



VALUE DIVERSITY IN ECEC TEAMS

ECEC WORKING GROUP

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Introduction



Quality ECEC depends on well-educated and competent staff (EC, EQF, 2014/2015)

Not only core practitioners, also assistants in ECEC (CORE, NESET II)

Challenges:

- Invisible: not in policy documents, no competence profile, limited initial training, few CPD opportunities, low job mobility
- Edu vs care?
- Diversity?

→ Need to value the diverse background and experiences of all staff members by developing a CPD path



Aim of VALUE

Central aim of VALUE is:

high quality ECEC through professional development by

- (1) strengthening the **professional identity** of all staff,
- (2) strengthening an **educare** approach, and
- (3) strengthening **collaboration** which values staff diversity.



COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AND LEARNING FOR ALL ECEC STAFF

VALUE PILOTS



<https://www.value-ecec.eu/?p=3873>

<https://www.value-ecec.eu/?p=3900>



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4 pilots – 4 contexts

Country		VALUE
Belgium (FI)	Context	Limited collaboration, edu vs care
	VALUE	2 pilot schools, focus educare / professional identity
Denmark	Context	Tradition of collaboration, educare approach
	VALUE	3 pilot schools, learning labs (LL) with representatives of principal, core practitioners and assisting practitioners Focus LL playground and diversity
Portugal	Context	Limited collaboration, edu vs care
	VALUE	2 pilot schools, only assisting practitioners Focus on professional identity, pedagogical intentionality
Slovenia	Context	Long tradition of collaboration, educare approach
	VALUE	2 pilot schools, 14 PLC's, Focus on vision & action plans, leadership / mentorship of assisting practitioners



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KEY POINTS



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Collaboration

“We connected better with colleagues, we started to think deeper, beyond the superficial level. There is no way to grow professionally if you do not take time to reflect on your work” (SI)

KEY POINTS to strengthen collaboration for all:

- Participative process
- Starts from practice to reflect on and act on
- Role of the facilitator: create safe, trustful space
- Democratic leadership: vision on ECEC & collaboration, set structural conditions
- Institutionalised collaboration: child-free hours, collaboration is part of the job
- Job conditions: salaries, attractive working hours



“I think it is easier to teach the children something if they do not feel that it is a learning situation. If they feel you are there full-on for them, and maybe put an arm around their shoulder, have a dialogue with them. Then I think it is easier to learn than in an old-fashioned school set up. Then we can sit and enjoy ourselves; my experience tells me that it is easier to have children learn something when you mix it all up” (Dk)

KEY POINTS to strengthen educare approach:

- Start from the image of the competent child
- Reflection in action and reflection on action
- Strengthen pedagogical intentionality



“We feel more valued because now we have a voice” (Po)

KEY POINTS to strengthen professional identity:

- Give words to think about professional identity
- Observation, reflection, reflected actions → create some distance through reflection, enable assistants to show what they do, ‘*we do important things*’, proudness of their job
- Recognition of other team members and the leaders “*we are seen*”
- Differences of the roles – cfr. Brussels: no co-teaching; “*we want to be equal, but not have the same role*”



Conditions for collaborative practice & learning

- Conditions of the collaborative practice and learning:
 - Crucial role of the facilitator
 - Mental space and safe learning environments: team development space
 - Positive recognition and appreciation for all staff members
 - Working on professional identities and self-confidence
 - Professional activities from an educare approach
 - Collective responsibility
 - Shared vision and set of values for the team
 - Deprivatisation and sharing of classroom practices, avoiding the tendency of disciplinary territoriality
 - Developing good social relations and collaborative skills of all team members
- Structural conditions: child-free hours for all staff
- Leadership that supports teamwork
- It takes time





COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AND LEARNING FOR ALL ECEC STAFF

WHAT'S NEXT?

■ Toolbox

■ Policy recommendations

KA3 Forward looking cooperation project

Raise awareness of policy makers and organizing bodies in the ECEC field



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More information

ISSA conference 2020

VALUE partners:

VBJK - Centre for Innovation in the Early Years (BE)

ERI - Educational Research Institute (SL)

DPU - Denmarks institut for Pædagogik,

Aarhus University (DK) Aga Khan Foundation (PT)

ESE – IPSantarém (PT)

Erasmus University College (BE) Karel de Grote University College (BE)



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