

CZECH REPUBLIC

Early Childhood Education and Care ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report author

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Citation suggestion:

Loudová Stralczynská, B. 2024. "Czech Republic – ECEC Workforce Profile." In *Early childhood workforce profiles across Europe. 33 country reports with key contextual data*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. Munich: State Institute for Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy.
www.seeepro.eu/English/Country-Reports.htm

Funded by:



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth



State Institute for Early Childhood
Research and Media Literacy



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Glossary

EQF – *European Qualifications Framework*

Outcomes based (knowledge, skills, competences), eight-level reference tool to enable qualification comparisons between countries.

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-efq>

ECTS – *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*

A system for enhancing student mobility through the Europe-wide recognition of credit transfers and credit accumulation in higher education

https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en

ISCED – *International Standard Classification of Education*

An instrument for comparing levels and fields of education across countries, developed by UNESCO in the 1970s and revised in 1997 and 2011.

<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

About the author

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1. ECEC governance in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the system of early childhood education and care is organised in separate sectors. Kindergartens (*mateřské školy*) for 2/3 to 6/7 year-olds and preparatory classes (*přípravné třídy*) for 5 to 7 year-olds¹ come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, while “Children's Groups” (*dětské skupiny*) – a new type of setting for 6 months to 6 year-olds – come under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The majority of children aged 3 to 6 years attend a kindergarten. Children under 3 years of age are cared for either in a nursery or in a Children's Group. The former crèches no longer exist in their original form. However, some of them continue to operate as care facilities under the sponsorship of municipalities or as commercial facilities under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade. They are usually used by parents who have not been able to get a place for their children in a public kindergarten.

Overall, the steering system is organised centrally by the state. However, for kindergartens and preparatory classes, which are part of the school education system, responsibility has been partly transferred to the regions or municipalities.

Responsibilities are divided among the three ministries, considered less than optimal in the long term by early childhood education experts. Even the Czech school inspectorate in its 2015/2016 report viewed centre-based education, upbringing and care in early childhood (0-6 years) as complex and recommended that it be included in the framework of inter-ministerial cooperation (CSI 2016, 31). Some years later, the *Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic for 2019-2023* (MŠMT 2019c) formulated the goal of creating an effective model of care for preschool children together with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Even the long-term plan states that “the system of education and care for children up to three years of age is still not systemically clarified due to unclear responsibilities and concepts for the care of preschool children” (MŠMT 2019c, 32). While some changes have been made in this area, a comprehensive and coherent model for the care and education of children aged 1-6 years has not been elaborated. The current provision of care for children under the age of 3 has systemic deficiencies that create financial problems for parents and do not compensate for the social barriers to accessing care and education, especially when the legal entitlement to a place in a public kindergarten for their 3 years old child cannot be met.

The current policy objective focuses on the provision of places for 1-3 year-olds in childcare centres and kindergartens, on supporting the kindergarten attendance of 5 year-olds from socially disadvantaged families as well as on the integration of Ukrainian refugee children in public kindergartens. The provision of childcare for children under 3 or 2 years of age is considered part of the social sector's responsibility, and the Czech Republic's Education Policy Strategy 2030+ does not include targets for children under 2 years of age. The 2030+ strategy emphasises the need to ensure greater participation of children aged 3 to 4 in pre-primary education in kindergartens (MŠMT 2021a, 20). Inter-agency collaboration currently focuses on supporting vulnerable children and their families². Cooperation between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education focuses particularly on ensuring compulsory pre-primary education for 5 year-

¹ Children deferred from compulsory school are given priority for admission.

² Collaboration of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health under the project Support for Systemic Change in Services for Children, Youth and Families at Risk in the Czech Republic (2018-2022). <https://www.mpsv.cz/podpora-systemovych-zmen-v-oblasti-sluzeb-pece-ohrozene-deti-mlade-lidi-a-rodiny-v-ceske-republice>

old children who do not comply with this obligation and on supporting families at risk of social exclusion.

Between 2018–2021, a research project reviewing the impact of introducing a compulsory last year of pre-primary education was conducted and funded by the Ministry of Education. The research has shown a partial benefit of the introduction of compulsory pre-primary attendance in kindergartens on the frequency of children's attendance. For example, the regularity of children's attendance has improved as a result of the introduction of compulsory notification of non-attendance. "While 92% of children without social disadvantages attend kindergarten every day, according to the directors this is the case for only two thirds of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (64%). Sixteen per cent attend several times a week, 15% several times a month and 5% do not attend at all." (Greger et al. 2022, 142)

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

In ECEC settings, the qualifications of core pedagogues and other personnel depend on the type of workplace. There are fundamental differences in the qualification requirements for staff in educational institutions (kindergartens, preparatory classes) and in settings that provide childcare without explicit educational goals (Playgroups, Children's Groups, Toddler Crèches and other forms of childcare).

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

Education sector

Staff in kindergartens and preparatory classes

According to the law, "pedagogues" or "pedagogical employees" work in kindergartens (*mateřské školy*) and preparatory classes (*přípravné třídy*). In everyday terms these are usually called **Kindergarten Teachers** (*učitelka/učitel*) and this is the terminology used in this report.

In both kindergartens and preparatory classes in schools, different kinds of **pedagogical support staff**, most of them qualified, may also work at times alongside the Kindergarten Teacher to provide support measures for individual children. Since September 2016, the supplementary support staff have included Teachers' Assistants, School Assistants, Bilingual Assistants, Social Care or Special Needs Teachers and Kindergarten Psychologists³. Between 2016 and 2022, kindergartens which worked in groups with at least two 2 year-olds had the opportunity to co-finance their work through a support programme of the Ministry of Education. As of the school year 2022/2023, this funding will no longer be granted. The care of 2 year-olds can still be supported by School Assistants, for whom a new funding programme provides subsidies to the kindergartens. However, the scope of work of the School Assistants is broader.

The Ministry of Education has launched several funding programmes in recent years which provide kindergartens with simplified access to funding for support staff. Systematic changes in the staffing of groups with 2 year-olds were ultimately not implemented. The main focus in the area of supplementary staff is the support of children with special educational needs and their integration into regular kindergarten groups.

³ Information from the Ministry of Education, MŠMT, 01.09.2016

Childcare sector

Staff in Children’s Groups and social care settings

The persons who work with children in children's groups and other childcare facilities are referred to by the umbrella term **Caregivers**. In fact, persons with very **heterogeneous** qualifications may work in Children's Groups.

Since October 2021, new qualification requirements for staff in Children's Groups have been in force (MPSV 2021a). The range and type of professional qualifications (education, health, social care) remain unchanged. The new job titles are: **Caregiver for pre-school age children** and **Caregiver for children in Children’s Groups**. Since July 2022, persons without a higher education entrance qualification (subject-related or general) are no longer allowed to carry out this work. For persons employed by existing providers who do not meet the new requirement, an exemption has been introduced with the obligation that staff complete their training by 1 October 2024. In addition to the above qualifications, the following persons may also work in children's centres: Kindergarten Teachers, Primary School Teachers, Educators, general nursing and care personnel, Midwives, Health Care Assistants, social services employees, Medical Doctors, health care workers, (Clinical) Psychologists.

Since 01.07.2022, the following new provisions apply to the profile of professionals working in Children’s Groups (“Caregivers”):

- (1) Care is provided by at least one person with a professional qualification in health care or a professional qualification as a Caregiver in a Children's Group.
- (2) If a child who is 3 years or older on 1st September is present in the group, at least one Caregiver with a professional qualification in education will carry out the work for at least 20 hours per week in the Children's Group (MPSV 2021a).

Table 1 gives an overview of the staff in both the education and childcare sectors who are in daily contact with the children. For core pedagogues, a reference to the professional profile according to the SEEPRO categories is added (see Box at the end of this Chapter).

Table 1

Czech Republic: Regular staff in ECEC settings

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age range ⁴	Main roles and positions	Main age-range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
Education sector				
Kindergarten Teacher <i>Učitelka/Učitel</i> <i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary Education Professional	<i>Mateřská škola</i> Kindergarten 2/3–6 years (up to enrolment in primary school) <i>Speciální mateřská škola</i>	Core pedagogue with group responsibility Centre leader (following compulsory course of	Primarily 3–6 years, although IPE programmes increasingly include content on working with children under age 3	4 years upper secondary education <i>Award:</i> Subject-linked (pedagogy) higher education entrance qualification

⁴ **Editors’ note:** International data sources use varying ways of presenting the age range of children enrolled in ECEC settings. We have chosen the following age-inclusive format for the SEEPRO-3 reports for countries with a school starting age at 6 (as in the Czech Republic): **0–2** years for children **up to** 3 years of age and **3–5** years for 3, 4 and 5 year-olds. In the Czech Republic, school entry may in justified and professionally assessed cases be deferred to 7 years of age.

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age range ⁴	Main roles and positions	Main age-range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
	<p>Special needs kindergarten 2/3–6 years</p> <p><i>Přípravná třída</i> <i>Základní škola</i> Preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds with additional support needs</p> <p><i>Dětská skupina</i> Children's Group 6 months–5/6 years (up to enrolment in primary school)</p>	management training)		<p>ECTS credits: n/a⁵ EQF level: 4 ISCED 2011: 354</p> <p>Further options: 3 years higher education institution (tertiary-level professional school, <i>vyšší odborné školy</i>), <i>Award: Diploma</i></p> <p>ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 655</p> <p>or 3 years university <i>Award: Bachelor's degree</i></p> <p>ECTS credits: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 645</p>
<p>Teacher's Assistant <i>Asistent pedagoga</i></p>	<p><i>Mateřská škola</i> Kindergarten 2/3–6 years (up to enrolment in primary school)</p> <p><i>Speciální mateřská škola</i> Special needs kindergarten 2/3–6 years</p> <p><i>Přípravná třída (Základní škola)</i> Preparatory class in primary school For 5 to 7 year-olds with additional support needs</p>	As a rule, qualified co-workers, mainly for supporting children with special educational needs	Supporting children with special educational needs from early childhood through to secondary education (depending on the provider, the qualification programme may have a specialisation, e.g. support of multilingual children, etc.)	<p>4 years upper secondary vocational education with a specialisation in pedagogy; subject-specific university entrance qualification</p> <p>ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 4 ISCED 2011: 354</p> <p>or diverse other qualifications – see <i>Table 5</i></p>
Childcare sector				
<p>Caregiver <i>Pečující osoba</i></p>	<p><i>Dětská skupina</i> Children's Group 6 months–5/6 years (up to enrolment in primary school)</p>	Core professional with group responsibility	Varies according to the study route specialisation	4 years upper secondary education specialising in pedagogy/ health care/ social care

⁵ n/a = not applicable

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age range ⁴	Main roles and positions	Main age-range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
<i>Profile:</i> No clear profile because of the variety of professionals working in Children's Groups (see <i>Table 6</i>)				<i>Award:</i> Subject-linked higher education entrance qualification ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 4 ISCED 2011: 354 <i>or</i> many other possible qualifications – see <i>Table 6</i>

Box 1

SEEPRO profile categories for ECEC core professionals (adapted from Oberhuemer, Schreyer, and Neuman 2010)

- **Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional** (specialist focus, 0–6/7 years)
- **Pre-primary Education Professional** (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years)
- **Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional** (focus on pre-primary *and* primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- **Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional** (mainly broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- **Social Care/Health Care Professional** (sometimes early childhood focus, sometimes broad focus, including adults)

2.2 Centre leader

Requirements for Centre Leaders vary according to the type of ECEC setting.

Childcare sector

Children's Group leaders

The Children's Group Act No. 247/2014 does not distinguish between managerial and support staff. In general, providers are subject to the qualification requirements described above (see *Table 1*). Although in practice a specific person is responsible for the management of a Children's Group, the law does not prescribe additional qualification requirements. There is no official job description for the position of director, which is a matter for the provider. However, from October 2021, it is mandatory for at least one person to have a health care degree if there are children under 3 in the group, or an educational degree if there are children over 3 in the group. These persons are expected to provide quality assurance as set out in the Quality Standards for Children's Groups (criteria for the standards are set out in Decree No. 350/2021 Coll.) (MPSV 2021b).

Kindergarten Head

The qualification requirements for a Kindergarten Head are described in the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel (No. 563/2004 Coll., §5). A head is appointed by the provider. For a management position in a kindergarten, at least three years of practice are required: (1) as a Kindergarten Teacher or (2) practice in activities that require knowledge of a similar specialisation or (3) another management activity or (4) at least three years of activity in research and development.

A Kindergarten Teacher may follow a "course for school management" (further education for pedagogical specialists according to the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004 Coll., §24, par.4 a), which must be completed no later than three years after starting as a Kindergarten Head. The qualification in management of an ECEC setting can also be acquired within the framework of a Bachelor's or Master's degree programme.

