be delivered if corresponding time units are set aside to prepare the content of work, to anchor it in a concept, to document it and to reflect on it in a network with the stakeholders.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.3	<p data-bbox="427 546 576 577">Sub-goal 2:</p> <p data-bbox="427 600 1390 667">Holidays, further training, educational leave, average sick days are deducted from the available working hours.</p> <p data-bbox="427 689 783 721">Implementation measures:</p> <p data-bbox="427 743 1241 775">Agreement amongst the federal states on the calculation basis</p> <p data-bbox="427 797 671 828">Reason/comment:</p> <p data-bbox="427 851 1390 918">Only the actual working hours can be taken as the basis for the staff-child ratio.</p> <p data-bbox="427 940 576 972">Sub-goal 3:</p> <p data-bbox="427 994 1390 1061">The available hours for work “on the child” are the basis for the duty rosters.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1084 895 1115">Possible implementation measures:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1137 1390 1205">Agreement amongst the federal states on nationwide recommendations for duty roster design.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1227 671 1258">Reason/comment:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1281 1390 1348">Reliable work plans must be in place for ECEC staff, centre leaders and parents.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.4	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Release for further training and financing</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Professional further training is an essential component in paedagogical work in ECEC centres – for 10 working days every year ECEC staff are released from work with continued payment of their remuneration and the costs for further training are borne by the provider.</p> <p>Implementation measures:</p> <p>Agreement between providers and federal states on funding and further training concepts</p> <p>Reason/ comment:</p> <p>Regular further training is the only way of ensuring that ECEC staff can keep pace with developments in early education.</p> <p>Action goal:</p> <p>Prevention in occupational health and safety</p> <p>Sub-goal 1:</p> <p>Implementation of the Arbeitsschutzgesetz (Act on Occupational Safety and Health) + the collective agreements occupational safety and health/ occupational health promotion are monitored continuously.</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Introduction of reporting on this by providers to the federal state authorities</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>If the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the collective agreement are complied with, health risks are recognised early on and effective measures can be taken.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.4	<p>Sub-goal 2:</p> <p>Team advice/supervision and professional advice are a regular feature of work in ECEC centres.</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Establishment and financing of this instrument by all providers – supplement to the ECEC centres laws</p> <p>Reason:</p> <p>The growing requirements to be met by early education are dependent on regular external reflection.</p> <p>Action goal:</p> <p>Training venue ECEC centre</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>ECEC centres see themselves as training venues and have the necessary preconditions.</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Agreement amongst all federal states about a catalogue of requirements “training venue ECEC centre”</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>Practical training is of clear value for qualified work in ECEC centres and must be conducted in a comparable and high-quality manner.</p> <p>Action goal:</p> <p>Multi-professional teams</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Basic staffing is to be ensured with ECEC staff members. Other professions are to be brought in in line with needs.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.4	<p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>In cooperation with youth welfare planning, needs are to be determined which are to be covered through further staff or additional qualifications or in a cross-provider manner.</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>Education, upbringing and care are inseparable tasks which are based on intensive relationship-building work in ECEC centres and are, therefore, to be guaranteed through a basic staff allocation that is to be laid down in a sufficient manner with ECEC staff.</p>
B.5	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Anchoring leadership as a main task</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Qualify and quantify leadership tasks</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Laying down of release times</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>The leadership of an ECEC centre is a management task and is dependent on sufficient staff resources.</p> <p>Action goal:</p> <p>Targeted further and continuing training for centre leaders</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Further training programmes which ensure quality and career advancement opportunities for pedagogical staff</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Option of an additional qualification/continuing training in specialist technical colleges</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>ECEC centre leaders must work in a practice-oriented manner.</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.6	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Multifunctional room design</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>Laying down minimum standards</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Agreement amongst the federal states on minimum standards which take into account the protection of occupational health and safety</p> <p>Reason/comment:</p> <p>ECEC centres are to be equipped in such a way that they can respond flexibly to needs and concepts. In principle the following is to be borne in mind:</p> <p>Room size: at least 8m² per child for care and education rooms. Design geared to children's age and needs. In addition, provision is to be made for utility rooms, sanitary rooms, storage rooms, offices, social and staff space.</p> <p>Outside area, at least 1.5 times the size of the indoor area. Noise and health protection: inclusion of noise protection measures. Ergonomic equipment for ECEC staff and children.</p> <p>Equipment: basic or initial equipment in line with the paedagogical and technical standards. ECEC centre's own adequate budget to cover ongoing material costs.</p>
B.7	<p>Action goal:</p> <p>Healthy nutrition</p> <p>Sub-goal:</p> <p>ECEC centres are to have domestic staff who can ensure the daily supply of freshly prepared food.</p> <p>Possible implementation measures:</p> <p>Laying down of basic principles and financial rules by the federal government or federal states</p>

