



Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE) – Project Insights and Contributions

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Paul Bartolo

The IECE Project (2015-2017)

Aims: “To identify, analyse and subsequently promote the main characteristics of quality inclusive early childhood education for all children from three years of age to the start of primary education.”

Target group: Preschool education for children from 3 years to primary education.

Participants:

- 28 countries/64 experts (a practitioner and researcher)
- **Project Advisory Group**
- **In co-operation with:** EU Commission, Eurydice, OECD, UNESCO, International Society on Early Intervention

Project Activities – Data collected

- A literature and policy review
- Descriptions of example IECE settings (32 from 28 countries)
- Case study visits to 8 examples in different countries
- Country questionnaire on national policy and practice
- The development of a Self-Reflection Tool for review of IECE settings
- The adaptation of an Ecosystem Model of IECE for planning, implementing, and reviewing IECE provision.
- A project web area on the Agency's website: www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/inclusive-early-childhood-education

Project Outputs

Publications:

- Agency summary of literature on inclusive early childhood education
- Inclusive Early Childhood Education: An analysis of 32 European examples
- Inclusive Early Childhood Education Project: Final Summary Report
- A Self-Reflection Tool: Inclusive Early Childhood Education Environments

Other electronic documents

- 8 separate Case study visit reports
- 32 separate Country Reports on national policy and practice in IECE

Added Value of IECE Project based on new conceptualisation of Quality in IECE

Project developed a new way of framing the definition of quality in IECE through the combination of three existing quality frameworks:

- **Structure-process-outcome** framework (e.g. OECD, 2009; European Commission, 2014);
- **Ecological systems** framework (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Odom et al., 2004).
- **Inclusive education** framework (European Agency, 2015).

Structure-process-outcome framework

- **Structures:** conditions in IECE setting, surrounding community, region and country, that influence the quality of children's experiences (e.g. staff qualifications)
- **Processes:** all interactions of children with the staff, peers and the physical environment of the IECE that have a direct impact on their wellbeing, engagement and learning.
- **Outcomes:** the impact that the structures and processes have on the children's wellbeing, engagement and learning.

Ecological systems framework

Considers complex evolving influences on children arising from their interactions and interrelations between them and all the surrounding systems

- in the IECE setting/home (Micro-systems)
- community (Meso-systems) and
- region/country (Macro-systems).

Inclusive Education framework

The project also assumed that *quality* early childhood provision needs to be characterised as an inclusive system as described in the Agency position paper:

The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers (European Agency, 2015, p. 1).

Main Project Value Added Outcomes/Contributions towards the improvement of quality IECE

1. Demonstrated how an inclusive vision can ensure high-quality early childhood education services that benefit all children through enabling each child's **belongingness, engagement and learning**.
2. Adapted an **Ecosystem Model of Inclusive Early Childhood Education** to support collaborative policy, research and practice in the planning, implementation, and review of IECE provision.
3. Developed a **Self-Reflection Tool** to support practitioners to review their service's quality in terms of the inclusiveness of the physical, social and other learning environments it offers to children and families.

Ecosystem Model of Quality IECE IECE

- Inspired by combination of three frameworks:
 - Structure-process-outcome framework (e.g. OECD, 2009).
 - Ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Odom et al., 2004).
 - Inclusive education framework (European Agency, 2015).
- Grounded in the project data.
- Sets out the key factors of quality IECE in five dimensions within three ecological system levels.
- Enables collaboration among policy makers, researchers and practitioners.

Dimension 1: Inclusion OUTCOMES

IECE practitioners worked towards the goal of enabling each child to **belong** – be a valued member of the group, to be **engaged** in regular activities, and to acquire relevant **learning**.



1. Inclusion Outcomes (cont ...)



Practitioners underlined that **children differ in many ways**. It is essential to attend to **each child's progress, rather than the absolute levels of competence achieved by any individual**.

Examples welcome and value each child within a creative, supportive learning community, where everyone belongs and enjoys positive relationships with both the staff and peers.

Inclusion outcomes (cont...)



All children are invited and enabled to:

- use their strengths;
- exercise their curiosity and self-direction;
- make choices, particularly in play;
- express interests and goals and engage in problem-solving accordingly;
- be motivated for and engage in valued activities alongside and in interaction with their peer group, with guidance and relevant support as necessary.