Leadership tends to be understood as hierarchical, although the transformation of the Czech school system in recent decades has increasingly emphasised collegial leadership. The leadership positions are distributed among the so-called director and their deputy. On the third level of the management hierarchy are Kindergarten Teachers as core pedagogues and below them come the supplementary pedagogical staff and non-educational kindergarten personnel. The current government has prepared an amendment to the Teaching Personnel Act, which went through the approval procedure in 2022–2023. The new version provides for a differentiation of roles within the group of core pedagogues (e.g. as a mentor specialist for trainees).

The Kindergarten Head also works directly with children on a regular basis, whereby the hourly amount of direct pedagogical work with children is reduced depending on the number of groups (classes) (Government Ordinance No. 75/2005 Coll.; MŠMT 2019a). The kindergarten management is appointed by the provider. Since 2012, the term of office of the Kindergarten Head has been six years in accordance with Section 166(2) of the Education Act (MŠMT 2016, most recent amendment 2023). After six years, the service provider can re-advertise the post.

The kindergarten management bears full responsibility for the personnel, financial and pedagogical management of the kindergarten. The high level of autonomy and responsibility of the head at all levels of the school system place considerable demands on the office. One of the consequences of this is the general shortage of management staff and the low interest in this position in the Czech Republic, which is reflected in the low number of applicants for this position following advertisements. The high administrative burden for Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary school heads has long been criticised (Simonová et al. 2017; Federičová 2019; MŠMT 2020a). As research has shown, the workload that is the potentially most demanding for heads is that related to the organisation of the pedagogical staff and communication with them (Smetáčková et al. 2018).

2.3 Centre-based posts of responsibility

In the Czech Republic, there are no designated posts of responsibility for specific pedagogical tasks across the entire ECEC setting (e.g. with a focus on work with migrant families), neither in the childcare sector nor the education sector.

Kindergartens can apply for funding under the MŠMT funding programme for School Assistants, Social Pedagogues and Bilingual Assistants. Such posts are expected to promote social cohesion, working with a heterogeneous group of children and cooperating with the children's families. This includes support for multilingual children and children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. families with a migration background).

There is currently a **new formal specification** of posts between trainee teachers, experienced teachers and mentors for students, resp. newly-qualified professionals in the amended version of the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004 Coll., §24 from September 2023 (valid from 1.1.2024). The employer's obligation to provide induction for trainee teachers is explicitly stated in the legislation for the first two years of pedagogical practice:

“The **induction teacher** in particular guides the novice teacher methodically during their adaptation period, continuously and regularly evaluates with them their direct teaching activities and the performance of work related to their direct teaching activities and familiarises them with the school's activities and documentation.” (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004 Coll., § 24b)

(1) The **accompanying teacher** shall methodically guide a student of another school or college or a participant in the further education of teaching staff referred to in § 22 (1) (a) preparing for the profession of teacher in the context of practical teaching, practical training or practice.

(2) The accompanying teacher may be a person ... who has acquired experience consisting in the performance of direct teaching activity of 5 years.” (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004 Coll., § 24c)“

The Labour Code requires employers to provide all school leavers (within two years of leaving school) with appropriate work experience to enable them to acquire the practical experience and skills required for their work. In practice, mentoring is a specific role in kindergartens as well as in primary and secondary schools. However, until 2023, there was no centrally specified system for the induction of Kindergarten Teachers. The specific form was left up to the centre leader, as was any financial remuneration for the mentor. In a new step, however, the forthcoming legal amendment on teaching staff and their training, provides for the introduction of the position of **induction teachers**, mentors for student teachers and novice teachers (**accompanying teacher**). From January 2024, the work of the mentor will be financially rewarded, and the mentor will be granted a reduction in the hours of direct pedagogical activities in order to support new colleagues.

2.4 Co-ordinating and supervisory staff

There are no legally regulated qualification requirements for educational counsellors. In the Czech Republic, there is no single counselling centre that provides comprehensive counselling for kindergartens or actively engages in pedagogical practice itself. The counselling function is performed by several institutions of different types, which can be used directly by kindergartens or individual professionals and parents:

- **School counselling centres** (pedagogical-psychological counselling centres and special needs education centres): they carry out assessments and offer support and counselling to schools, including kindergartens, and parents, especially in the area of support for children with special educational needs.
- The **National Pedagogical Institute** provides training for pedagogical staff and teachers, develops support platforms and methodological advice,
- **NGOs** and non-profit organisations.

The staff of the above-mentioned institutions must have adequate training and practical experience in the field. However, the requirements for their qualifications are determined by the individual institutions. An exception are the professionals of the school counselling centres, whose qualifications are enshrined in the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel (MŠMT 2023a).

Inspection activities in the field of pedagogical work are carried out on a broad basis only in kindergartens. They are carried out by employees of the Czech School Inspectorate. The qualification for the function of inspector is the legally required education for this position (§ 25(1)(e) of the School Act), i.e. a university degree in pedagogy, psychology or another related field and usually five years of pedagogical or pedagogical-psychological practice (MŠMT 2022a).

2.5 Specialist support staff

Childcare sector

Support for children with special educational needs is not provided for in the legal regulations for **Children's Groups**. This is due to the nature of the institution, as Children's Groups are settings for the care of children, which are not obliged to offer support measures and ensure the education of children. For children with special needs, there are usually no specialists available as support staff.

Education sector

In **kindergartens** and **preparatory classes**, in addition to the Kindergarten Teacher, a mostly qualified **Teacher's Assistant** (*asistent pedagoga*) may also work in the group from time to time to provide possible support measures for individual children (see **2.1**). The number of working hours of the support staff is determined by the school counselling centres and depends on the assessment made of each individual child.

The Teachers' Assistants can also be assigned to several children in a group (as a so-called joint supplementary assistant), so that the kindergarten can coordinate and vary the workload of the staff depending on the number of children with recognised special educational needs and the changes in the support measures that occur during the child's attendance in kindergarten. Since 2020, there is no maximum number of children per Teacher's Assistant (MŠMT 2019b). The personnel management in this area represents a considerable administrative burden for the Kindergarten Head.

The presence of two Teachers' Assistants in a group is currently an exception, as an amendment to the 2021 regulation on the education and upbringing of children with special educational needs has increased the maximum number of staff in a group to three (MŠMT 2020b). The vast majority of kindergartens therefore have two Kindergarten Teachers and one Teacher's Assistant. In the school year 2020/2021, the most frequently used support measure in groups of children with special educational needs was support by a Teacher's Assistant (63.9%). On average, the number of kindergartens in the Czech Republic enrolling children with special educational needs is increasing; in the school year 2020/2021, more than one fifth of all kindergarten groups belonged to this category (CSI 2022).

The support can take place within the framework of joint educational activities for all children or separately in specially equipped rooms. This work of the Teachers' Assistants is determined in their job description by the Kindergarten Head and in relation to the specific conditions of each individual setting.

Kindergartens can also be supported by an external staff member from the school counselling office. However, this is an exceptional measure for regular kindergartens. The presence of special education staff is only typical for special kindergartens. If a child needs sessions with a Speech Therapist, this is usually carried out outside kindergarten hours and accompanied by the parents. Before 1989, Speech Therapists were part of the kindergarten staff in many kindergartens and speech therapy was offered to children directly in the kindergarten (Oprávilová and Uhlířová 2021).

3. Structural composition of the ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Since early childhood education and care in the Czech Republic is organised as a split-sector system, statistical data are compiled and structured in different ways. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs does not carry out any statistical compilation of the qualification, gender or age structure of employees in Children's Groups. There is no statistical data on the qualification structures of staff in Children's Groups and institutions subject to the Trade Act – they can therefore not be included in this overview. The personnel statistics of the Ministry of Education only take into account kindergartens and preparatory classes.

Table 2

Czech Republic: Staffing structures in kindergartens and preparatory classes in schools (2–6 years), 2020

Personal	Proportion of workforce in %
Kindergarten Teachers with a relevant higher education degree – Ph.D.	0.1
Kindergarten Teachers with a relevant higher education degree – Master	9.3
Kindergarten Teachers with a relevant higher education degree – Bachelor	14.6
Kindergarten Teachers with a relevant award from a tertiary professional school	5.9
Kindergarten staff with a relevant upper secondary qualification	69.1
Kindergarten staff with other, non-specialist qualification	1.1
Staff with no formal IPE	6.1* (converted to full-time employees, the proportion is 5.8%*)
Specialist support staff (see 2.5)	Mostly not on-site; may be employed as supplementary staff in cases of need
Male staff	In kindergartens: 0.74
Kindergarten staff with a migration background	No national data available. Staff with a migration background work primarily in areas with a high proportion of minority languages (mostly in larger towns and industrial areas).

Sources: MŠMT 2022b; *CSI 2022

The proportion of qualified Kindergarten Teachers in the pre-primary workforce has steadily decreased nationwide since 2017/2018 and was 93.9% in 2020/2021. Converted to full-time employees, the share of unqualified staff is 5.8% (MŠMT 2022b). The qualification rate of staff is significantly lower in the economically richer regions, especially in Prague and in Central and Western Bohemia. This may be related to the higher cost of living, which is not easily covered by the salary of a Kindergarten Teacher. In addition, due to the shortage of skilled workers, many unqualified people are hired, especially in larger cities. However, they are only allowed to take on the work if their qualifications are supplemented on the job. By way of contrast, in the economically weaker regions (south-east Bohemia and south-east Moravia), the teaching profession in kindergartens and schools is a stable job. An exception are remote regions with a complicated socio-cultural situation (e.g. north-west Silesia), where unemployment is high and there is a long-term shortage of qualified workers.

At the same time, the proportion of people with **higher education** is increasing significantly (the Ministry of Education takes only core pedagogical staff into account in the statistics). In the last ten years, the number has more than doubled (see Annex 1 in the Appendix). In the age group of core pedagogues between 26 and 35 years, university degrees even slightly outweigh upper secondary awards. This can be seen as a very positive development (CSI 2022) (see *Table 3*).

Table 3

Czech Republic: Kindergarten Teachers with a relevant higher education degree – BA, MA, PhD

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Percentage	11.8%	13.5%	15.1%	17.2%	18.9%	20.3%	21.1%	21.8%	22.7%	24.0%

Until 1989, there were no **male professionals** working in kindergartens at all. Their percentage is now increasing every year, especially in the big cities (in the school year 2021/2022 there were 1.5% men in kindergartens in Prague). In the Czech Republic, the pre-school education sector has long been characterised by a high proportion of women (Bendl 2002; Fárová 2015; 2018). The proportion of males, at 0.74%, has long been well below the average for European countries (Loudová Stralczynská et al. 2022). 99.28% of teachers in kindergartens are female, and in preparatory classes 97.85% (MŠMT 2021c). In an international comparison, the Czech Republic is below the European average with 0,5% men in pre-school education and 5,8% in primary school (Eurostat 2021).

In the Czech Republic, there are no official data on **staff with a migrant background** in the pre-primary education sector. In larger cities, some kindergartens appear to employ Teachers' Assistants or School Assistants with a migrant background. The aim is to help children and families from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. children with a different family language) to integrate into the education system. While it is a legal requirement for these teachers to pass a language test (MŠMT 2016), they do not have to be native speakers of the language of instruction. Against the background of the conflict in Ukraine and the high number of refugees from Ukraine, the Ministry of Education is also trying to increase the number of Bilingual Assistants. To this end, it also offers kindergartens and schools simplified funding for these teachers.

Statistical data regarding the qualification structure of the active supplementary pedagogical staff such as **Teachers' Assistants** in kindergartens and preparatory classes are very limited. They are only available as proportions among all active supplementary teachers, but not in relation to the respective levels of the education system and the educational institutions⁶.

4. Initial professional education (IPE)

4.1 Initial qualifying routes (higher education and vocational)

This Chapter focuses on the initial professional education options for three staff categories:

- **Kindergarten Teacher** (core professional in kindergartens for 2 to 5/6 year-olds)

⁶ Statistical data are only available for the highest level of training of the supplementary pedagogical staff, but not for the qualification pathways and the form of training programmes. Therefore, no statements can be made about the most frequent qualification paths or number of lateral entrants.

- **Teacher's Assistant** (supplementary support staff in kindergartens with responsibility for children with special educational needs)
- **Caregiver** (an umbrella term for the staff with diverse IPE qualifications working in Children's Groups (6 months to 6 years), micro nurseries (for 6 months to 4 years) and institutions subject to the Trade Act for children up to 6 years of age).

The educational pathways are presented in three tables.

4.1.1 Kindergarten Teacher (*učitelka/ucitel*)

There are currently three qualification routes available for prospective Kindergarten Teachers. However, until now, only the first option (see below) is the minimum *requirement* for taking up a post in a kindergarten.