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Section	Opinion or position
B.7	<p>Reason/comment: ./.</p> <p>Action goal: A holistic upbringing is the basic principle for all ECEC centres.</p> <p>Sub-goal: The facilities in ECEC centres enable staff to offer early childhood education in line with the latest scientific findings.</p> <p>Possible implementation measures: Sufficient spatial, financial and staff resources in ECEC centres</p> <p>Reason/comment: ECEC centres have their own education mandate. It must take into account the diversity and non-simultaneity of children's education processes. In child education the focus is on the whole personality. This all-round approach is, therefore, the guiding principle in ECEC centres and takes into account the individual, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development and the entire personality of the child. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.offering children opportunities for experiences, actions and learning on the basis of their needs and their life circumstances; 2.strengthening children’s responsibility amongst other things by means of age- and development-appropriate participation in decision-making; 3.fully developing the physical, intellectual and linguistic skills of children and supporting, encouraging and promoting their emotional, artistic and creative development; 4.taking into account the different life circumstances, cultural and ideological backgrounds and the age- and development-appropriate needs of children; 5.promoting and living equal, partnership-based, social and democratic coexistence and the cohabitation of children along the lines of inclusive paedagogics; 6.guaranteeing a healthy diet in line with the latest nutritional findings;

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Section	Opinion or position
B.7	7.conveying the responsible handling of the environment and offering a learning venue designed in line with ecological and sustainable principles.
C	<p>Staff and material costs:</p> <p>For the operation of the centres providers are reimbursed 100 percent of recognised material and staff costs. They are adjusted annually in line with the development of the cost of living index.</p> <p>The federal government and federal states provide the funding.</p>

Federal association of private providers of non-public children, youth and social welfare services – VPK (Bundesverband privater Träger der freien Kinder-, Jugend- und Sozialhilfe e. V.)

The VPK Federation explicitly welcomes and supports the efforts outlined in the “Communiqué - Developing and Financially Ensuring Early Education” undertaken by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Seniors, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and by the Youth and Family Ministers’ Conference (JFMK) with regard to high quality and the long-term successful further development of child day care.

When it comes to the further expansion of the system of education, upbringing and care of children, VPK and its member providers are of the opinion that there is a need for binding and uniform nationwide quality standards which make possible provision for all children which is of a high quality, conceptually diverse and tailored to the needs of both children and parents.

We are an association that represents the interests of private providers. In the context of parents’ and children’s right to choose which is anchored in law, it is moreover important for VPK that the services of providers of child day care centres are given financial backing and support for their work subject to the aforementioned requirements.

A few selected action goals are discussed below which, in the opinion of VPK, are of major importance and need to be commented on from the association angle. We agree to the content of any action goals that are not mentioned.

1. Need-based ECEC provision

Efforts to increase the number of places have progressed well but are far from being completed. The quantitative expansion must, therefore, be continued and must definitely be coupled with qualitative expansion.

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There is a need for the high quality and customised provision of education and care which pays equal attention to the needs of children and parents. It is imperative to promote the development of a broad landscape of providers with different paedagogical concepts who make available flexible provision (e.g. extended opening hours, option of reserving hour-based or day-based care, reduced annual closing times) thereby facilitating the successful reconciliation of family and work. At the same time all the services provided must comply with basic paedagogical principles and give due consideration to respecting children's welfare, protecting them from any form of violence, and upholding their right to unimpeded development, education and upbringing.

Only if a diverse provider offering is available, can parents (and children) make real use of their right to choose.

3. Good staff-child ratio

The staff-child ratio is of key importance for the education, upbringing and care of children in ECEC centres. The introduction of a nationwide staff-child ratio is, therefore, essential. Scientific recommendations on establishing the staff-child ratio are available. Now it's about introducing the scientifically recommended staff-child ratio in a binding manner in all federal states. VPK is of the opinion that the objective should be the staff-child ratio of 1:3 for children under three years and 1:7.5 for children aged between three and six recommended by the Bertelsmann Foundation.

