



Curriculum and Quality Analysis and Impact Review
of European Early Childhood Education and Care

Cross-cutting themes 1: Process quality and curriculum

1.1 Developmental goals and concepts of learning

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Aim

Summarise main findings on the broad goals of ECEC with regards to children's development and learning

- personal/social-emotional competencies
- intellectual and academic skills

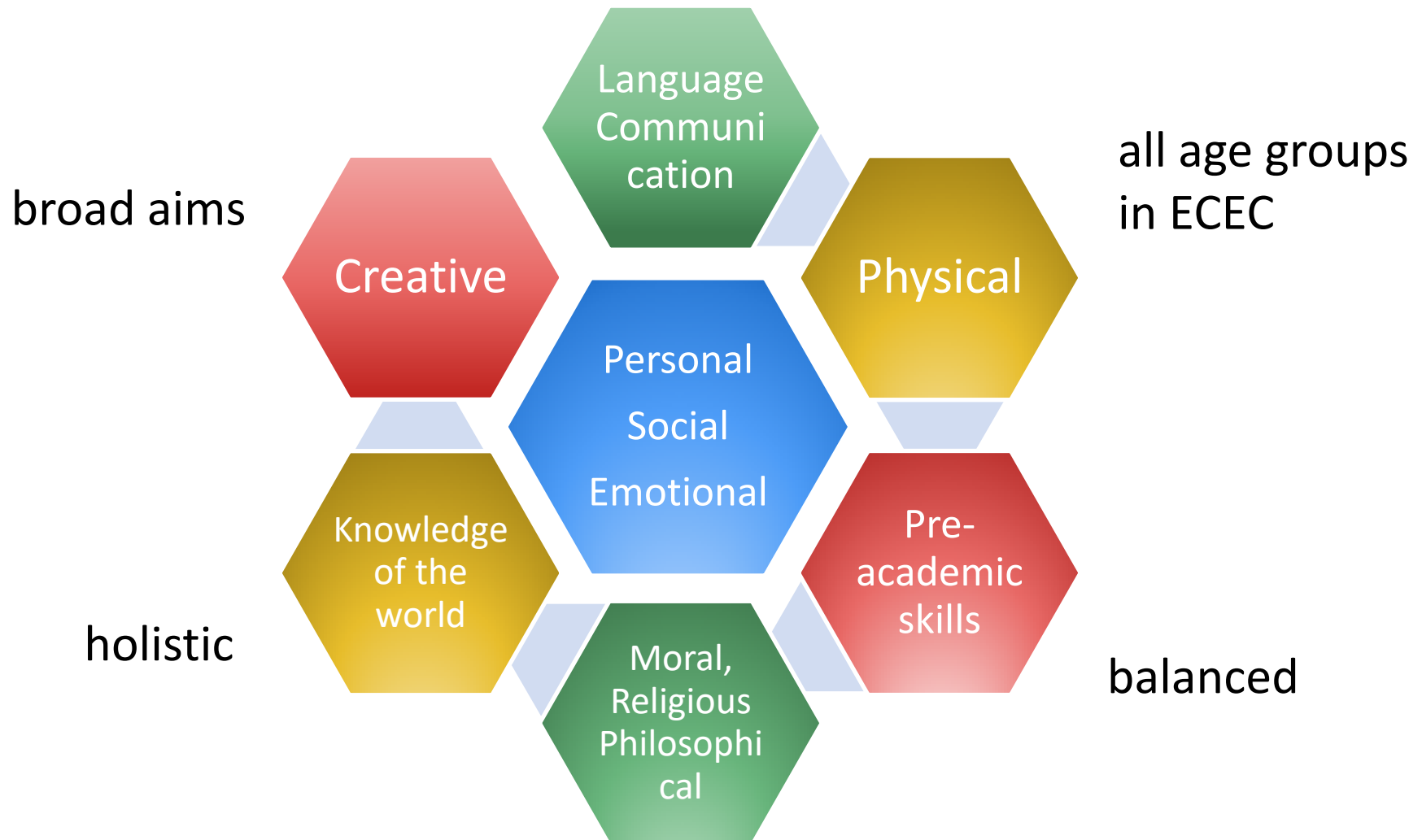


Stemming from three CARE reports:

- the curriculum report (T2.1)
- the multiple case study (T2.3)
- the stakeholder study (T6.2)

Drawing links to educational principles, concepts of learning

Curriculum frameworks: goals of ECEC and areas of development



- Contribute to overall development and wellbeing, include values and norms

Case study focus groups with educators: cultural values and goals

Fostering autonomy and independence

Broad concept of autonomy that encompasses cognitive-intellectual autonomy, as well as physical and emotional self-regulation

Creating a sense of interdependence and belonging to a community

Learning to live in a well organised group, in a flexible although 'lightly regulated' community life



The pleasure of being together, the enjoyment of an atmosphere of conviviality

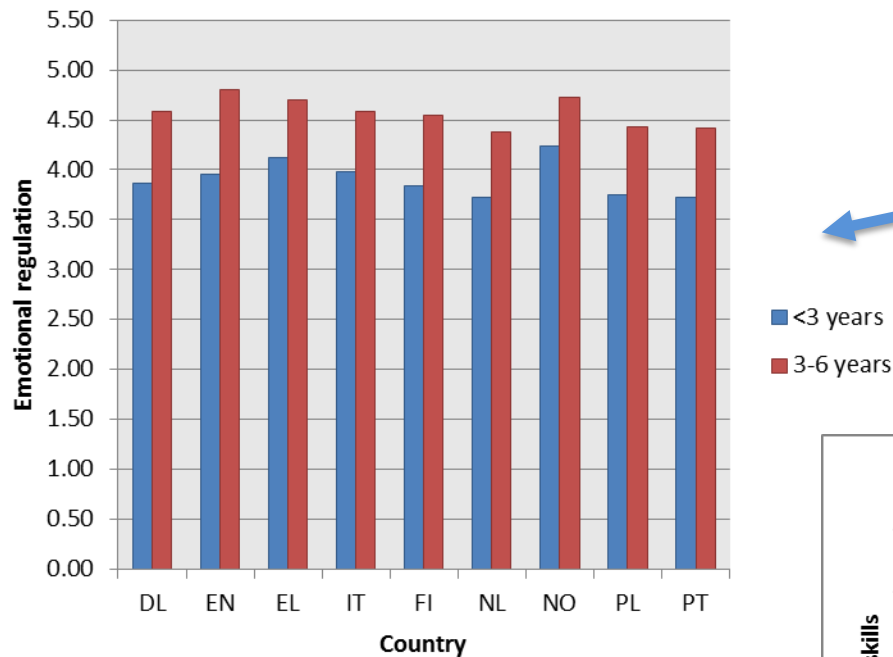
Stimulating children's learning related to specific content and academic skills



Language proficiency as a universal and targeted goal

- more emphasis: learning processes based on self-regulation, problem-solving, creativity and collaboration
- less emphasis: content of knowledge children should acquire