The qualification requirements in the Czech Republic for all teachers in the education system (including core pedagogues and supplementary pedagogical staff in kindergartens and preparatory classes) are laid down in Act 563/2004 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff, last amended on 1 September 2023 (MŠMT 2023a). Besides the qualification requirements, the Act defines working hours, continuing professional development and the career system. The pedagogical staff are required to have a professional qualification for the specific educational activity they perform; they must also be fully competent, of good character, in good health and have knowledge of the Czech language, unless otherwise specified. The Act is supplemented by two regulations (No. 1/2006 Coll. and No. 317/2005 Coll.), which lay down the conditions for the further training (CPD) of pedagogical specialists, the accreditation commission and the career system.

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying option 1 (minimum qualification requirement)

Upper secondary vocational school – specialisation in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy

After nine years of compulsory schooling and following the completion of a personal eligibility test and demonstration of proven skills in music, sports and the arts, it is possible to enrol at a vocational school with a pedagogical specialisation. Good general health and a standard pronunciation in the Czech language are prerequisites for admission⁷. The initial professional education usually lasts four years and ends with a subject-related (pedagogy) higher education entrance qualification (ISCED 2011: 354; EQF level: 4).

A total of 44 vocational schools (including four denominational schools and twenty public schools) offer this specialised training (MŠMT 2022d). The classical form is accredited as a four-year face-to-face course or a one to two-year course for students with a university entrance requirement in another subject. The majority of vocational schools also offer a distance learning programme of varying length (three to five years or one to two years for applicants with a university entrance requirement in another subject – depending on previous course content, their aptitude and previously acquired training levels and orientation). This form of study (so-called combined⁸ or evening option of ten to 18 hours per week) may last a maximum of one year longer than the regular IPE programme. The individual VET schools can decide independently on the opening of the training programme and its forms in each year. They usually do so on the basis of demand from applicants and the agreement with the school provider (MŠMT 2009b).

⁷ The same applies to the professional qualifying institutions and to the study of early childhood education at the universities. As a rule, confirmation is required from the general practitioner and the speech therapist by all profession-qualifying institutions.

⁸ The combined form of education comprises in-person and distance forms of education – students have both traditional classes and tasks that they perform individually.

The initial professional studies in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy qualify the vocational school leavers for a broad field of work. As fully qualified pedagogues they may occupy the following posts:

- **Teacher** in a kindergarten (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004, compendium of laws, § 6) or pedagogical employee in other kinds of ECEC setting (MŠMT 2023a)
- **Educator** (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004, compendium of laws, § 16) and Out-of-school Pedagogue (Act on Educational Staff 563/2004, compendium of laws, § 17) in outside-school-hours provision (child-care settings, children’s and young people’s centres, children’s centres)
- **Teacher’s Assistant** (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel 563/2004, compendium of laws, § 20)
- **Caregiver** for children under three years of age (in social care institutions regulated by the Trade Licensing Act) or in groups for older children (commercial enterprises).

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying option 2

Tertiary professional schools – study programmes in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy

The second qualification option for prospective Kindergarten Teachers is the study programme in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy at one of the ten tertiary professional schools in the Czech Republic which offer qualification programmes specialising in early childhood education. Completion of studies is awarded with a Diploma (EQF level 6, ISCED 2011: 655).

The tertiary professional schools are a relatively new form of higher education providing initial professional education – they were established as part of the Czech education system in 1991. In the meantime, there are now four public, one church-affiliated and five private professional schools. Right from the early days these higher education institutions offered both regular courses of studies and distance learning options.

The admission requirements differ to some extent among the tertiary professional schools. In principle, the requirements include a general or subject-linked higher education entrance qualification and an entrance examination (test in aesthetic disciplines, pedagogy, psychology, often also a personality test or an individual interview with the applicant). The standard IPE lasts three years (distance learning four years). Completion of an upper secondary school award with a pedagogical orientation is not required for admission to the tertiary professional schools; the result of the entrance examination is what counts. The regular study programme is divided into winter and summer semesters (16 teaching weeks and three examination weeks). The distance learning course consists of 22 consultation meetings (200 hours) in the school year and three weeks for examinations. The consultations take place on a specific day of the week, about nine hours of block teaching, approximately twice a month (Rýdl and Šmelová 2012, 115).

The study programme qualifies for similar professional positions as the upper secondary programme (i.e. Teacher in kindergartens and other early childhood education institutions, Teacher in a preparatory class, Educator in after-school care centres and social services institutions, Recreational Educator in after-school care and Teacher’s Assistant in all types of schools).

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying option 3

University studies in early childhood education

Since the time of the First Republic, Kindergarten Teachers have been trying to open up university education for kindergarten staff. However, this was never implemented before the Second World War. In the short term, the training of Kindergarten Teachers was carried out at university

level in the years 1946-1950 (a two-year course and later a one-year course). Due to the shortage of teachers, it was then reduced to the secondary level. From 1970 it was then possible to study early childhood education at two universities in the Czech Republic (in Prague and Olomouc). The study programme was aimed at teachers who were to take on more demanding pedagogical, methodological and management tasks in practice. It was organised as a full-time programme as well as a distance learning programme. The first accredited Bachelor's degree programme was offered in Prague (Charles University) in the academic year 1992/1993, later also at other universities (Opravilová and Uhlířová 2021).

Currently, all degree programmes are structured into a Bachelor's and Master's programme within the framework of the Bologna Process. At ten universities (usually at faculties of education) in the Czech Republic, three-year Bachelor's programmes (180 ECTS) and at four universities also subsequent two-year Master's programmes (120 ECTS) can be taken (both as regular studies and as part-time studies, so-called combined studies).

The Bachelor's programme is called "Pedagogy for kindergartens" (literally: "Teaching profession for kindergartens", *Učitelství pro mateřské školy*) and the Master's programme is called "Pedagogy of early childhood".

Entrance requirements are the general or subject-linked university entrance qualification and a successfully passed entrance examination (often a practical or theoretical test, e.g. in aesthetic subjects or the Czech language, an oral examination in the subject areas of pedagogy, psychology, children's literature, a personality test or a test of the applicants' general study requirements, etc.). The conditions differ depending on the university and are adjusted from year to year. In the long term, there are more interested persons than places for the Bachelor's degree programme. In Prague, from around 240 applicants, about 30 are usually accepted for a regular programme and 30 for a part-time programme. However, many school-leavers apply to more than one university or to other educational courses (e.g. primary education, special and remedial education).

Both intensive practical and theoretical elements are included in the three-year programme. The Ministry of Education guidelines specify the percentage, credits and hours of each component (see *Table 4*). The Bachelor programmes are designed to prepare kindergarten professionals with regard to the framework curriculum for preschool education (MŠMT 2021b). However, detailed specifications of the objectives and contents of the bachelor's degree programmes are not prescribed by the state and are within the university's scope of decision. The Bachelor's and Master's programmes are divided into compulsory, compulsory elective and elective courses. These are intended to promote general, subject-related, didactic and pedagogical-psychological knowledge, skills and abilities of the students (an example of curricular areas in the Bachelor's programme at the faculty of education of Charles University is listed in Annex 2 in the Appendix). The Bachelor's and Master's programmes are divided into compulsory, compulsory elective and elective courses. These are intended to promote general, subject-related, didactic and pedagogical-psychological knowledge, skills and abilities of the students (an example of curricular areas in the Bachelor's programme at the faculty of education of Charles University is listed in Annex 2 in the Appendix).

A uniform professional standard for the Bachelor's and Master's programmes did not exist until 2023. In October 2023, a *general Competence Framework for Teacher Education Graduates* (MŠMT 2023c) was published, an orientation framework for all teacher education programmes. Based on this general competence framework, specific competence frameworks, including the competence framework for Pre-primary Education Teacher graduates, should be developed in 2024.



Table 4

Czech Republic: Qualification routes for Kindergarten Teachers (*učitelka/učitel*)

Job title in Czech: <i>Učitelka/Učitel</i> ("Teacher") Profile: Pre-primary Education Professional
<p><i>Route 1</i> (= the only <i>requirement</i> for occupational practice):</p> <p>Entry requirements: 9 years of compulsory schooling; entrance examination; competence test (e.g. music, sports, the arts etc.)</p> <p>Professional education: 4 years upper secondary vocational, specialist field pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy. Field placement of at least 10 weeks and teaching practice of at least 7 hours per week throughout the four years</p> <p>Award: Subject-linked university entrance qualification (<i>maturita</i>)</p> <p>ECTS credits: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 4</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 354</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years); preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds . Work in age-integrated Children’s Groups, in micro nurseries or workplace nurseries is also possible.</p> <p><i>Route 2:</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: General or subject-linked university entrance qualification; entrance examination and competence test (e.g. aesthetic-artistic field, pedagogy, psychology)</p> <p>Professional education: 3 years at a tertiary professional school, either specialising in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy or in IPE for Educators who have successfully passed an examination in early childhood education as part of their university entrance qualification</p> <p>Award: Diploma</p> <p>ECTS credits: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 655</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years); preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds. Work in age-integrated Children’s Groups (6 months–6 years), in micro nurseries or workplace nurseries is also possible.</p> <p><i>Route 3:</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: General or subject-linked university entrance qualification; entrance examination and competence test (e.g. aesthetic-artistic field, pedagogy, psychology – varies according to university); it is possible to enrol for a subsequent two-year Master’s degree full-time or distance learning programme.</p> <p>Professional education: 3-year Bachelor study programme specialising in pre-primary education</p> <p>Award: Bachelor’s degree/Pre-primary education</p> <p>ECTS credits: 180</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 645</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years); preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year olds. Work in age-integrated Children’s Groups (0–6 years), in micro nurseries or workplace nurseries is also possible.</p>

In addition to these three qualifying routes, alternative qualification paths have also been opened up. Since 2005, Special Educators with a university degree can also be employed as fully qualified core pedagogues in kindergartens; since 2012, persons with a university degree as an Educator, Primary School Teacher, Recreational Educator or graduates of the study programme in pedagogy after completing the continuing professional development programme for Kindergarten Teachers (within the framework of lifelong learning programmes at the universities).

4.1.2 Teacher's Assistant (*asistent pedagoga*)

Since 1993, Teachers' Assistants have been working as supplementary staff in groups for children with social disadvantages (in regular kindergartens, special needs kindergartens or preparatory classes at primary schools) and since 1997 in groups for children with health impairments (in integrative regular kindergartens or special needs kindergartens).

The legal basis for competences, training and work content was anchored in the years 2004 to 2005. However, no specific initial professional education path was defined.

After the amendment of the Schools Act in 2016, pedagogical support staff became an integral part of the workforce in all types of schools and their number has doubled since 2016. Teachers' Assistants are one of the most important assets in the promotion of inclusion in kindergartens and primary/secondary schools. The position of Teacher's Assistant is still more of an alternative employment opportunity – very often for mothers of pre-school and younger school-age children – but with the gradual improvement of salaries, this position is changing. Currently, however, there is a great shortage of supplementary Teachers' Assistants throughout the Czech school system.

The requirements for professional qualifications of supplementary specialists are laid down in Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on Pedagogical Personnel (amended by Act No. 183/2023, § 20). The Act provides for **two types** of Teachers' Assistants:

- 1) According to §20, para. 1, a Teacher's Assistant who performs **direct pedagogical activities in a classroom** where children or pupils with special educational needs are taught or in a school that teaches children and pupils in the form of individual integration.

The minimum qualification for this position is a subject-linked higher education entrance qualification (*maturita*) in the pedagogical field or a higher education entrance qualification and a further training course *Study Programme in Pedagogy* for supplementary staff.

- 2) According to §20, para. 2, a Teacher's Assistant who performs **direct pedagogical activities in the form of pedagogical support activities** in a school, in a school-based facility for recreational pedagogy, in a school-based educational and accommodation facility, in a school-based facility for the implementation of home or protective education or in a school-based facility for preventive pedagogical care.

For this position, even lower minimum requirements apply, namely basic training and studies for Teachers' Assistants (completion of lower secondary education and a qualifying course). This is viewed negatively in professional circles and is also a reason for the low remuneration.

The qualifying routes described below are equivalent, heterogeneous and characterised by high permeability possibilities. In general, all persons with initial pedagogical education at upper secondary level and pedagogical or psychological education at tertiary level can perform the work of a Teacher's Assistant without taking a further qualifying course. Such a qualifying course (so-called study programme in pedagogy or study programme for Teachers' Assistants⁹) is only obligatory for persons with a degree in a non-educational subject. In the meantime, however, there are a large number of institutions that have accredited such a 120-hour qualifying course for supplementary staff with the Ministry of Education. This great variety raises the question of the real quality of these courses with regard to some providers. Experts also point out that the qualification of Assistants who have completed only one such course is insufficient if they are to provide highly specific support to children with special needs (Hájková 2018; Němec et al. 2014).