Dimension 2: PROCESSES WITHIN THE SETTING

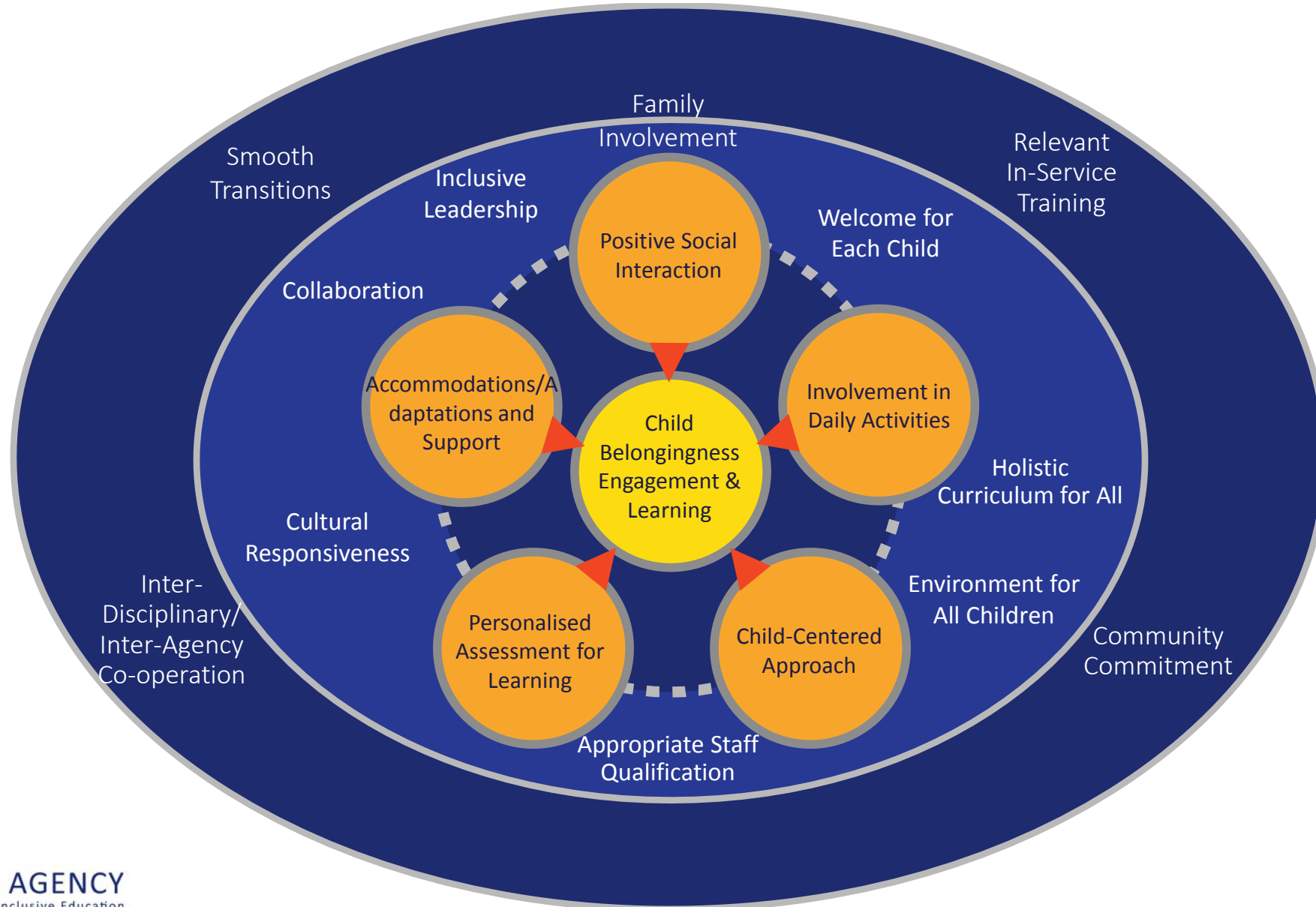
Children are directly involved in these five processes that enable them to belong, to be engaged and to learn



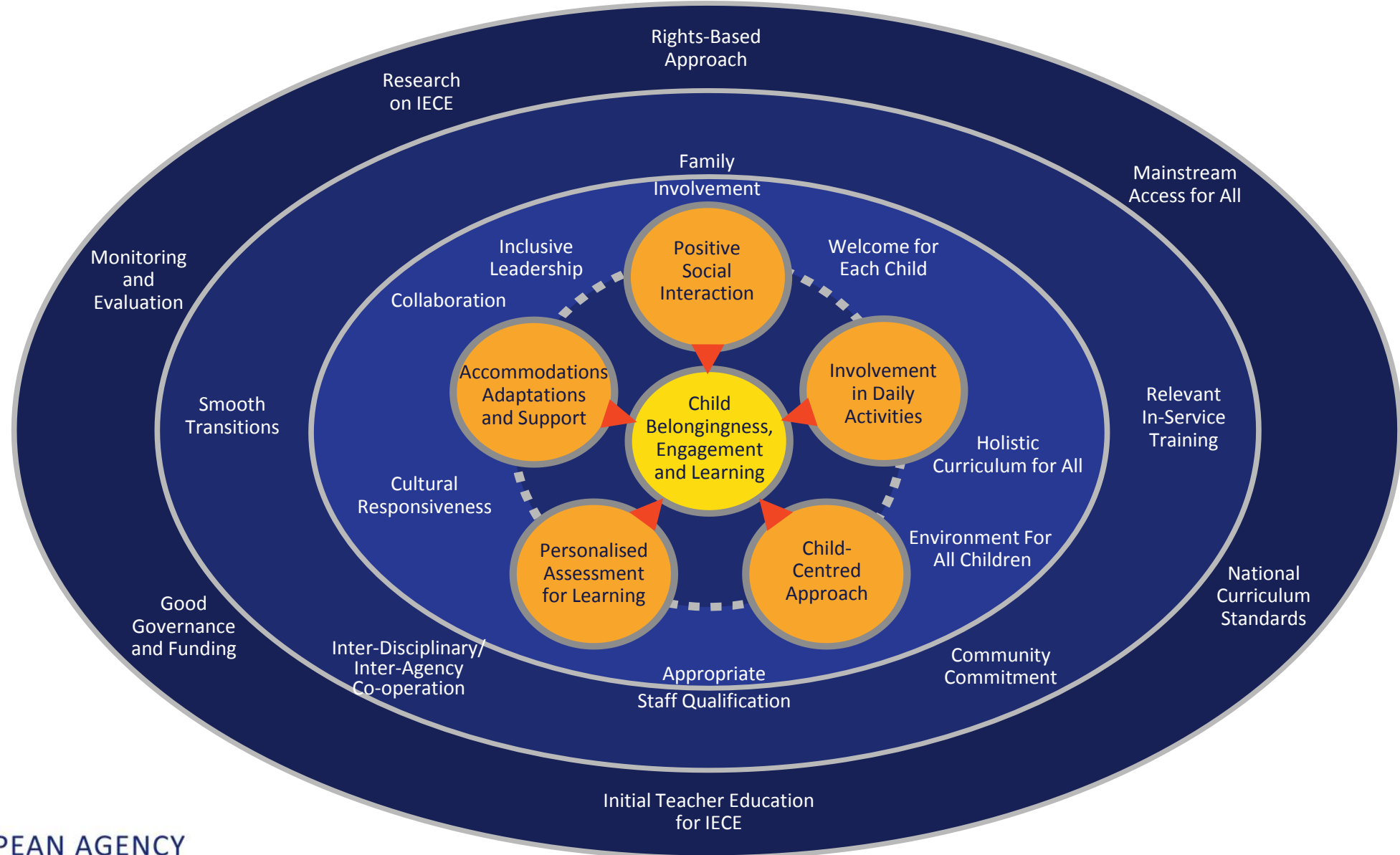
Dimension 3: STRUCTURES WITHIN THE SETTING



Dimension 4: STRUCTURES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY



Dimension 5: STRUCTURES AT REGIONAL/NATIONAL LEVEL



Recommendations within the model

e.g.