Stakeholder study: developmental-educational goals age 0-3 vs. 3-6

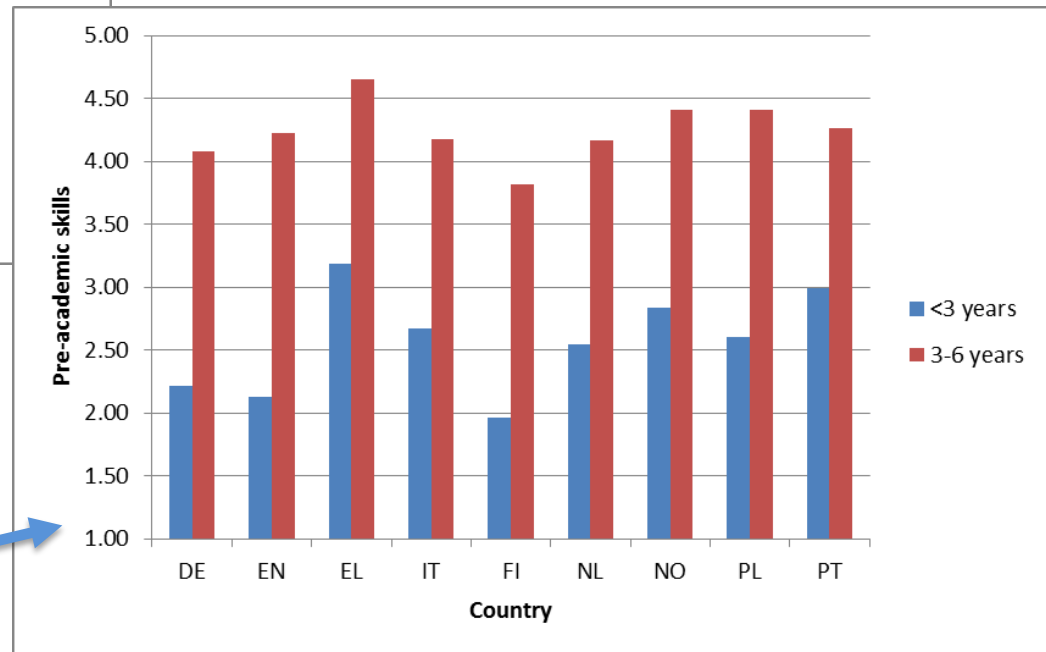


Small increase in the importance that parents attach to more “soft” skills:

- interpersonal skills
- emotion regulation (see example)
- personal learning attitudes

Sharp increase in the importance that parents attach to more “hard” skills:

- pre-academic skills (see example)
 - learning-related skills
- A blue arrow points from this text to the bottom chart.



A balanced curriculum?

Agreement

- Value of learning related to personal and socio-emotional aspects, emphasis on soft-skills
- Learning in ECEC also requires a more sustained focus, related to intellectual development and academic skills.
- More importance to educational goals as children get older

Differences

- Pre-academic skills?: more variation between countries and stakeholders
- Value of school preparation?
- Well-developed frameworks for the older age-group only



Lack of a shared conceptual framework for the younger children?

Lack of clarity (and more divergent views) on the way learning is conceptualised, especially in relation to intellectual goals?

Learning in all areas is about:



Developing a positive self-concept as learner and (emotional) self-regulation

- e.g.
- confidence
- intrinsic motivation
- enthusiasm for learning
- curiosity
- perseverance

Learning processes that require learning/cognitive executive skills

- e.g.
- critical thinking and reasoning,
- problem solving
- organisation and planning
- decision making
- creativity

Acquiring knowledge about a subject and specific skills

- Content that is rich and helps children to develop knowledge of the world as well as higher order thinking skills
- Specific skills, including *pre-academic skills*

The image of the child as a learner

Children are seen as unique individuals, and competent, active drivers of their learning, referred to as:

‘researchers’, ‘explorers’, or ‘strategic and critical thinkers’



The role of the educator

Educators have described their role as ‘scaffolders’, ‘enablers’, ‘sources’, ‘providers of security when is needed’, ‘specialists in knowing individual children’



Pedagogical approach

Agreement

Value of socio-emotional climate

Child-centred and holistic approach

- child is at the centre of planning and decision making
- values of play, creativity, child-initiated activities

Children learn through rich conversation

Differences

- intentional stimulation of learning
- how much guiding from adults during learning
- structuring of the learning environment



Challenges related to the issue of facilitating learning

Lack in clarity in how to best implement the child-centred approach while aiming at progressive learning in all domains.

Research Evidence

Traditional child-centred approach

- socio-emotional climate
- holistic
- sensitivity/responsiveness
- child-lead activities

Social-constructivist approach

- playful activities that include adult scaffolding to facilitate learning
- language to create ideas and common knowledge
- co-construction, collaboration

Academic/didactic approach

- planned academic curriculum
- cognitive stimulation
- instruction
- teacher-lead activities



effects on socio-emotional competence, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation

Long-term effects



Timing effects

increased benefits of an academic orientation on basic skills with age

and for more disadvantaged
Population specific effects

To sum up

- Agreement to go beyond the traditional child-centred approach and include an intentional focus on learning
- Yet, importance of learning undervalued?
- Lack of clarity in how learning is conceptualized
- Lack of clarity in how to implement an approach where child-following, playful and authentic activities are used i) to facilitate learning processes and ii) to introduce children to academic subjects.



Thank you for your attention

before we go on to the second presentation in
theme 1
– any questions?