⁹ According to the law, the "study of pedagogy" is a general designation for qualification/continuing education programmes of pedagogical orientation without further specification.



The following qualifying routes directly address the professional preparation of supplementary pedagogical staff.

Teacher's Assistant – qualifying option 1

Study programmes for Teachers' Assistants

The first way to obtain the minimum qualification for the work of Teachers' Assistants of both types is the so-called **Study Programme in Pedagogy**. This qualifying course is also offered by various universities and further education institutions. It is intended for persons who have completed upper secondary education or have a (specialist) university degree in a non-educational subject. Until 2023, it comprised at least 80 hours; since 01.09.2023 it comprises at least 120 hours. This study of pedagogy forms the new pathway for professionals to the qualification of a Teachers' Assistant (**1st and 2nd type**), who carries out direct pedagogical activities in a classroom.

The **Study Programme for Teachers' Assistants**¹⁰ is the second way to obtain the minimum qualification for Teacher's Assistant (**2nd type**), who carry out direct pedagogical activities in the form of pedagogical support activities. As from September 2023, the programme is called: *Studies for Teaching Assistants who carry out direct teaching activities in auxiliary educational work*. The programme is offered by various universities and further education institutions (53 providers), whose number has more than doubled in the last 5 years. Each of these educational institutions must have its own programme accredited. Depending on the specialisation, the contents differ: e.g. preparation mainly for work with children with a migration background, with socially disadvantaged or bilingual children, with children with ADHD, etc. The courses can usually be completed within one year. Great emphasis is placed not only on theoretical but also on practical preparation. This full-time training programme consists of at least 120 hours (80 hours of theory and 40 hours of practice).

A third way to obtain the minimum qualification for the work of a Teacher's Assistant of both types is to study within the framework of further education courses of higher education institutions and universities.

Teacher's Assistant – qualifying option 2

Upper secondary vocational school programme for Teachers' Assistants

Since September 2023, this programme is the second way to obtain the minimum qualification for Teacher's Assistant (**2nd type**), who carry out direct pedagogical activities in the form of pedagogical support activities. Currently, only five vocational schools have a designated and accredited qualifying programme in Pedagogy for Assistants in Education (*Pedagogika pro asistenty ve školství*). The course is offered by only two vocational schools and only in distance learning format (5-year training for trainees with completed lower secondary education in combined or evening form and 1- or 2-year regular training for persons with completed upper secondary education in another subject) (MŠMT 2022d, own research). The qualifying course, which was created in 2008, is intended to enable these persons to obtain upper secondary education and is therefore offered on a part-time basis¹¹. However, this qualifying option plays a less significant

¹⁰ In accordance with legislative provisions in Act No. 563/2004 Coll., §20 and Regulation No. 317/2005 Coll., §4.

¹¹ Personal communication from PhDr. Jana Kašparová, National Institute of Education, 23.09.2016.



role, as the Teachers' Assistants of both types are recruited either from persons with other pedagogical qualifications or from persons who have completed the qualifying course (see qualifying option 2).

This IPE route (similar to all accredited IPE routes at upper secondary level) is based on a national framework programme for vocational schools. In addition to the general education subjects (525 teaching hours), 310 teaching hours are devoted to pedagogical-psychological preparation and 150 teaching hours to the pedagogical work of the Teacher's Assistant. The minimum amount of practical training is 100 hours. The study programme is intended to prepare learners for supporting children with special needs in general, not only specifically for work in primary schools or kindergartens (MŠMT 2009a).

Table 5 gives an overview of the different qualifying routes for the profession of Teacher's Assistant.

Table 5

Czech Republic: Routes for qualifying as a Teacher's Assistant (*asistent pedagoga*)

Job title in Czech: <i>Asistent pedagoga</i> (lit. "Teaching Assistant")
<p>Type 1: Teachers' Assistants who carry out direct teaching activities in the classroom</p> <p>There are currently seven qualification routes for Type 1 Teachers' Assistants in kindergartens and preparatory classes. These professionals can also work in Children's Groups and social care settings outside the education sector.</p>
<p><i>Route 1.1</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling; entrance examination</p> <p>Professional education: 4 years upper secondary vocational with specialisation in pedagogy</p> <p>Award: Subject-related university entrance qualification (<i>maturita</i>)</p> <p>ECTS credits: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 4</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 354</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/special education kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).</p>
<p><i>Route 1.2</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification with a <i>non</i>-pedagogical specialisation</p> <p>Professional education: Completion of the <i>Study Programme in Pedagogy</i> within the further education</p> <p>Award: Certificate</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/special education kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).</p>
<p><i>Route 1.3</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance examination</p> <p>Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school programme with a specialisation in pedagogy</p> <p>Award: Diploma/degree*</p>

Job title in Czech: *Asistent pedagoga* (lit. “Teaching Assistant”)

ECTS credits: n/a for Diploma awards

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 655

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/special education kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

*The tertiary professional schools are not yet integrated into the Bachelor/Master system, although according to ISCED (2011) their awards are placed at level 655 and in the EQF at level 6. Permeability of these professional studies is limited – only a few universities accept a selection of the examinations in their Bachelor study programmes, otherwise the tertiary professional school graduates have to complete the full course of studies.

Route 1.4

Entry requirements: Diploma/degree from a tertiary professional school with a *non*-pedagogical specialisation (3-year professional education programme)

Professional education: Completion of the *Study Programme in Pedagogy* within the further education

Award: Programme certificate

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/special education kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Route 1.5

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3 years university, Bachelor study programme with a specialisation in Educational Science; enrolment for a subsequent 2-year Master’s degree programme possible.

Award: Bachelor

ECTS credits: 180

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 645

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Route 1.6

Entry requirements: Completed Bachelor study programme in a *non*-pedagogical specialisation

Professional education: Completion of the *Study Programme in Pedagogy* within the further education

Award: Certificate

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Since 01.09.2023 there is an additional qualifying option:

Route 1.7

Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling; entrance examination

Job title in Czech: *Asistent pedagoga* (lit. “Teaching Assistant”)

Professional education: 8 or 6 years of secondary technical school (conservatoire). Conservatoires provide art education through two types of programmes:

- “Six-year programmes focused on music, singing, music and drama for pupils who have completed compulsory schooling; these programmes include upper secondary and tertiary level of education (ISCED 354+554)
- An eight-year programme specialising in dance for pupils who have completed the 5th year of the basic school; the programme includes lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary level of education (ISCED 244+354+554).

It is possible to achieve the tertiary professional education in conservatoires by passing the graduate examination (absolutorium) after completing the whole educational programme.” (Eurydice 2023b)

Award: Diploma

ECTS credits: n/a

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 554

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/special education kindergarten (2/3 to 5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Type 2: Teachers’ Assistants who perform direct teaching activities consisting of auxiliary educational work in the school

There are currently four qualification routes for Type 2 Teachers’ Assistants in kindergartens and preparatory classes.

Route 2.1

Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling

Professional education: Accredited supplementary qualifying programme (*Study Programme for Teachers’ Assistants*) of at least 120 hours’ duration which is offered by further education institutions

Award: Certificate

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years, together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Up to 01.07.2022, these persons were also allowed to work in Children’s Groups, but it is now no longer possible, as the minimum qualification level has been raised to university entrance qualification (there is a transition period for existing providers) (MPSV 2021a).

Route 2.2

Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling; entrance exam

Professional education: Upper secondary vocational programme offering a specialism for Teachers’ Assistants (in the case of a subject-related university entrance qualification in a non-pedagogical subject the course can be completed within 1 to 2 years or as a distance learning programme within 1 to 3 years)

Award: Subject-related university entrance qualification (*maturita*)

ECTS credits: n/a

EQF level: 4

ISCED 2011: 354

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years, together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Route 2.3

Entry requirements: Skilled worker certificate

Job title in Czech: *Asistent pedagoga* (lit. “Teaching Assistant”)

Professional education: Completion of the *Study Programme in Pedagogy* or *Study Programme for Teachers’ Assistants*, both within the further education.

Award: Certificate

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years, together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Route 2.4

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification in a *non-pedagogical* discipline

Professional education: Completion of the *Study Programme for Teachers’ Assistants* within the further education.

Award: Certificate

Main ECEC workplaces: Kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years), together with a core pedagogue; special needs/remedial therapy kindergarten (2/3–5/6 years, together with a core pedagogue; preparatory class in primary school for 5 to 7 year-olds, together with a core pedagogue (in each case – focus on children in need of special support).

Possible additional routes: All further qualifying options for Type 1 Teachers’ Assistants (see Routes 1.1 to 1.7)

4.1.3 Caregiver (*pečující osoba*)

Caregivers are core pedagogues in Children's Groups and micro-crèches. Since 2021, there has been a specific qualification for these personnel prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the graduates of which are designated as a "Caregiver for children in a Children's Group" (§ 5 of the Children's Groups Act, MPSV 2021a). Since 1 July 2022, it is obligatory for providers of Children's Groups to employ at least one Caregiver with a healthcare degree or one with the new professional qualification.

Since 1 July 2022, the provider is also obliged to employ a Caregiver with a pedagogical qualification for at least 20 hours per week if children are admitted to the Children's Group from 1 September after their third birthday. A “pedagogical qualification” refers to Kindergarten Teachers, Primary School Teachers, Special Education Pedagogues, Educators or a Teacher’s Assistant in accordance with §20 para. 1 of the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel (MŠMT 2023a).

Since September 2016, persons who have completed an IPE course with a pedagogical, social or health focus (ISCED 2011 354) or with a Caregiver qualification (see Route 11) can also work as an Assistant (*chůva* – “nanny”) in kindergartens that have admitted 2 year-olds. However, this position has not been included in the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel (MŠMT 2023a). The Ministry of Education provided funding for their salary costs through special subsidy programmes, but the kindergartens had to make a specific and repeated application. Their inclusion is a considerable help in supporting 2 year-old children, but systematisation remains a challenge for future legislation. Moreover, the programme to fund them expired with the school year 2021/2022.

Table 6 gives an overview of the qualifying routes of the 13 different professional awards that are considered prerequisites for employment as a core pedagogue in the Children's Groups and micro-crèches.

Table 6

Czech Republic: Qualifying routes for core pedagogues (Caregivers) in Children’s Groups (pečující osoba)

Job title in Czech: Pečující osoba Profiles: Diverse
<p><i>1. Kindergarten Teacher</i> For the three qualifying routes, see Table 4.</p>
<p><i>2. Primary School Teacher</i> Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam Professional education: 5-year Master study programme with specialisation in Primary Education Award: Master’s degree ECTS credits: 300 EQF level: 7 ISCED 2011: 746 Main (ECEC) workplaces: Primary school, out-of-school provision, Children’s Group (<i>dětská skupina</i>) (6 months–5(6) Jahre), as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years, social care settings, etc.</p>
<p><i>3. Educator</i></p> <p><i>3.1 Educator (higher education route)</i> Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school or Bachelor study programme for Educators (literally: <i>Study Programme in Educational Science</i>, i.e. specialisation for work with 7 to 18 year-olds in schools and out-of-school settings) Award: Diploma or Bachelor’s degree (Master’s study programme possible following Bachelor award) ECTS credits: n/a (Diploma), 180 (Bachelor) EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 645/655 Main (ECEC) workplaces: Out-of-school provision, Children’s Group (<i>dětská skupina</i>) (6 months–5(6) Jahre), as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years, social care settings, etc.</p>
<p><i>3.2 Educator (upper secondary vocational route)</i> Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling; entrance exam Professional education: 4 years upper secondary vocational with specialisation in <i>Professional Studies for Educators</i> Award: Subject-related university entrance qualification (<i>maturita</i>) ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 4 ISCED 2011: 354 Main ECEC workplaces: Out-of-school provision, Children’s Group (<i>dětská skupina</i>) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years), out-of-school settings</p>
<p><i>4. General Nurse</i> Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school or Bachelor study programme Award: Diploma or Bachelor’s degree ECTS credits: n/a (Diploma), 180 (Bachelor) EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 645/655 Main ECEC workplaces: Children’s Group (<i>dětská skupina</i>) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years)</p>

Job title in Czech: Pečující osoba
Profiles: Diverse

5. Midwife

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3-year Bachelor study programme

Award: Bachelor's degree

ECTS credits: 180

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 645

Main ECEC workplaces: Children's Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months–5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years)

6. Paramedic

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school or Bachelor study programme

Award: Diploma or Bachelor's degree

ECTS credits: n/a (Diploma), 180 (Bachelor)

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 645/655

Main ECEC workplaces: Children's Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months–5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years)

7. Healthcare Assistant

Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling; entrance exam

Professional education: 4 years upper secondary vocational programme with a relevant (*non-pedagogical*) orientation

Award: Subject-related university entrance qualification (*maturita*)

ECTS credits: n/a

EQF level: 4

ISCED 2011: 354

Main ECEC workplaces: Children's Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months–5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years)