To ensure that children's active participation and learning in IECE becomes a main goal of IECE provisions, policy-makers should:

1. Support local IECE providers to reach out pro-actively to children and families and listen to their voices.
2. Create the conditions for IECE settings to secure not only children's attendance, but also their engagement once they are there.

Model links micro provisions to macro policy

E.g. **Access issues:** ‘Rights-based approach’ essential for regional/national policy-makers (outer circle) to legislate and fund entitlement of all learners to access mainstream provision; but also highlights that same attitude is essential for leadership and practitioners at IECE setting level to ensure ‘Welcome’ and accommodation for all children and families in the community.

Staff quality: Initial teacher education for IECE may be primarily a regional/national responsibility (outer circle in the Figure). On the other hand, the employment of qualified staff and their continuing up-skilling is more closely linked to the responsibilities of IECE settings (inner circle in the Figure).

Model clarifies different types and levels of family involvement

- Examples of enhancing children's engagement in meaningful learning by involving parents within the IECE outdoor and indoor setting (in the first circle).
- In addition, examples worked with families in the community (second circle).

Kindergarden „Am Gänsberg“ Germany

Hubert Lorenz- Medick

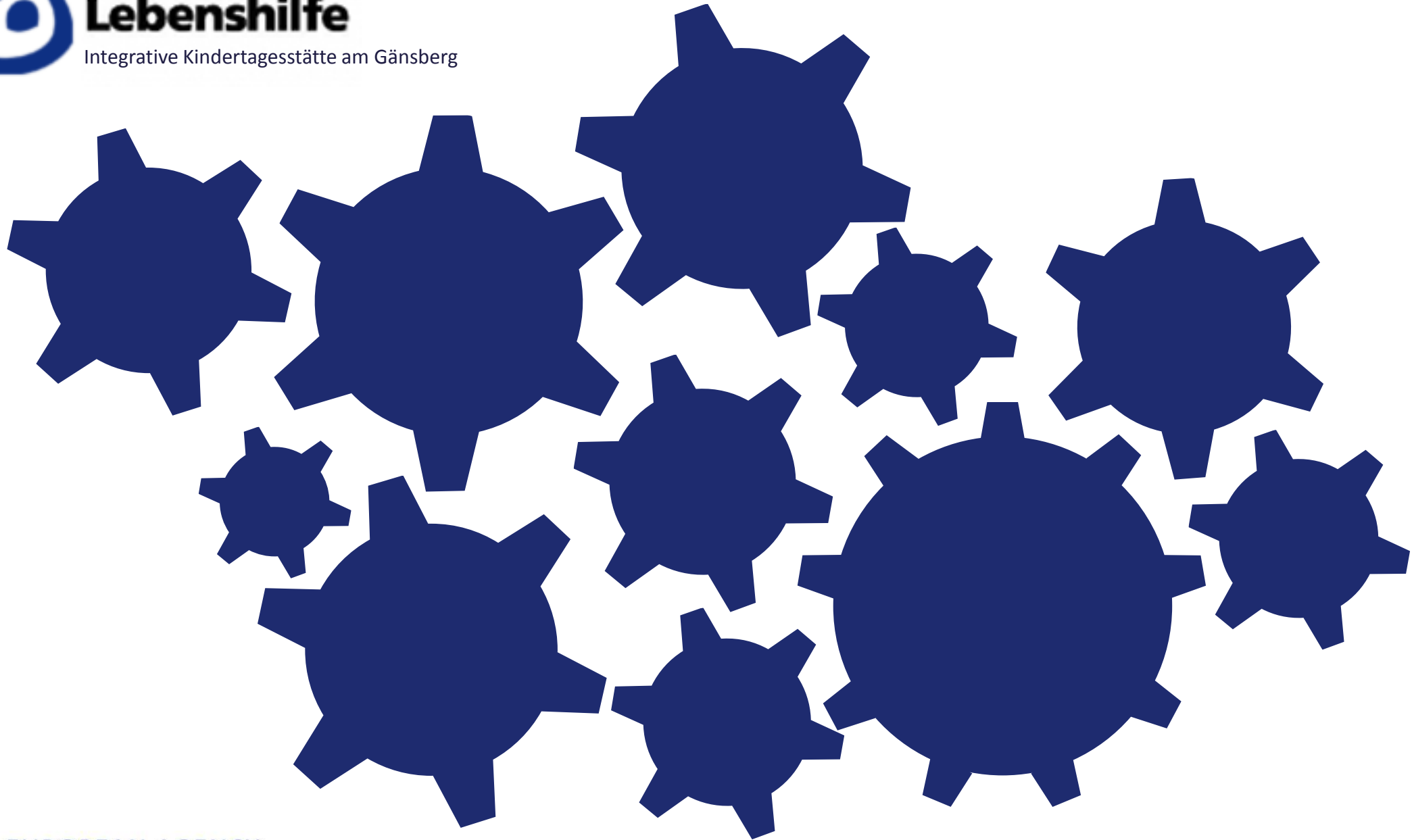
„It`s normal to be different“

-Richard von Weizäcker-



Lebenshilfe

Integrative Kindertagesstätte am Gänsberg

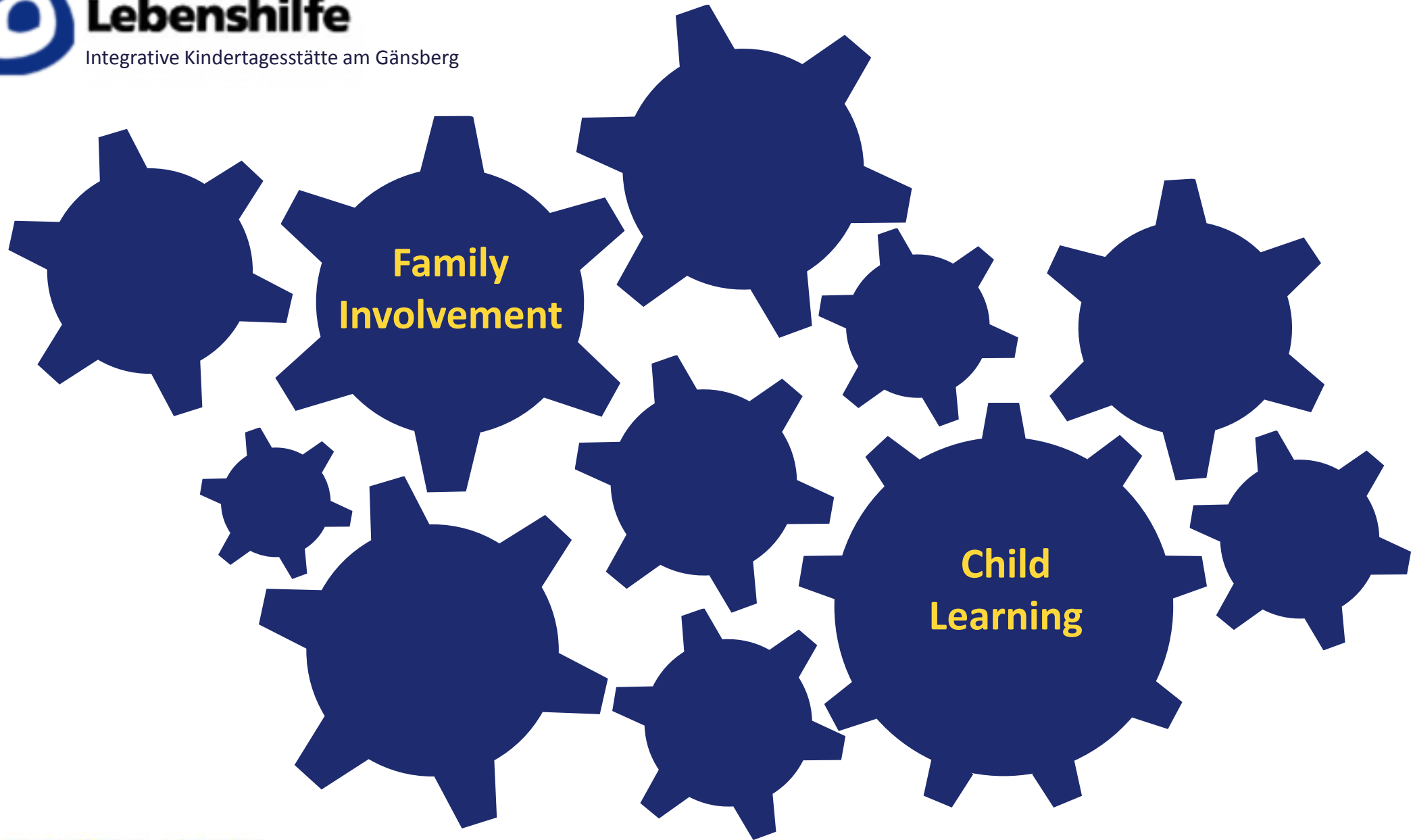


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Lebenshilfe

Integrative Kindertagesstätte am Gänsberg



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**Child
Learning**



EUROPEAN AGENCY
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http://www.lebenshilfert.de/lhrtk/angebote_einrichtungen//integrative_kindertagesstaetten/kita_idstein.php

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Togher Family Centre

Niamh Sheridan

Director

Overview of Presentation

1. Irish Context
2. The holistic curriculum at TFC
3. Why we focus on holistic curriculum
4. How we implement a holistic curriculum
5. What are the outcomes of this approach

Universal and Universal +

Irish Provision

- 15 hours per child per week
- Ratio of 1:11
- 38 weeks per year
- Free
- Two years pre-primary school

Togher Centre Family

- Ratio 1:7
- Staff training 50% degree
- Empowered advocacy
- EY Educators as Family Support Workers