Given the steadily increasing challenges facing ECEC staff in child day care centres, there is a need for the binding stipulation of indirect paedagogical working time which is needed for instance for preparations or follow-up, documentation or parent work. Consideration is to be given to hours lost because of holidays, illness and further/continuing training. Indirect paedagogical working time (including hours lost) should, therefore, be deemed to account for around 20 to 25 percent of total working time in the staff-child ratios.

4. Qualified staff

Well-trained and happy staff in ECEC centres are the basis for successful paedagogical work and children's positive development. The aim here is to present the occupational field in an attractive manner in terms of content and remuneration in order to counteract an existing and future shortage of qualified staff. Besides the improvement and uniform nationwide alignment of the current training arrangements, this also includes the permanent and binding (nationwide) anchoring of ongoing practice-based further and continuing training opportunities, commensurate financial remuneration during training and when pursuing this occupation, and the raising of the standing of all individuals who work in the field of child day care.

Good and practically trained ECEC staff constitute the foundation for the work of every

child day care team. Against the backdrop of changing social situations which lead, amongst other things, to out-of-home care for infants and young children at an increasingly early age and for increasingly longer periods, staff other than those with pure paedagogical training should also be fixtures amongst the staff in ECEC centres. For instance existing teams should be extended to include individuals who first completed non-paedagogical training and who in their prior working lives pursued, for instance, a craft, artistic or natural science occupation. The skills acquired in these occupations are integrated into the daily life of the ECEC centres and input topics which are atypical for ECEC centres in line with the orientation plan. This extends the children's range of experience. Bringing in individuals who do not come from this occupation is not a quick fix for the shortage of ECEC staff. Committed, interested individuals with a different type of qualification who can introduce exciting topics for children, should enrich daily life in the ECEC centres with their energy and their fresh ideas. The parallel training of these individuals would enable them to develop in the long term into appreciated and specifically trained members of a strong team.

Professional advice is an important pillar in the ECEC system. Professional advice should be recognised as an important quality assurance and quality development instrument, and should be made available to all centres and parents. The right to professional advice must be anchored in law and the financing of this service must be guaranteed.

Last but not least, existing structures within ECEC centres are to be further developed and optimised to ensure that the children looked after there are protected from every form of violence and/or sexual abuse. To this end, all the people who work in these centres must be on board and systems must be developed which lead to the timely identification of any infringement of this protection mandate, and then facilitate immediate intervention.

5. Strengthening leadership

Leaders in ECEC centres take on diverse paedagogical, human resources and managerial tasks which, in some cases, are highly complex and key to the successful leadership of a centre. In this context the job satisfaction and motivation of centre leaders have a considerable impact on the satisfaction and motivation of ECEC staff and teams. Hence it is important to analyse the framework conditions of leaders in ECEC centres and then optimise them to ensure they can cope with the complex challenges they face.

A definition about the need for time dedicated solely to leadership tasks should not necessarily be established on the basis of care places in a centre but rather depending on the number of employees and the requirement profiles of centre leaders.

The first step should, therefore, be to draw up uniform nationwide requirement profiles for ECEC centre leaders on the basis of which the different work areas on the one hand and

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the skills required for them on the other are set out. Based on a requirement profile of this kind important findings can then be obtained about the profile of centre leadership and the required time resources for the fulfilment of leadership tasks.

In the opinion of VPK it would be desirable to introduce a basic level of at least 20 hours per week (0.5 full-time equivalents - FTEs) nationwide for all ECEC centres. Depending on the staff employed in the respective centre and the places available, this basic level would then be topped up.

High quality work with children in ECEC centres – particularly given the growing number of tasks and requirements for staff in ECEC centres – is only possible under the framework conditions described here. Hence, the leadership activity should definitely be recognised as a separate area of activity. It would, therefore, be conceivable and desirable to also separate purely paedagogical tasks from administrative tasks and to find ways of employing experts with different qualifications in business management or administrative tasks.

Further and continuing training for leaders of ECEC centres should be introduced in a binding manner throughout Germany and encompass around 200 hours per year.

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