8. Social Worker

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school or Bachelor study programme

Award: Diploma or Bachelor's degree, subsequent Master's/Doctoral study programme possible

ECTS credits: n/a (Diploma), 180 (Bachelor)

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 645/746/747/844/655

Main ECEC workplaces: Children's Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months–5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

9. Caregiver – early years (lit.: "Carer for children up to compulsory school age")

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification

Professional education: (1) None, just an examination without a previous formal qualification; (2) Further education programme for lateral entrants of 160 hours' duration (including 60 hours of field-based studies)

Award: Certificate

ECTS credits: n/a

EQF level: 4

ISCED 2011: 344/354

Main ECEC workplaces: Children's Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months–5(6) years, as core pedagogue,

Job title in Czech: Pečující osoba
Profiles: Diverse

micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

10. Caregiver – Children’s Group (lit. “Carer for children in a Children’s Group”)

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification

Professional education: None, just exam without a previous formal qualification

Award: Certificate

ECTS credits: n/a

EQF level: 4

ISCED 2011: 344/354

Main ECEC workplaces: Children’s Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

11. Health and Social Services employee

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3-year tertiary professional school or Bachelor study programme

Award: Diploma or Bachelor’s degree, subsequent Master’s study programme possible

ECTS credits: n/a (Diploma), 180 (Bachelor)

EQF level: 6

ISCED 2011: 645/746/655/746

Main ECEC workplaces: Children’s Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

12. Medical doctor

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 6-year university study programme

Award: MUDr. (*Medicinae Universae Doctor* – General Practitioner in the Czech Republic)

ECTS credits: 360

EQF level: 7

ISCED 2011: 747

Main ECEC workplaces: Children’s Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

13. (Clinical) Psychologist

Entry requirements: General or subject-related university entrance qualification; entrance exam

Professional education: 3-year Bachelor studies followed by a 2-year Master’s degree programme

Award: Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree

ECTS credits: 300 (180 plus 120)

EQF level: 7

ISCED 2011: 746

Main ECEC workplaces: Children’s Group (*dětská skupina*) (6 months –5(6) years, as core pedagogue, micro-crèche (6 months–4 years) and other settings

4.2 Competences, curricula and pedagogic-didactic approaches in IPE programmes

4.2.1 Kindergarten Teacher (*Učitelka/Učitel*)

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying option 1

Upper secondary vocational school – specialisation in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy

The content for this qualifying route is anchored in the *Framework Education Programme for the subject pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy* (2009), which is a binding framework for all vocational schools with this orientation. This document defines not only the general basic competences, but also subject-specific competences. Educational content is based on the four goals of Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century (the "four-pillar model"¹² in the Delors Report¹³). The vocational course aims to develop skills and abilities in the form of key and subject-specific competences, which are linked to the curriculum for the uniform nine-year primary school (Framework Education Programme for primary and lower secondary education):

- **Key competences** are divided into: Learning competence, problem-solving competence, communicative competence, personal and social competence, civic competence and cultural awareness, work and business competence, mathematical competence and competence in the use of information and communication technologies.
- **Subject-related competences** concern the preparation, realisation and evaluation of pedagogical, educational and recreational activities of young and school-age children. Graduates should also be enabled to observe occupational safety and health protection at work, to strive for the highest quality in their own work and to act economically, in accordance with the strategy of lifelong learning. Each vocational school develops its own school education programme, which is structured either by subjects or in modules.

Table 7

Czech Republic: Key curricular areas of the vocational school qualifying programme for pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy

Areas of learning	Minimum number of hours during the vocational school programme	
	Weekly	Total number of hours
Language education: Czech	5	160
Language education: foreign language	10	320
Societal education	5	160
Science education	4	128
Mathematical education	8	256
Aesthetic education (Music, Art, Drama)	5	160
Health education	8	256
Education in Information and Communication Technologies	4	128
Economic education	2	64
Pedagogic-psychological education	21	672
Pedagogical didactics	30	960

¹² Learning to live together; learning to acquire knowledge; learning to act; learning for life.

¹³ Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, Ed. 1997. *Lernfähigkeit: Unser verborgener Reichtum. UNESCO-Bericht zur Bildung für das 21. Jahrhundert* [Capacity to learn: our hidden wealth. UNESCO Report on Education for the 21st Century]. Neuwied; Krieffel; Berlin: Luchterhand. See also: <https://www.unesco.de/infothek/publikationen/publikationsverzeichnis/delors-bericht.html>.

Areas of learning	Minimum number of hours during the vocational school programme	
	Weekly	Total number of hours
Disposable hours	26	832
Total	128	4096

Source: MŠMT, Framework Plan for Pre-primary and Out-of-school Pedagogy 2009b, 58

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying route 2

Tertiary professional school – study programmes in pre-primary and out-of-school pedagogy

The qualifying courses include both theoretical and practical subjects and are primarily oriented towards pedagogical work with 3 to 6 year-old children in kindergartens, but also towards other educational situations. The specification of the curricular areas is designed individually by the higher education institution. Each higher education institution has its own accredited programme – although the programmes have a common basis in terms of content, they differ in terms of the design, scope and orientation of the subjects. As a rule, both general (foreign language, ICT, etc.) and subject-related subjects are covered, i.e. content from pedagogy, psychology, didactics, school law and school management and subjects that promote specific competences (communicative, musical or motor skills). Students also have other elective subjects at their disposal that are, for example, linked to current pedagogical topics (intercultural education/education, second/foreign language acquisition, environmental education, dealing with media, digital education) or that deepen their subject knowledge in a specific area (e.g. in an aesthetic discipline). The professional schools structure the training programmes into modules (compulsory, compulsory elective and elective subjects). Practical training is structured as weekly internships, mainly in the first and second year of study, both during the school year and in the holiday period.

The study programme ends with a diploma examination, which consists of three partial examinations: an oral examination in a foreign language, a theoretical or practical examination in subject-related subjects and the defence of the diploma thesis.

Kindergarten Teacher – qualifying option 3

University study programme in Early Childhood Education

The curriculum of the Bachelor's degree programmes emphasises the following professional competences (Opravilová 2007; 2016): Respect for children, children's development, creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and understanding. Observations of the children form the basis of the educational activities, which are then adapted to their needs and abilities. The methods and pedagogical activities should be chosen with the specific characteristics and developmental nuances of the children in mind, and decisions should be analysed and justified accordingly. Activities should be planned, and conditions created that benefit the development of the individual and the group – including children with special needs. The use of music, art and drama should reflect the needs of the early childhood environment and the children's individual abilities. Learning how to adapt the pedagogical work to the children's individual needs has a high priority.

The study programme **curricula** are beginning to respond to current societal problems in their educational content and increasingly taking into account challenges that arise for the pedagogical work: The education of children with special needs; inclusive education; support of children with a migration background and children with social disadvantages; transitions (especially in connection with school enrolment); at some universities also foreign language acquisition for young children.

The **content** of the study programme is intended to prepare students for competence-oriented pedagogical work in the current educational and upbringing concept of early educational institutions (especially kindergartens) and for the increased importance of special needs education. Societal developments emphasise the importance of preparation in these areas and are leading to more innovation in the faculty study programmes in order to take more account of these issues – which are rather new in the general pedagogical discourse in the Czech Republic compared to Germany and other Western European countries. The study content areas are exclusively oriented towards work with young children (mainly between 3 and 6 years of age). Increasingly, courses/modules or topics on the upbringing and education of under 3 year-olds are also being incorporated into the study programmes¹⁴. From a disciplinary point of view, the main curricular focus is on educational and psychological subject areas. Social topics and an orientation towards socio-pedagogical and out-of-school activities tend to be of less significance.

The study programmes at the ten universities differ greatly from each other in terms of programme content, especially in the electives. The diversity of options available to applicants is a positive feature which enables the choice of a programme that matches an applicant's personal professional interests. Electives relate to a component of the statutory requirements or to the focus of the programme. The number of credits for compulsory subjects together with the minimum number of credits for electives usually amounts to about 90% of the total number of credits.

All faculties have included foreign language learning in the compulsory or elective subjects. Some faculties offer only English, while others also offer German, French, Spanish or Russian and offer both language learning for students and foreign language didactics in kindergarten. Early foreign language teaching in kindergarten is a controversial topic in the Czech Republic, with much of the professional community raising questions related to the introduction of (mainly) English in mainstream kindergartens. As the number of multilingual children in kindergartens has doubled in the last ten years, more and more emphasis is being placed on the didactics of Czech as a second language. The consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and the high level of migration present a very particular context. Universities have responded to the new situation by setting up elective courses for students who want to further their education on this issue, or by recognising support for refugees as part of their practice, etc.

The practicum component of the study programmes is organised differently at each university (see *Chapter 5*). The universities often have faculty kindergartens, i.e. regular kindergartens and also kindergartens with alternative/innovative pedagogical approaches (Montessori and Waldorf pedagogy, Dalton Plan, Reggio pedagogy, forest kindergartens, the Step by Step approach or the innovative pedagogical concept "health supporting kindergarten"¹⁵), which cooperate with the respective faculty chair in the long term and ensure the practical placements in cooperation with the university lecturers. Students acquire theoretical knowledge and practical experience with alternative pedagogical programmes and with other forms of early childhood education institutions during their studies.

¹⁴ For example, at the Faculty of Education of Charles University in Prague, there is a specialisation/profiling in the Master's programme oriented to work with children up to 3 years of age (so-called study of early childhood).

¹⁵ This is an innovative pedagogical concept of Czech origin that emerged in the early 1990s as a response to the holistic and humanistic-oriented approach. It was particularly influential during the second half of the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century. Today, elements of this approach are already an integral part of most education programmes in kindergartens and primary schools.

The Bachelor's degree is completed with a written thesis and an oral examination, which usually consist of partial examinations in the subject areas of education and psychology, in a specialisation subject or children's literature and the defence of the Bachelor's thesis. This can be followed by a two-year Master's programme.

Graduates acquire qualifications for work as a core professional/lead pedagogue or manager in regular and special/ remedial kindergartens, in other early childhood education institutions, in kindergartens with alternative educational programmes and in kindergartens attached to hospitals, therapeutic institutions and sanatoriums.

Graduates should be prepared to perform the following tasks and professional requirements: designing and implementing the curriculum at class and institution level, consulting with other teachers, diagnosing and evaluating structural, organisational and qualitative processes at different levels. The graduates are prepared for teamwork with the family and the various educational providers in the pre-primary sector. They have basic competences in the management and leadership of kindergartens and have the ambition to further develop their own conceptual understanding. The study programmes focus on the students' personal and professional development and prepare them for an inclusive approach to working with a mixed group of pre-school age children.

Table 8 summarises the proportion of each study component set by the Ministry of Education as the uniform orientation framework for the newly accredited early childhood education programmes in 2017.

Table 8

Czech Republic: National Framework for determining the scope of individual components of initial professional education in the BA programme for educators

Curricular components	Proportion of programme, in %	Credits	Number of hours during the study programme
Propaedeutics: Educational psychology and special education subjects, e.g. general education, psychology and didactics, history, school education, educational psychology, developmental psychology, Inclusion didactics, methodology, medical propaedeutics, foreign languages and ICT in connection with teaching for kindergartens or studying.	23–30	41–54	1.230–1.620
Subject-specific components with didactics: Czech language and literature, communication, mathematics, nature and environmental education, physical education, music education, art education, drama education, dance education, etc.	45–50	81–90	2.430–2.700
Teaching practice: Guided and reflected practice (observation, practice in the form of selected days or sections of the week during the semester, continuous practice during the semester)	10–15	18–27	540–810
Preparation of the Bachelor thesis	510	9–18	270–540

Source: MŠMT 2017

A challenge for the current university study programmes is the danger of fragmentation of educational content with a large number of subjects. Pre-primary and primary education programmes should adopt an integrated approach to education, which some university faculties are beginning to consider not only in the content of their programmes but also in their structure.

The tradition of subject-specific segmented education is still very much rooted in current degree programmes and reflects the problems with pedagogical practice in many pre-primary settings (Syslová 2016a, 2017; Koželuhová, Loudová Stralczyńska, and Lipnická 2020).

4.2.2. Teacher's Assistant (*Asistent pedagoga*)

Qualifying option 1

Supplementary training for Teachers' Assistants

The CPD programme includes topics from general and social pedagogy, psychology, educational theory, pedagogical diagnostics. Each training provider accredits its own programme and specifies the content (also in connection with the regional needs of the schools). However, there is a standard for the accreditation of this CPD programme issued by the Ministry of Education (MŠMT 2020c).

In total, the training programme should comprise at least 120 hours of teaching. This includes 80 hours of direct teaching (lectures and seminars) and 40 hours of teaching practice in schools, educational institutions and cooperating institutions. The standard formulates the competences and contents of the Teacher's Assistant for the entire field of education, without specialisation for a certain level such as kindergarten.