Holistic Curriculum at TFC

Accepts the
complex reality of
the whole child

Creates an
environment in
which meaning
can emerge

Disadvantage as embodied experience

Cumulative

Both

And



Child



*As if these two things
were experienced
separately for the
child*

Intersectional

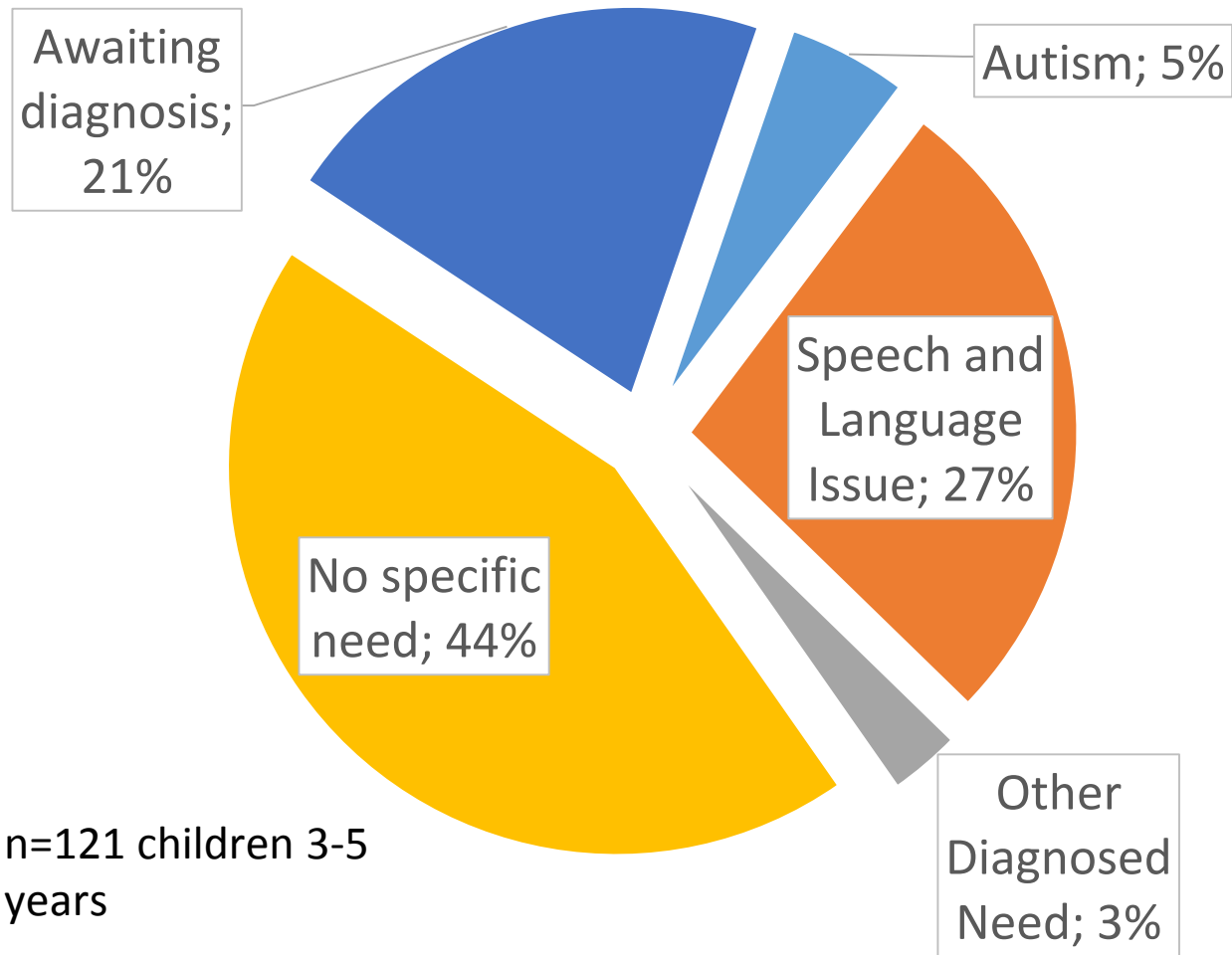


Child

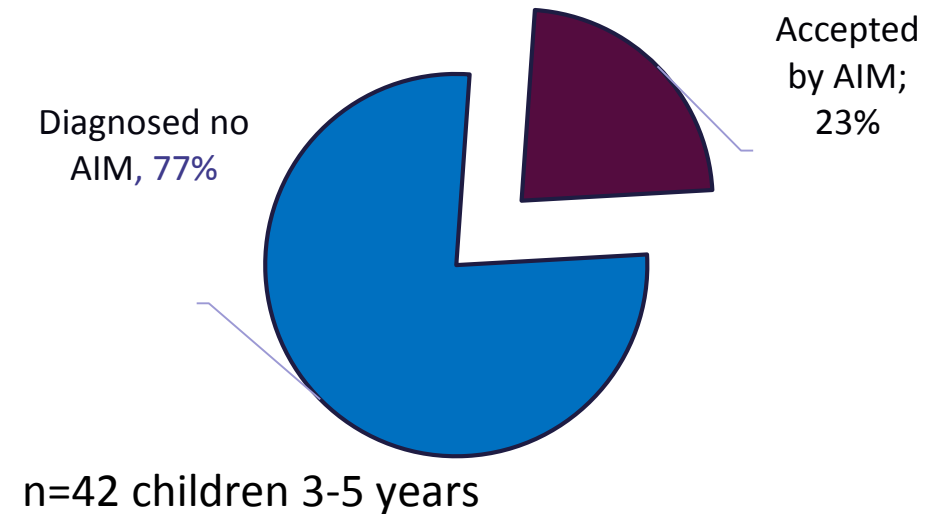


At the same time

Profile of Children



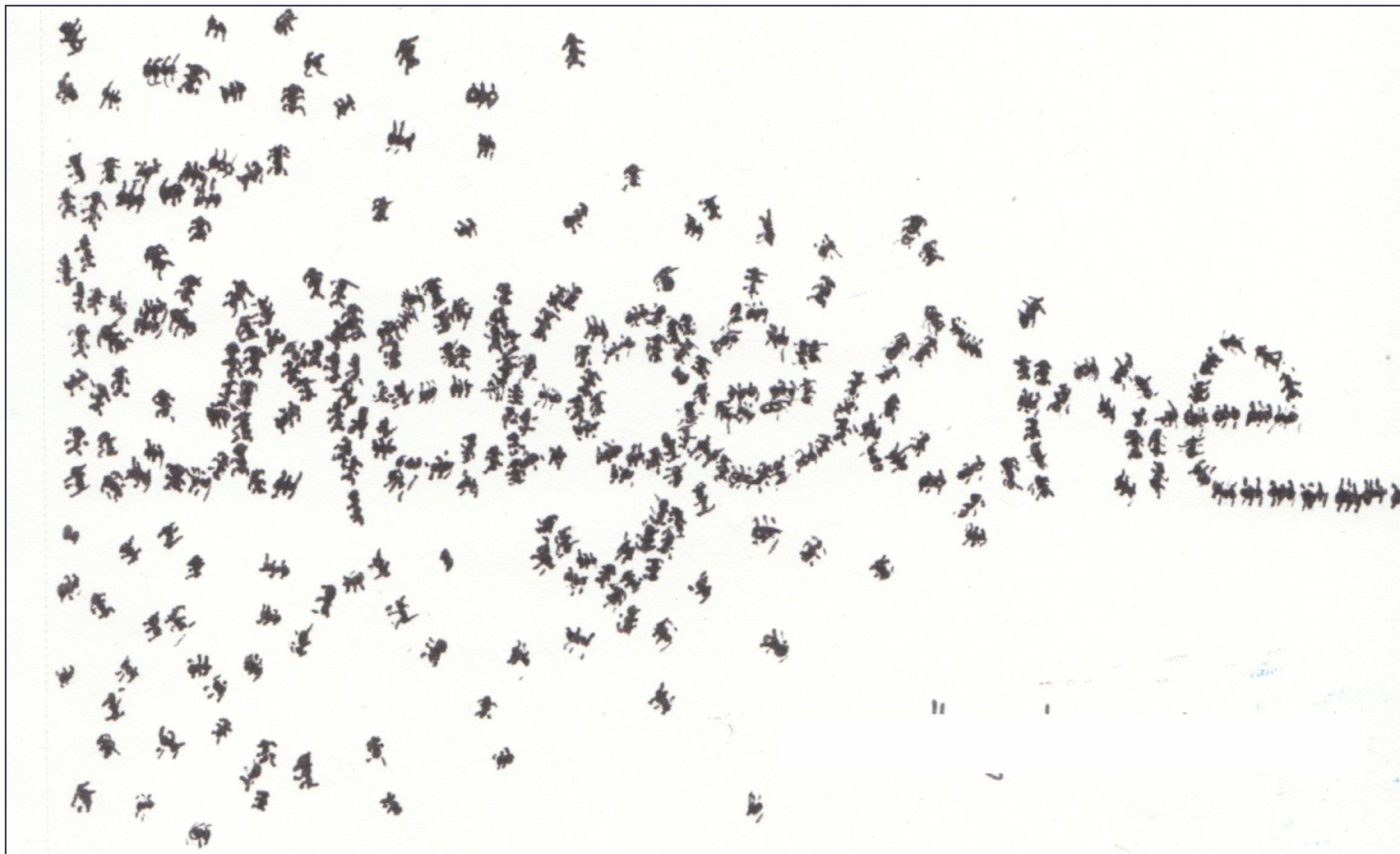
Access and Inclusion Model



Holistic Curriculum at TFC



Emerging curriculum



Emerging curriculum & Complex adaptive systems

This goes further than following the child's interests

Focuses on

Creating an environment in which meaning can emerge

Universal and Universal +

Aistear Focus on

Identity and belonging

Communication

Wellbeing

Exploring and thinking

Togher extend this through

Applying these concepts to everyone

Creating space for sensemaking

Extending sensemaking through play

Safe to Fail Environment

*for children **and** practitioners*

Holistic Curriculum, Ecosystem Model & TFC

Active participation

Creation of meaning

Processes

Focus on emergence

Supportive structures

Settings

Safe to fail environment

Community

Advocacy and agency

National

AIM programme

Outcomes

1. Ensure no barriers to a child's opportunity to access life enhancing experiences
2. The child is not 'split' from their context
3. Children and adults create meaning together
4. Curriculum responds to the whole child

Thank You

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An open space for creativity, research and active discovery for children including families

ANA DIAZ CAPPÀ



Sharing Education and
Learning with Families
A challenge for XXI Century Schools

Why

- European framework:
 - *Educational disadvantages should be addressed through high-quality inclusive and early education.*
 - *...broader learning communities with civil society and other stakeholders should be promoted.*
- “Educating” should not be the exclusive responsibility of educational institutions.
- Sharing of knowledge as a way of learning and developing competences and skills (curricular and for life)

Need to...

- ✓ Be an opened school (surroundings, culture, art trends, changes,...)
- ✓ Be everybody's school (children, families, teachers, neighbours)
- ✓ Consider the importance of giving abundant and diverse learning opportunities as much as possible to every girl and boy

And...

✓ **BE FLEXIBLE** ... organisation, methodology, resources, time, who, where, ...

How

- Adopting a receptive attitude to families' proposals, treating them as new experts that enrich collective knowledge.
- Assuming the presence of families in day-to-day classroom and school as part of a current practice.
- Supporting them while they are planning and carrying out the activity (resources, method, groups, language,...)
- Asking them what they know how to do and encourage them to share it

European Erasmus+ Project

(S.E.L.F. Sharing Education and Learning with Families)

This project, for the educational community of our school, represents our social commitment to work with families towards a comprehensive education for their sons and daughters. We hope to open new doors to culture and to our surroundings in an innovative, interactive and caring environment that helps our children to learn, happily grow as well as being active participants in their society.

