



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION



Child care and child rearing are no longer viewed as mothers' exclusive responsibility.
But questions remain:

- What is the purpose of ECEC services?
- Which children should participate?
- Where should the services be delivered and by whom?
- How should they be paid for?
- How extensive should access be?



TWO FACTORS ARE DRIVING THE EXPANSION OF ECEC

- Increased labor force participation of women with young children.
- Growing conviction regarding positive benefits for children, especially disadvantaged children.

MY PRESENTATION TODAY

INCLUDES:

- A definition of ECEC programs and policies;
- The major policy dimensions that characterize the different ECEC systems;
- A description of the three major ECEC policy regimes in the industrialized countries;
- The implications and some concluding comments.

1. **Defining ECEC Programs and Policies**



EIGHT MAJOR POLICY DIMENSIONS

The primary purpose is dual:

- Education, including socialization and school readiness, primarily for 3-5 year olds, with care subsumed under the education goal;
- Care, including cognitive stimulation and socialization, while mothers work in paid employment outside the home, especially for children under age 3.
- Other goals include: early intervention, compensatory education, and human capital investment, and creating more jobs for women.



POLICY DIMENSIONS (cont'd)

Policy Responsibility

- National, State/Province, Local

Administrative Auspice

- Education
- Social Welfare
- Health
- Some combination, sequential or parallel.



POLICY DIMENSIONS (cont'd)

Eligibility Criteria

- Increasingly universal for 3-5 year olds
- With working parents for the under 3s
- With special needs.



POLICY DIMENSIONS (cont'd)

Access and Coverage

- Highest rates for countries with universal preschool for 3-5 year olds.
- Medium high rates are for countries that target children with working parents, covering full work day, often with places guaranteed from age 1.
- Lowest rates are for under 3s and no country has adequate supply. Highest rate is Denmark, with almost 60 percent of 1-2 year olds covered
- Infant care is increasingly care by a parent, at home on parental leave.



POLICY DIMENSIONS (cont'd)

Delivery Patterns

- Largely public delivery, especially for 3-5 year olds in preschools/centers.
- Some growth in publicly funded private non-profit providers.
- Little for-profit provision except in Anglo countries.
- Family day care homes for the under 3s



POLICY DIMENSIONS (CONT'D)

Expenditures and Financing

- Funding is largely by government - national, state, or local, depending on country.
- Parent fees play minor role except in Anglo countries
- Preschool programs covering school day are free with income-related fees for supplementary services.
- Services for under 3s charge income-related fees.
- In early 1990s, public expenditures for ECEC were about 2.4% of GDP in Sweden, 2% in Denmark, 1.1% in Finland, .6 % in Norway.

No agreed on definition of **quality**.



ECEC Policy Regimes

3. THREE MAJOR ECEC POLICY REGIMES

- Continental European
- Nordic
- Anglo



ECEC POLICY REGIMES

- Continental European Model: Preschool for 3-6 year olds under ministries of education and a separate system under health or social welfare auspices for the under 3s. Largely publicly funded and delivered.
 - Universal, free, and voluntary, covering normal school day and year with supplementary services (at government subsidized and income-related fees) to fill gap between school and parents' work day.
 - Services for under 3s in centers or family day care homes, covering full work day, with income-related fees. Parental leaves an important component.



ECEC POLICY REGIMES

- The Nordic model integrates care and education, is largely publicly funded and delivered, with income-related but heavily subsidized fees.
 - Universal programs serving all children under compulsory school age, covering the usual work day, usually in centers
 - Family day care a component especially for the very young
 - Infant care largely care by a parent home on a paid and job-protected leave from employment.



ECEC POLICY REGIMES (concluded)

- The Anglo-American model: two parallel systems
 - One system targeted on low-income children or those with special needs, under social welfare auspices
 - A second for middle and upper class children under education auspices, charging market fees
 - For-profit services a significant component
 - Family day care a significant component as well.
 - The systems are now in flux in several countries.



CONCLUSIONS

- The continental European model has clearly emerged as the dominant model:
 - largely government funded and delivered under education auspices, but going beyond formal school
 - universal, voluntary, free for the school day,
 - serving 2 or 3 year olds to compulsory school entry regardless of parents' employment status,
 - as a matter of legal right or societal conviction.
 - The key issue is increasing the availability of wrap around services to cover the work day



CONCLUSIONS (cont'd)

- Infant and toddler care have emerged as a key ECEC issue for the future.
 - Growing consensus regarding infant care but continuing diversity regarding toddler care.
 - Infant care is viewed as care by a parent home on a paid and job-protected leave from work. No consensus yet on duration of leave, but one year seems standard.



CONCLUSIONS

- Toddler care is in scarce supply in all countries, becoming close to adequate only in the Nordic countries.
- There is growing acceptance of family day care as one part of the ECEC delivery system, especially for very young children, but only with improved quality –not as a cheap alternative.



CONCLUSIONS

- Public financing is the dominant mode in the Nordic and Continental European countries. Parent fees play a minor role in meeting the costs in these countries .
- Public delivery is dominant in these countries as well, with a small but growing role for the voluntary sector.
- Quality is becoming more of an issue. If the programs are of decent quality, they are expensive – but worth it.



ECEC in Industrialized Countries

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