The programme is expected to cover the following topics:

Theoretical background and current trends in special education; relevant legislation; families and children with special educational needs; ways of educating pupils with special educational needs; types of disabilities; approaches towards educating and providing an appropriate environment for the development of children with special educational needs; mechanisms of development and support; models of inclusion of children with special educational needs in the educational process.

Development of abilities, skills, knowledge and personality traits in childhood and adolescence; formation of the psyche in a phase of relative stability in adulthood; developmentally relevant social relationships.

Thematic areas of the standard for the continuing education programme of study for Teachers' Assistants:

- I. School, schoolwork and the role of the Teacher's Assistant
- II. Pupil support
- III. System of pupil support
- IV. Pedagogical-psychological and cultural specifics in the work of the Teacher's Assistant (MŠMT 2020c).

Qualifying option 2

Vocational school route

The curriculum of the training programme at the few vocational schools includes the following topics: Czech school system; basic pedagogical concepts and methods for work in early childhood education and other school institutions; special education topics (support of children with disabilities, socially disadvantaged children and their families); family living conditions and child rearing; bullying in the children's group; addiction problems in families; communication with parents; behaviour and individuality of the child, etc. The practical training prepares learners mainly for effective cooperation with the lead pedagogue in the group and individual support of the child, taking into account his or her needs.

4.2.3 Caregivers (*Pečující osoba*) in Children's Groups and social care settings

Diverse qualifying options

Children's Groups (*dětské skupiny*) have been a new form of early childhood education since 2014. They are intended to partially replace the former work of the nurseries/crèches and to help reduce the temporary lack of space in kindergartens due to the high birth rate.

The staff in Children's Groups are usually not teachers, as is the case in kindergartens and preparatory classes. They can be people with different pedagogical, social or health qualifications (13 options in total, see *Table 6*). The following text mainly illustrates the lowest level of qualification and the new specialised training programme for future professionals.

The lowest level of qualification is held by two kinds of childcare staff: the **Caregiver for pre-school age children** (*Chůva pro děti do zahájení povinné školní docházky*, 2012) and the **Caregiver for Children's Groups** (*Chůva pro děti v dětské skupině*, 2021), see *Tables 6, 9 and 10*). These new professional qualifications were introduced in 2012 and 2021 respectively. Both qualifications have qualification and assessment standards that overlap in content and form the basis for the vocational qualification examination. The examination can be taken without prior training. Some CPD providers provide short-term preparation courses (e.g. amounting to 28 teaching hours). These persons may also provide childcare services within the scope of the Trade Act (e.g. in the child's family home, as a caregiver in a children's group, etc.).

The examination for *Childcare Workers for children in Children's Groups* is to include the following contents: Compliance with safety and accident prevention regulations; first aid for the child/children; common childhood diseases, epidemiology and hygiene; human somatology with a focus on childhood; safe handling of the infant from the age of 6 months; instruction of the child in hygienic habits; application of the principles of a healthy lifestyle according to the age of the child; application of methods and forms of pedagogical work with regard to the age of the child/children; dealing with unfavourable educational situations from a pedagogical and psychological point of view; application of knowledge about the stages of development and support of social-emotional development of the child at an early age; observance of ethical principles when working with children and guiding the child towards moral values; conditions of providing childcare services in a Children's Group; operational and hygienic rules when working with children in a Children's Group (MPSV 2021c).

4.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Kindergarten Teacher – Alternative qualification routes

The three described standard qualification paths for professionals in kindergartens are offered in the regular form and in the form of a combined training/study. This combined form represents **Option 1** of the alternative qualification paths and often takes longer than the standard forms of initial professional education.

Option 2: A second alternative qualification route was opened in 2005 for Special Needs Educators¹⁶ who can now be employed as fully qualified core professional in kindergartens without further examinations or certification.

Option 3: Since 2012, other pedagogical professionals (persons who have completed studies in primary school pedagogy, pedagogy, leisure pedagogy or the study programme for Educators) can also acquire the required qualification at a university within the framework of the so-called lifelong training programme, which specialises in kindergarten pedagogy, and then work as fully

¹⁶ Since 2005 for special educators with a university degree in special/remedial education; since 2012 also for graduates of this field from tertiary professional schools.

qualified core pedagogues in kindergartens. Students of this further education programme write a thesis and take an oral examination at the end of their studies.

Option 4: Persons with the secondary school leaving certificate in the study programme for Educators can acquire the relevant qualification if they also take the baccalaureate examination section in early childhood education.

Option 5: Persons who do not have a relevant education may carry out pedagogical work in kindergartens or preparatory classes in the following cases:

- 1) If they were at least 55 years old as of 01.01.2015 and could show at least 20 years of practice in the relevant type of school (in kindergarten or in a preparatory class).
- 2) If the educational institution proves it is unable to find a suitably qualified person. The non-qualified person may only carry out the pedagogical work until someone qualified is found.

Teachers' Assistants in kindergartens and preparatory classes – Alternative qualification routes

The qualification routes of Teachers' Assistants in kindergartens and preparatory classes are not shown in the statistics and in inspection reports. The frequency of individual qualification routes of these qualified co-workers is therefore not known.

The high diversity of qualification routes also enables adequate system permeability.

Kindergarten Teacher – Formal connectivity and career advancement possibilities

- Kindergarten specialists who have acquired the relevant initial professional education within the framework of a university degree programme in special education may also work as teachers in higher levels of the education system.
- Kindergarten Teachers who have received the relevant training within the framework of a Master's degree in early childhood education can then work as Primary School Teachers if they extend their qualifications in the Lifelong Education Programme, a further training programme that is oriented towards the preparation of Primary School Teachers. It is usually a three-year distance learning programme at a faculty of education, which is combined with a final examination and the defence of a thesis. These persons do not receive another independent diploma, but only extend their qualification.
- Additionally, persons who have completed the primary school education programme may also work in kindergartens if they broaden their qualification in a Lifelong Education Programme oriented towards the preparation of kindergarten professionals¹⁷.

Pedagogical staff at all school levels (including kindergartens at ISCED 02 level) have **two career paths** – by (1) carrying out specialised activities in the institution or (2) taking on management tasks (administrative positions).

As of 1 January 2024, two new positions will be introduced, the **induction teacher** and the **accompanying teacher** (see *Chapter 2.3*).

The Education Act (No. 561/2004 Coll., §131) determines the competences and the appointment procedure for managers (MŠMT 2019d (see *Chapter 2.2*). For managers who have completed a "School Management" course in a higher or further education programme at a higher education

¹⁷ A draft for the career and mentoring system was developed by the Ministry of Education within a national project in 2017. However, due to a change of government, this model was no longer implemented. One of the goals of the current government is to create a new career system in education.

institution/university, this qualification is recognised in place of the further education programme "Study for School Managers" (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel No. 563/2004 Coll., §25, para. 3). Thus, a university degree is not obligatory for Kindergarten Heads.

Experienced professionals (often former head teachers) can apply for the position of **school inspector** at the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*). School inspectors are not pedagogical specialists, but state employees. Requirements include a Bachelor's or Master's degree and at least five years of practical experience in the education sector (20 years for those with upper secondary education).

Entry options for persons with non-relevant qualifications – career changers

The entry options for persons without relevant qualifications have already been described. The Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel (No. 563/2004, Coll.) or laws specifying the qualification options for other professionals in early childhood education do not distinguish between alternative entry options and entry options for lateral entrants.

System permeability

The tertiary professional schools still have a relatively difficult position in the IPE system of early childhood education staff: On the one hand they provide initial professional education at tertiary level, on the other hand there exists very little permeability in terms of studying for a Bachelor's degree at a university and little acknowledgment or recognition of this qualification. The professional schools are still not integrated into the Bachelor-Master system. Although the diploma award is placed at level 655 of ISCED (2011) and level 6 in the European Qualifications Framework, the diploma qualification is considered to be at a lower level than the Bachelor's degree. Only a few professional schools recognise part of the diploma studies for their study programme in out-of-school pedagogy (the three-year course of studies can be completed within a year and graduates may go on to study for a Master's degree). Other universities do not recognise the diploma qualification and diploma holders have to complete all modules of the Bachelor study programme.

Studying at a tertiary professional school is for many school leavers with the university entrance qualification an alternative, second way (besides studying early childhood education at a university) of acquiring a tertiary-level qualification. Compared with the university studies in early childhood education for the Bachelor's degree, the tertiary professional schools study programmes are relatively broad, without an in-depth specialisation in pedagogical work with young children.

Employment of specialist staff from other European Union countries

All persons who apply for a post as a core professional or support worker in kindergartens and preparatory classes (support workers are excluded for the time being) have to fulfil the following legislative requirements (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel 563/2004, paragraphs 3, 4 and 6):

- The general conditions for Pedagogical Teaching Personnel, who in the Czech Republic belong to the so-called regulated professions, are: legal capacity, qualification (recognition according to Law No. 18/2004, paragraph 6), integrity, state of good health, proficiency in the Czech language.
- All applicants who have acquired the relevant qualification in a language other than Czech are required to take a *proficiency exam in the Czech language*. The assessment is conducted by university faculties of education, by language school accredited to hold examinations in the Czech language and by CPD institutions for educational staff. The amendment to the

Teaching Personnel Act (MŠMT 2023a) sets the required language level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR – namely at least level B2 for Teachers’ Assistants. A level of at least C1 is then required for Kindergarten Teachers. The required level of knowledge of the Czech language can now also be proven by passing an individual matriculation examination, which in its content and form corresponds to the examination of the common part of the matriculation examination in Czech language and literature.

This examination of competence in the Czech language is **not** required by the following persons:

- Persons who will work in an educational institution with a language of instruction other than Czech
- Persons who have passed an exam in the Czech language as part of their university entrance qualification
- Persons who teach in another language (also applies to staff in kindergartens and preparatory classes) or give conversation classes.

Kindergarten Teachers and Primary School Teachers are not permitted to submit proof of their competence in the Czech language if the examination was taken in another country – in these cases the examination must take place in the Czech Republic.

The necessary recognition of specialist qualifications for persons from other EU countries, EEA countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway) and Switzerland is undertaken according to Act No. 18/2004 on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

Staff in kindergartens and preparatory classes who are recognised as qualified in another EU country and may practise their profession there (i.e. mostly those who have a qualification as Educator (*Erzieher:in*) or Childhood Pedagogue (*Kindheitspädagog:in*), are also recognised by the Ministry of Education as qualified for the work in kindergartens or other ECEC settings in the Czech Republic. During the recognition procedures, not only the formal initial professional education is taken into account but also the applicant’s non-formal competences and previous work experience as well as further acquired competences (e.g. through CPD activities). What is crucial for the recognition procedure is whether the applicant possesses a relevant qualification and permission to practise the profession in the country of origin. In such cases the qualification is then recognised in the Czech Republic and if the person fulfils further legislative requirements, then he or she can work as an early childhood specialist.

5. Guided workplace experience (practicum) in the initial professional education of core professionals

The practicum is an integral part of all initial professional education programmes for core pedagogues in **kindergartens** and preparatory classes. For professionals in **Children's Groups** and social care settings, the situation is more heterogeneous, as not all IPE routes are Education-based and not all programmes focus on young children. Therefore, professionals in Children's Groups often do an internship in other pedagogical, social or healthcare institutions which does not always focus on pedagogical work with children under 6.

The guided workplace element of the IPE routes for working in kindergartens and preparatory classes is not regulated by regional or institution guidelines in general. However, there are national regulations of different kinds that refer to individual IPE programmes or education/training institutions.

For **vocational schools** at upper secondary level, there is a national framework programme for pre-school and out-of-school pedagogy (75-31-M/01; MŠMT 2009b). Practical training is organised individually by each vocational school. A so-called specialist internship (*odborná praxe*) lasts at least ten weeks during the whole IPE programme (often organised in block times in a kindergarten). The so-called teaching internship (*učební praxe*) comprises at least seven hours per week within the duration of the IPE programme (organised throughout the school year in a certain number of hours). The practical training may also be completed during the holidays, but not for more than three weeks altogether. Each vocational school formulates its own specific practicum programme. Therefore, it is not possible to make a general statement about the organisation of guided workplace experience.

The vocational schools cooperate with kindergartens in their vicinity where the practical training takes place. Each institution determines its internal rules (recruitment, payment, participation of the pedagogues in the internship etc.) and also the placements for their practical training. Before 2023, there were no national specifications for the cooperation between IPE institutions and the ECEC settings. The amendment of the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Personnel 563/2004 from 2023 regulates new positions of teachers who participate in the teaching practice (**accompanying teacher**) and initial support for the graduates of the IPE programmes (**induction teacher**) (see *Chapter 4.3*). The vocational schools ensure the quality of the internships by setting up a network of cooperating institutions and organising training sessions for mentoring professionals. Nevertheless, there are partial efforts to coordinate the internships within the regions¹⁸.