In this school year, it will be important to recognize the opportunities that we have in maximizing the educational potential of all those who take part of our school in order for our boys and girls to benefit.

In this community, we are all special. We want to discover your skills, hobbies... hidden talents, and those of the people closest to you with the end goal of sharing them with the school.

Everyone contributes “within the collaborative triangle of school-family-environment”.

I KNOW SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO...

I CAN TELL A TALE.....

I CAN TEACH.....

I KNOW HOW TO DO

I CAN COLLABORATE IN ...|

TEACHERS

- Offer our knowledge to put into practice an activity with children: methodological and pedagogic help
- Each proposal is assumed by a member of the staff who is responsible for helping and supporting the family during the experience
- Looking for Agreements
- Fill out an activity report
- Evaluation

FAMILIES

- Think about what their own abilities are
- Work with any group at school
- Frequency: Daily, Weekly, monthly, once a year
- Design their own activity or workshop and share information with the “support teacher”
- Write their own opinion

Implementation

- Creativity
- *Flexibility
- *Open school in contact with social and cultural environments
- New methodological approaches
- Listen to families
- Normalise families (other agents) presence in day to day school life
- *Solve difficulties
 - Understand that ORGANIZATION is the best tool for achieving inclusive goals
 - Not avoiding them
 - Mutual respect
 - Accept suggestions
 - Recognize other educational agents roles and identify ours
 - Introduce changes gradually
 - Recognize and deal with possible fears

Advantages

- Promote innovation while building more inclusive pedagogies
- Discover new possibilities of cooperation between families and teachers
- Children develop new competences which could not have occurred if we had not included families
- Teachers' work is more understood and recognized by families
- Cooperation and relationship between families and school improve
- The feeling of contribution on a joint project between families is promoted
- Families support each other and all children's inclusion gets easier
- Give a holistic answer to our students' needs



Familia y Escuela.
Acogiendo.
Construyendo.
Repensando la Educación.

The screenshot shows the S.E.L.F. website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links: S.E.L.F., RESULTS, TEACHER'S GUIDE, SPAIN, CROATIA, FAMILIES, SELF-LEARNING, and CALENDAR. The main content area features a blog post dated Friday, 20 February 2015, titled "Summary". The text of the post discusses the S.E.L.F. project's goal of making education more inclusive and community-oriented. To the right of the post, there is a sidebar with a blue header "ENCUENTRO FAMILIA Y ESCUELA. Acogiendo. Construyendo. Repensando la educación. (12 MAYO DE 2016)" and a link "INSCRIPCIÓN AQUÍ". Below this, there is a Facebook icon and text indicating that families from Spain and Croatia can keep in touch through the "S.E.L.F. families Facebook account". At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Translate", "Visits", and "Blog Archive".