Tertiary professional schools accredit their training or study programmes with the Ministry of Education (according to Act No. 563/2004 Coll.). The programmes also include all practical parts, which are structured differently: as continuous practice on certain weekdays during the whole semester (individual subject-related hours/(half)days with a more general orientation towards direct pedagogical work) or as block periods (one to three-week internship in a kindergarten during the semester or holidays). In addition, smaller development projects are often realised.

In the Czech Republic, a similar model of guided workplace experience is used at all ten **universities**. Students complete a kind of motivational internship in a kindergarten during their first year; in the following semesters they progress from observing to working as a teaching assistant to leading teaching activities. The aim is to experience all the activities of a Kindergarten Teacher and the full range of time demands, especially in the final semesters of the programme when there are more contiguous blocks of weekly practice of full-time teaching. Students have the opportunity to experience not only practice in mainstream kindergartens, but also alternative and innovative pedagogical concepts such as Montessori, Forest School or Healthy Kindergartens. According to the regulation (MŠMT 2017), the practice within the study programme should have a share of 10-15%, 18-27 ECTS credits and comprise 540 to 810 teaching hours. The universities therefore have a relatively broad scope for decision-making.

A clear trend is the effort to combine theoretical and practical teaching. In the Czech Republic, there is no semester at any university so far in which students only work in an ECEC setting.

¹⁸ For example, in 2021-2023 the Municipality of Prague implemented a project entitled "Programme to increase the quality of practicum experiences for pedagogy students in kindergartens", which tried to coordinate and exchange experiences between vocational schools, vocationally qualifying higher education institutions and individual kindergartens.

Theoretical, didactic and practical seminars always stand side by side. However, it is clear from the individual university curricula that care is taken to ensure that students can complete practical and also elective placements during all semesters of study.

The internships are consistently adapted by the training institutions so that they meet the practical requirements. As a rule, students also have the opportunity to get to know different early education institutions (including the new Children's Groups and care institutions, family centres, etc.) and alternative and innovative pedagogical concepts. Some universities even offer students study trips to early education institutions abroad. This is not a national reform, but a trend to introduce students to new forms of early childhood education institutions.

Pedagogical portfolios have become an integral part of professional practice training at Faculties of Education in the Czech Republic. They take different forms at different faculties, with some also using them for state examination questions. They allow students to demonstrate their professional competences and thus link the theoretical examination with practice (Rodová and Syslová 2021; Syslová and Horňáčková 2014; Syslová 2016a, 2016b). Work with the pedagogical portfolio aims to include teaching students how to use the portfolio for self-reflection and professional growth. The current practice of portfolio work in some faculties anticipates the wider use of a professional portfolio envisaged in the proposals for teachers' professional development and promotion recently announced by the Ministry of Education.

Qualification of the mentoring staff

Until January 2024, no specified qualification was required for the staff in charge of mentoring students in kindergartens. They were usually selected on the basis of their practical knowledge and their professional and individual competences. Each IPE institution selects the cooperating kindergartens and the mentoring staff themselves and often have their own selection criteria. They also usually prepare the mentoring staff on how to accompany the students.

The amended Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on Pedagogical Personnel (MŠMT 2023a) for all teaching staff, including Kindergarten Teachers, provides for a position of two **mentoring specialists: an accompanying and an induction teacher**. The amendment enshrines the positions and specifies their activities in order to improve the quality of pedagogical practice of future teachers and to link initial teacher education with schools in the regional education system. The system of support for mentoring specialists and teaching practices is currently being piloted as an experimental validation; from 2026 onwards, to be funded on the basis of a specific normative enshrined in the Education Act (MŠMT 2023b). The Kindergarten Head decides on the time allocation of the mentoring specialists in early education institutions.

Current reforms related to guided workplace experience

The Ministry of Education is currently piloting a new system of teacher education that will also significantly affect the practical component of IPE programmes. Kindergartens and schools are to become places of practical training and a new national system for financing apprenticeships is to be introduced (MŠMT 2022e) (see *Chapter 8*).

6. Continuing professional development (CPD) of ECEC staff

Every employer is obliged under the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.) to support the professional development of its employees. As a rule, there are **two main forms** of Continuing Professional Development:

- (1) **Supplementary qualifications** (seminars/courses, in-house CPD): The employer can order the employee to attend training courses to deepen qualifications (also outside working hours, as overtime). The deepening of qualifications means their continuing enrichment, enabling the employee to perform the agreed work. It is therefore compulsory CPD that all workers should follow (core skilled workers, supplementary (skilled) workers and facility management). The employer is obliged to cover the costs of the training (Act No. 262/2006 Coll., § 230).
- (2) **Additional specialist qualifications:** This type of CPD is usually more time-consuming and may involve studying for a new (academic) degree or a new specialisation.

According to Act No. 563/2004 Coll, self-study is also part of CPD.

6.1 CPD for staff in commercial childcare centres

For professionals of commercial childcare institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, there are no further requirements outside the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.).

6.2 CPD for staff in Children's Groups

For the Caregivers working in Children's Groups (childcare institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), according to the amendment of the Children's Groups Act (MPSV 2021a), a new regulation regarding CPD (type 1, supplementary qualification) applies. From 2022, the provider is obliged to provide the Caregiver with further education in the field of child care in the scope of at least 8 hours per calendar year, including at least once every two years a first aid course focused on childhood. The provider, together with the professionals, can choose such courses that support and motivate workers to continue working with children. Conditions for further training are:

- *Scope:* at least eight hours per calendar year
- *Content:* training in childcare, including a first aid course at least every two years with a focus on childhood
- *Form:* Course in an educational institution or at the employer's workplace, internship on the basis of a written contract between the provider and the educational institution
- *Format:* CPD sessions can be full-time or followed through distance learning (e.g. e-learning); for a first aid course, a full-time course including practical training preferable for qualification reasons (§ 5c, Act No. 247/2014 Coll.).

Various courses and workshops are offered, e.g. within the framework of the project *Support for the Management of Children's Groups*¹⁹.

¹⁹ <http://www.dsmpsv.cz/cs/>



6.3 CPD for staff in kindergartens and preparatory classes

For pedagogical staff in public education institutions, the CPD requirements are laid down in the Act on Pedagogical Teaching Staff (No. 563/2004 Coll.) and the Decree on the Further Training of Pedagogical Staff (No. 317/2005 Coll.). CPD is provided institutionally (1) at universities, (2) at institutions for teacher CPD and other institutions-on the basis of accreditation granted by the Ministry of Education, and (3) through self-study. However, an amendment to the Act on Pedagogical Workers (which came into force on 01.09.2023) specifies that no accreditation is required for short CPD programmes.

The kindergarten management draws up a CPD plan for the teachers. This plan may also include provider-specific requirements.

The Decree on the CPD of Pedagogical Specialists (No. 317/2005 Coll.) provides for three forms of in-service and further training:

- 1) **CPD to fulfil the qualification requirements for the job:** this includes, for example, qualifying courses for kindergarten and school heads (100 teaching hours) or for co-workers (Teachers' Assistants, with 120 teaching hours), which qualifies them to perform these job positions. This form of CPD also includes a qualification that leads to a supplement to the required qualification – this mainly concerns pedagogical staff without a relevant qualification. This further training is usually completed with an examination before an examination committee and with the defence of a written paper. The costs are borne by the professional, but the employer may cover part of the costs.
- 2) Additional training to meet **further qualification requirements** for the job: This includes, for example, CPD for pedagogical leaders (350 teaching hours). Here, too, the further training is concluded with an examination before an examination committee and with the defence of a written paper. The costs are borne by the educational specialist, but the employer can pay part of the costs.
- 3) Further training to **deepen the qualification** concerns the ongoing enrichment of the qualification. CPD is oriented towards current theoretical and practical problems of education and is usually obtained through courses and seminars of at least four hours' duration. The costs are usually covered by the employer. However, the professionals may cover part of the costs if they request a more financially demanding CPD session.

There are no national regulations for in-house CPD; the respective management decides whether such trainings are organised for the team and, if necessary, also the topics. These usually take place at the beginning of a school or kindergarten year.

6.3.1 Entitlement to days off for further education and training for ECEC professionals

The entitlement to days off depends on the kind of CPD:

- 1) **Self-study:** There is an entitlement to 12 paid days per year if the operating conditions of the institution do not contradict this.
- 2) **Attending CPD courses:** Kindergarten staff in particular have problems obtaining days off for the more time-consuming forms of CPD and often have to complete the course during their vacation time.

The following days off may be granted for further education leading to a higher qualification:

- All teaching days of the study programme
- Two working days for each examination in CPD programmes of colleges, universities and tertiary professional schools
- Five working days for preparation for and taking of a final examination or the baccalaureate

- Ten working days for preparation and defence of a final examination, Bachelor's, Diploma or Doctoral thesis
- 40 working days for preparing and taking the state examination or doctoral state examination.

Time off for CPD sessions on a small scale (about two to five days a year) is not problematic. However, in the case of more time-consuming further education, it becomes more difficult. The legal right to days off cannot be granted for "operational reasons" either.

6.4 Main providers of CPD

The main provider of CPD for educational staff is the **National Pedagogical Institute** of the Czech Republic (NPI CR), an organisation directly administered by the Ministry of Education. At the beginning of 2020, a merger took place between the National Institute of Continuing Education and the National Institute for Education. The newly established Institute (NPI CR) aims to ensure the transfer of educational innovations from the central conceptual level to the educational institutions in the regions. It develops pedagogical framework programmes for the individual school types, including kindergartens, and offers methodological support to schools and teachers and targeted training to teaching staff. The 13 regional offices of the NPI CR play an important role in supporting schools in the regions.

The NPI CR takes on the patronage for planning and organising CPD programmes and prepares the national programmes. In addition, it implements so-called government priorities in the CPD offers for pedagogical professionals, including management and framework education programmes.

The courses are mostly financed by the European Social Fund and by development programmes of the Ministry of Education and are therefore free of charge or cost only a small fee for the pedagogical staff. In this case, the institutions only have to reimburse a few costs for the CPD of their professionals.

Other important providers are colleges and universities, which are the exclusive providers of some FWB programmes within lifelong learning training programmes (Decree No. 317/2005 Coll., MŠMT 2005).

Other important providers are the **higher education institutions and universities**, which are the exclusive providers of some continuing education programmes²⁰ within Lifelong Learning training programmes (Decree No. 317/2005 Coll., MŠMT 2005).

CPD is also offered by schools, non-profit societies, private CPD providers whose programmes have been accredited by the Ministry of Education (in July 2022, 61 such providers were registered in the School Register) and who often finance their courses within the framework of European projects, so that participants only have to bear low costs.

6.5 CPD for Kindergarten Heads

Kindergarten Heads must (in addition to their initial professional education) have completed a headship course within three years of assuming the leadership position. An exception are those managers who have acquired the management expertise within the framework of a university degree in school management or within the framework of further training within the Lifelong Learning programmes at an HEI/university in the field of school management and organisation

²⁰ These are longer CPD programmes: Studies in the field of educational sciences with 250 teaching hours (supplementing the pedagogical qualification), studies to expand the qualification (e.g. for another school level, performing remedial and special educational tasks for children with disabilities outside the qualification of pedagogues), studies for pedagogical managers, etc.



as well as persons who have ten years of experience in a management position. The managers of other ECEC settings (Children's Groups, childcare facilities) are not obliged to complete certain CPD courses or modules that focus on the acquisition of specific management and leadership competences.

The professionals are obliged to undergo CPD. However, because until 2023, there were no other institution-specific positions in kindergartens and other early childhood education institutions beyond the position of head (from 2024, new positions are the **induction** and the **accompanying** teacher), further training in the sense of an additional qualification was not obligatory. However, a wide range of optional thematic CPD courses is available to regular staff in ECEC settings. The choice of courses and their thematic orientation is made in accordance with the interests of the professionals and the needs of the institution (Act on Pedagogical Teaching Staff No. 563/2004 Coll., Regulation on Further Training of Pedagogical Staff No. 317/2005 Coll.).

6.6 Main topics in the CPD of ECEC staff

Topics related to current problems and issues in practice represent a contemporary trend in CPD. Since 2016, as a result of the new Education Act, inclusion has been strongly promoted in the entire school system and at all levels (curricula, staff recruitment, CPD of professionals, new funding possibilities, etc.). Therefore, most of the programme offers are in line with this need: Supporting children with special educational needs (especially language support, supporting children from socially disadvantaged families, children with ADHD, etc.), inclusion, school management, 2 year-olds in kindergarten, further education for Teachers' Assistants.

The educators/teachers decide on topics that interest them personally in consultation with their employer. Sometimes the Kindergarten Heads choose courses for several or all teachers if they are dealing with a specific problem in the kindergarten and have specific pedagogical needs.