✓ Tutorial

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxWwzN2xncz4eW05aUJybTBSd0U/view>

✓ Guide for teachers

<https://issuu.com/erasmusfamiliesandschools/docs/guide>

<http://erasmusfamiliesandschools.blogspot.com.es/>

Face up to the Challenge

THANK YOU



Sharing Education and
Learning with Families
A challenge for XXI Century Schools

Contact

<http://www.educa.madrid.org/web/eei.zaleo.madrid/>

Children's rights approach in Portugal

Cecília Aguiar

ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Children's rights approach in Portugal

What do we expect from inclusion?

- Sense of belonging and membership
- Positive social relationships and friendships
- Development and learning

What are the features of inclusion?

- Access
- Participation
- Supports

Implementation of IECE in Portugal

Aiming for access:

- **Universal entitlement** for 5 year-olds (Law No. 85/2009), 4 year-olds (Law No. 65/2015), and 3 year-olds (2019)
- **Free** educational component (25h)
- **Priority criteria** in the public sector: age; within age groups: SEN, underage parents... (not SES)
- **Right** to education and health for all < 18 (**regardless of legal status**) (DL No. 67/2004)

Implementation of IECE in Portugal

Aiming for **quality** ECE:

- Recent revision of curriculum guidelines (explicit recognition of children's right to **participate** and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Pedagogical guidelines for 0-3 under construction

Implementation of IECE in Portugal

Providing supports:

- Educational Territories for Priority Intervention (**TEIP**) Program: additional resources for school clusters serving disadvantaged areas
- National System of Early Childhood Intervention (DL No. 281/2009)
 - Serving both children with disabilities **and children at risk**
 - Pluridisciplinary teams (Education, Health, and Social Security)
 - Recommended practices guide / training for ECI professionals: Family-centered, Natural settings and routines-based, Transdisciplinary

Implementation of IECE in Portugal

Aiming for **participation**:

- Serving children with disabilities in **regular (pre)schools**: 99% (87% in public schools)
- Learning full time in regular classrooms: 87% (DGEEC, 2016)
- **Children's voices** heard in curriculum development initiatives

Implementation of IECE in Portugal

Still a lot to do...

- **Belongingness & membership** (Ferreira, Aguiar, Correia Fialho, & Pimentel, 2017)

Social acceptance

46% of children with disabilities below the 25th percentile

8% scoring above the 75th percentile

Children's social status

Teacher: 27% popular, 4% rejected

Peers: 4% popular, 42% rejected

- Attendance is not suficiente...

2. Development of a Self-Reflection Tool

- Early in the project, **need** felt for a tool that all professionals and staff could use to reflect on their setting's inclusiveness.
- **Inspiration** for the observation tool from well-established instruments on inclusion in early childhood education environment.
- **Aimed** to provide a *snapshot* of the environment from the perspective of the IECE project's key question: "What are the main characteristics of quality inclusive early childhood education settings for all children?"
- **Used** during site-visits in inclusive early childhood education settings in eight countries.

Focus of the Self-Reflection Tool

- The focus of this self-reflection tool is on **increasing the capacity** of inclusive early childhood education environments to enable the *participation* of all children, in the sense of *attending and being actively engaged* in activities and interaction.
- **Engagement** is defined as being actively involved in everyday activities of the setting, and is the core of inclusion. It is closely related to learning and to the interaction between the child and the social and physical environment.

Content of the Self-Reflection Tool

Eight aspects are addressed in the tool:

- Overall welcoming atmosphere
- Inclusive social environment
- Child-centered approach
- Child-friendly physical environment
- Materials for all children
- Opportunities for communication for all
- Inclusive teaching and learning environment
- Family friendly environment

Each aspect is covered by a set of questions that require a qualitative response.

Validation of the Self-Reflection Tool

A validation process was performed in three steps:

- An expert panel (25 European experts in IECE) used and reflected on the observation tool (OT) at the final site visit.
- Focus groups to validate the Self-Reflection Tool as appropriate and useful for the review of IECE environments were conducted by researchers and graduate students in three European Universities.
- Individual cognitive interviews to explore the extent to which practitioners, leaders of pre-schools, parents, academic staff consider the tool comprehensive and culturally appropriate.



INCLUSIVE
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION

Self-reflection on Inclusive Early Childhood Education

Name of the setting:

Date

Participant/s

Before using the self-reflection tool in your setting:
Think: Purpose of self-reflection

After using the self-reflection tool
Decide what should be changed

Priorities

1. Overall welcoming atmosphere

1.1 Do all children and their families feel welcome?

1.2 In what ways is the setting a caring, comfortable and appealing place for children and staff?

1.3 How does the leadership promote a collaborative and inclusive culture?

How does the setting reflect and value the diversity of the local community?

Are children enabled to feel that they belong to the peer group?

Is there any experience that any child may feel excluded?

What do you like to change?



Uses of the tool

The self-reflection tool may be used for a number of purposes:

- (a) to provide a picture of the state of inclusiveness in the setting;
- (b) to serve as a basis for discussions about inclusion;
- (c) to describe, formulate and prioritise areas for improvement in inclusive practice.

The tool can be used flexibly, is being published in all EU languages, and is expected to be used by IECE settings across Europe.



Inclusive Early Childhood Education Environment Self Reflection Tool The Portuguese experience

Marisa Carvalho

Sofia Ramalho

Overview of presentation

- I. Context
- II. Translation and adaptation
- III. Usage
- IV. Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

I. Context

NEW LEGISLATION

Rational Change

- From Special Needs Education to Inclusive Education;

Guidelines for the legislation implementation

- Multi-Tiered System of Support Model;
- New Tools Availability for Professional's Interventions;

Decision was taken to translate, divulgate and make available the **SRT**

II. Translation and adaptation

Phase 1. Translation by a group of professionals

Phase 2. Translation verification and correction by different professionals

Phase 3. Commented analysis by preschool teachers and school psychologists

Note: adaptation, validity, fidelity



Autorreflexã o sobre Inclusã o na Educaç ã o Pré -Ecolar

Estabelecimento de Educaçã o Pré-Ecolar:
Data
Participantes
Antes de utilizar o instrumento de autorreflexã o no seu contexto de educaçã o pré-escolar:
Propósito final desta autorreflexã o
Depois de utilizar o instrumento de autorreflexã o:
O que deve ser mudado?
Objetivos de mudanç a
1. Clima Geral de Acolhimento:
1.1 Em que medida é que todas as crianç as e respetivas famí lias se sentem acolhidas no seu contexto de educaçã o pré-escolar?
1.2 De que forma é que o seu contexto de educaçã o pré-escolar é um espaç o confortá vel e apelativo para as crianç as?
1.3. Considera Considera que alguma das crianç as pode sentir-se excluí da no seu contexto de educaçã o pré-escolar?
1.4. Como Como é que o seu contexto de educaçã o pré-escolar integra e valoriza a diversidade da comunidade local?

II. Translation and adaptation

The Portuguese version maintains the same structure and contents of the original version:

- Overall welcoming climate
- Inclusive social environment
- Child-friendly physical environment
- Materials for all children
- Opportunities for communication
- Child-centered learning environment
- Inclusive teaching environment
- Family-friendly environment



Autorreflexã o sobre Inclusã o na Educa çã o Prã -Escolar

Estabelecimento de Educaçã o Prã -Escolar: Escola bási ca de Seroa
Data 16-10-2017
Participantes Maria Emília Pereira
Antes de utilizar o instrumento de autorreflexã o no seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar:
Propó sito final desta autorreflexã o Refletir sobre a açã o educativa ?!!!
Depois de utilizar o instrumento de autorreflexã o:
O que deve ser mudado? Os mecanismos de avaliaçã o individual das crianç as Objetivos de mudanç a Melhorar o processo ensino-aprendizagem das crianç as
1. Clima Geral de Acolhimento:
1.1. Em que medida é que todas as crianç as e respetivas famí lias se sentem acolhidas no seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar? As crianç as e respetivas famí lias sã o muito bem acolhidas, diariamente, na escola e sentem-se à vontade para colocar as suas dú vidas e por vezes angústias.
1.2. De que forma é que o seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar é um espaç o confortá vel e apelativo para as crianç as? A organizaçã o do ambiente educativo vai sendo reformulado ao longo do ano de forma a ser sempre e cada vez mais confortá vel e apelativo para as crianç as.
1.3. Considera que alguma das crianç as pode sentir-se excluí da no seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar? De forma alguma

1.6. Como é que o seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar integra e valoriza a diversidade da comunidade local? Ao solicitar, no iní cio do ano, uma ficha de caracterizaçã o a cada aluno, possibilita que a diversidade familiar seja valorizada nas atividades a realizar com as crianç as
1.5. Que aspetos contribuem para que as crianç as e os adultos se sintam envolvidos e felizes no seu contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar? Acima de tudo o ambiente educativo envolvente e a responsabilizaçã o das famí lias neste processo.
1.6 O que gostaria de mudar? De uma forma geral estamos sempre em mudanç a e devemos estar atentos ao que nos rodeia para que a mudanç a surja de forma natural.

2. Ambiente Social Inclusivo:
2.1 Em que medida é que todas as crianç as participam nas atividades e no jogo? As crianç as tã m autonomia para decidir que atividades e jogos desejam fazer, sendo que, algumas dessas atividades/jogos sã o sugeridos pelo educador com vista ao desenvolvimento de determinadas capacidades ou, eventualmente, suprir dificuldades.
2.2. De que forma a interaçã o e o jogo entre pares sã o facilitados para todas as crianç as? Através de dinâmicas pedagó gicas que favorecem o trabalho em grande e pequeno grupo.
2.3. Em que medida é que todas as crianç as sã o envolvidas nas atividades de grupo? As crianç as sã o chamadas a intervir constantemente para que nenhuma se sinta excluí da.
2.4. De que forma é que as crianç as sã o encorajadas a respeitar as diferenç as no seu grupo de pares? Através de diversas estratégias promove-se o respeito pelo outro e a sensibilidade à diferenç a.
2.5. De que forma é que as crianç as sã o envolvidas nas decisõ es que lhes dizem respeito? Através de mecanismos simplificados de auto-avaliaçã o .
2.6 De que forma é que as crianç as sã o ajudadas na resoluçã o de conflitos? A resoluçã o de conflitos passa por conversas entre os intervenientes e, eventualmente, levadas à consideraçã o do grande grupo.
2.7 O que gostaria de mudar?

3. Ambiente Físico Adequado:
3.1 Em que medida é que o contexto de educaçã o prã -escolar é acessível a todas as crianç as, considerando os seus espaç os interiores e exteriores? É perfeítamente acessível.

III. Usage

Preschool teachers

Special Education teachers

School psychologists

Other professionals (e. g. school administrators)

III. Usage

- (a) To provide a picture of the state of inclusiveness in the preschool;
- (b) To serve as a basis for discussions about inclusion;
- (c) To describe and formulate problem areas and for setting goals for improvement and planning interventions for preschool inclusion;
- (d) To evaluate ways of working with inclusion;
- (e) To provide practical information about preschool and/or classroom structure, interactions and relationships, intentional and also informal activities for development, learning and inclusiveness;

III. Usage

By using the SRT, professionals can access important contextual and practical information that can help them to accomplish the new legislation principles and guidelines.

IV. Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

- It is an intuitive tool that enhances self-reflection, collaborative work and organizational improvement;
- It offers a broad and comprehensive approach of the inclusiveness environment;
- It can be a stimulus to personal, professional and organizational reflection and improvement;
- It is a good complementary instrument to use with other school and classroom indicators.

IV. Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

- It is a long document, with opened questions, which is time demanding;
- It demands subsequent steps, in order to obtain specific indicators to set goals for improvement and planning interventions.

IV. Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

- Need of scientific studies for adaptation and validation of the SRT Portuguese version;
- Use of data in an integrated and comprehensive way, together with other sources of information, in order to define strategic goals of intervention;
- Dissemination and intentional use of the SRT in Portuguese context.

Contact

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