New topics include promoting science literacy, digital learning and assessment. There is currently particularly strong demand for courses that focus on the language development of multilingual children. This is due to the increasing number of non-Czech-speaking children in kindergartens (and in the Czech school system in general), as well as the need to integrate refugee children from Ukraine, more than 50,000 of whom have been admitted to kindergartens and schools since spring 2022. Currently, it is the promotion of multilingual children and the specifics of work with traumatised children – either as a result of the measures occurring in connection with the COVID pandemic or specifically in relation to the support for refugee children from war conflicts.

Of particular significance were training offers for teachers in kindergartens and preparatory classes in the field of online education, especially in the second half of 2020 and in 2021. The kindergartens were obliged to offer education activities online to children who had reached the age of 5 and had completed a compulsory pre-school year in their kindergarten in spring 2021, at the time of the general long-term closure of the schools during the pandemic (this obligation also applied to the preparatory classes).

The Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) continuously monitors the professional development in the monitored kindergartens. The CSI report (2022) states that "the professional development of teachers is organised by 85.5% of school heads according to the professional development plan". Only some principals (48.6%) are meticulous in developing CPD plans, i.e. they monitor and assess teachers' needs and tailor them to the needs of the school. Probably due to the anti-epidemiological measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of teachers who attended courses and seminars (70.6%) to deepen their professional development decreased in 2020/2021 compared to 2019/2020. The percentage of teachers who did not participate in any

kind of CPD was 16.5% (CSI 2022, 30-31). These were the majority of topics chosen by core pedagogues for CPD courses in the school year 2020/2021:

- Knowledge and skills in early childhood education and care
- Supporting the development of literacy and methods of key competences, and approaches towards of education, new and alternative pedagogical directions
- School readiness, enrolment of children in primary school
- Education of children with deferment of compulsory education
- Individualisation of education and pedagogical diagnostics (including portfolio management)
- Speech therapy, speech therapy prevention
- Education of children with special educational needs (methods, forms, support)
- Inclusion (legal aspects, curriculum change, etc.)
- Education in a multicultural or multilingual environment (CSI 2022, 32).

6.7 Research projects related to CPD in ECEC

No major national research projects have been funded over the past five years that deal with the CPD of early childhood educators. However, CPD institutes offer a relatively large number of projects which are linked to smaller research activities. Smaller research projects have also been realised at the faculties of education (for example, with a focus on the evaluation and development of own programmes).

However, within the framework of an extensive ESF project – *Systemic Support of Inclusive Education in the Czech Republic* -, a lot of space was devoted to the training and further education of support workers in 2013-2015: among other things, a standard for the work of Teachers' Assistants; guidelines for working with children with different special educational needs and further guidelines on specific topics in the work pedagogical specialists were developed. Several drafts on the system of initial and continuing professional development itself were also drafted, focussing on systemic development.

6.8 Current issues related to CPD

In the Czech Republic, there is **no credit system** for the recognition of CPD for professionals of all types of ECEC settings. Participation in CPD is not yet formally recognised (see *Chapter 8*).

7. Working conditions and current workforce issues

7.1 Remuneration

7.1.1 Core pedagogues and educational support staff

The payment of early childhood staff differs depending on the type of institution. "For remuneration in the non-commercial sector and in companies where no collective agreement has been concluded, there is the so-called guaranteed wage, i.e. the employer cannot set a lower wage (salary) for an employee than the lowest level of the guaranteed wage. The guaranteed wage is graded in eight groups according to the complexity, responsibility and difficulty of the work performed. In public schools. Teachers' salaries are currently higher than the corresponding guaranteed minimum wage, so this decree is particularly important for public schools (and Children's

Groups and childcare facilities for children under 3), as well as for the remuneration of non-educational staff" (Eurydice 2023a).

Kindergarten Teachers are paid as pedagogical employees in the school system under the collective bargaining system (11 salary grades in total). Kindergarten staff fall into the lowest salary grades (8 to 10) of the pay scale system. Each pay grade is further divided into 7 levels. The specialists are assigned to the respective level by the facility management based on the nature of their work (core professional, core professional with a post of responsibility, length of work experience, etc.). If the professional acquires an additional qualification (e.g. within the framework of further training courses), this does not usually affect the pay grade. An exception is the leadership position, which requires an additional headship qualification and is therefore also linked to a promotion in the pay scale system. Kindergarten professionals are generally entitled to remuneration for overtime and extra work in the context of direct pedagogical work. They may also receive other non-tariff supplements (e.g. for guiding other persons, for specialised work such as the planning of the institution's training programme, for long-term high-quality work or the performance of specific tasks).

Table 9

Czech Republic: Tariff classification and gross salary of Kindergarten Teachers, Teachers' Assistants and Primary School Teachers in the school system

Profile	Salary grade	Minimum gross salary per annum	Maximum gross salary per annum
Kindergarten and out-of-school pedagogues	8–10	CZK 300,480 ²¹ EUR 2,665	CZK 444,720 EUR 18,745
Primary School Teachers, Secondary School Teachers I and II, Special Educators, Psychologists	11–13	CZK 38,440 EUR 16,246	CZK 554,640 EUR 23,378
Support staff	4–9	CZK 186,480 EUR 7,860	CZK 433,560 EUR 18,274

Source: Eurydice 2023a

The salaries of early childhood core pedagogues are lower than those of Primary School Teachers. The salaries of supplementary co-workers are significantly lower. For them, the content of their work depends to a large extent on how the management determines it and thus places them in the appropriate salary bracket (see Table 9). With this pay, earning a living, e.g. as a single parent with one child in the capital city, is rather difficult, even though the pay scales have been increased substantially for kindergarten professionals across the board in recent years. The average gross monthly wage of a Kindergarten Teacher is CZK 33,861 (€1,427) (as of 2023).

The salaries are generally slightly higher for teachers in public kindergartens (€1,384) than in private (€1,179) and church institutions (€1,215; as of 2022; MŠMT 2022c). Over the last five years, salaries have increased by about one third. At the same time, however, the cost of living has increased considerably. The government's current goal is to raise the average teacher's salary to 130% of the average wage in the Czech Republic. Admittedly, this is a success in terms of average teacher salaries. However, professionals in kindergartens and pre-primary classes do not reach this salary level.

Specific positions of responsibility (i.e. head, deputy head, mentoring specialist) are paid additionally within the framework of the supplements. The supplement is 5 to 50% of the pay scale

²¹ Conversion rate July 2023

salary for the highest level in the respective pay grade; for management staff, the supplement can be 15 to 60%. The Kindergarten Head is paid according to the pay scale system (10th salary grade) just like other pedagogical staff. The specific conditions of payment in public institutions are determined by the authority that appointed the head.

The remuneration of all teachers consists of: (1) the pay scale part and (2) a non-pay scale part. The extra pay can be as follows:

- **Supplement:** Kindergarten Teachers are legally entitled to this if they perform one or more assignments (e.g. leading other teachers, working in schools and classes for children with special educational needs) for which this entitlement is enshrined in law.
- **Staff bonus:** There is no legal entitlement to this; it is the subjective decision of the Kindergarten Head to allocate this bonus to a teacher, e.g. for very good work performance in the long term or additional tasks (support of other teachers, children with special educational needs, etc.). This is a permanent supplement that cannot be withdrawn as long as the conditions are met. The supplement can be up to 50% of the salary (in some cases even up to 100%).
- **Award or so-called reward:** This is a one-time allowance for exceptional work, without legal entitlement.

7.1.2 Staff in other ECEC settings (Children's Groups, social care settings for children under 3 years of age)

The remuneration of regular and managerial staff is the same in these institutions and is governed by the Labour Code. As of 1 January 2022, they are included in the catalogue of professions in public service and administration, where they are classified in grades 6 to 9 depending on the difficulty of the work. They are also entitled to certain allowances.

7.2 Full-time and part-time employment in ECEC provision

A full-time staff member in a public kindergarten works 40 hours per week (of which 31 hours are for direct pedagogical work with the children). The working hours are the same for all kindergarten core staff. In the case of management staff, the workload for direct pedagogical work is reduced depending on the size of the institution. The working time of a full-time employee in other ECEC facilities (Children's Groups, social care settings for children under 3 years of age) is also 40 hours per week. The employer determines the work content of each worker; there are no central regulations. Full-time employment is characteristic for managers and core pedagogues in kindergartens. Supplementary co-workers are more often employed on a part-time basis, which very often depends on the amount of support provided to a child with special educational needs in the respective group.

7.3 Support measures in the workplace for newly qualified and newly appointed staff

Specific induction measures for novice staff in early childhood education institutions have not existed and were not enshrined in legislation until 2023. The general basic conditions for new entrants to the profession were only defined in the Labour Code (entitlement to adequate introductory practice during the first two years in the profession). The concrete form of implementation depends on the school management. The weekly direct pedagogical activity of a trainee teacher must not be reduced. In addition, a trainee teacher may receive advice, information or suggestions from the school management, benefit from discussions in the classroom, etc. The school management may appoint an induction teacher for a new core professional. The

management decides at its own discretion whether to reward the greater extent of the induction teacher's activity, e.g. with a personal allowance.

A new system of support measures in the workplace has been created and piloted since September 2023 (MŠMT 2023a). As of 1 January 2024, the adaptation period of the beginning teachers and the position of the Accompanying Teacher will be established. "The teacher's adaptation period is the period from the start of the teacher's first employment until the end of two years' employment with the legal entity carrying out the school's activities (MŠMT 2023b).

The Czech School Inspectorate continuously monitors how the management of kindergartens and schools deal with the introduction of newly qualified teachers. In the annual reports 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, the CSI (2020) evaluated the methodological support for prospective or new teachers; this was described by the school management as insufficient and unsystematic. According to the last inspection report (2022), there have been no significant improvements in this area. For the further development of Kindergarten Teachers, the Czech School Inspectorate recommends in particular the creation of a professional portfolio or cooperation with other kindergartens (CSI 2022, 35-36).

Table 10

Czech Republic: Support measures for novice core pedagogues – proportion of kindergartens with newly qualified staff in %

Formal induction programme (the new staff member is familiarised with respective school procedures)	53.2
Assignment of a mentor (induction teacher)	70.3
Reciprocal job shadowing of core pedagogues	58.2
Consultations with the Kindergarten Head	75.9
CPD courses	54.4
Other forms	54.4

Source: CSI 2022, 33.

7.4 Non-contact time

The working hours of full-time **kindergarten core pedagogues** are divided into so-called direct and indirect pedagogical work. Nine hours per week are set aside for indirect pedagogical work. This includes work with parents, team meetings, networking, material preparation, planning, follow-up, evaluations and documentation and other activities. For Kindergarten Heads, the direct pedagogical work can be reduced depending on the size of the institution (to 13 to 24 hours per week, or 5 to 16 hours per week in boarding kindergartens). In public kindergartens, the number of released hours for the Kindergarten Head is set nationally, but practice shows that they often "step in" when staff shortages occur (MŠMT 2019a).

In the case of full-time **Teachers' Assistants**, the management decides on the number of hours of indirect pedagogical work depending on the specific work content of the specialist. Out of 40 working hours, up to 20 hours can be devoted to indirect pedagogical work (MŠMT 2019a).

The child-free working hours of a full-time employee in other ECEC settings (care facilities for children under 3, Children's Groups) are not determined by law (only the total 40-hour working week). The institution owner determines the work content of each worker. They can therefore also determine some working hours for indirect pedagogical work.

7.5 Current staffing issues

Since 2016, there has been a widespread **shortage of staff** in kindergartens in the Czech Republic, especially of Teachers' Assistants. This is related to the introduction of support measures for children with special needs (MŠMT 2016, resp. 2020b, 2022b), which has enabled a significant increase in the number of assistant co-workers in kindergartens and schools. In all regions there is currently a significant shortage of qualified co-workers, but in recent years also of core pedagogues, because the number of children and kindergarten classes is increasing every year.

A high proportion of **older professionals** has for many years also been a distinct feature of the ECEC system; at the same time, the number of professionals in the two lower age groups increased slightly recently:

Table 11

Czech Republic: Age structure of core pedagogues in kindergartens, in %

Age	Distribution
Up to 20 years	1.7
21–30 years	22.3
31–40 years	18.4
41–50 years	26.3
51–60 years	25.4
61–70 years	5.6
71–80 years	0.3

Source: CSI 2022.

Staff recruitment strategies in recent years have included **significant pay increases** (across the board for all pre-primary staff) and the opening of new qualification pathways and lateral entry opportunities: this is especially true for other early education/care providers (Children's Groups and social care facilities for under 3 year-olds).

8. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to staffing and professionalisation issues

8.1 Education sector – kindergartens and preparatory classes

The current policy reforms are related to the **implementation of the Education Strategy 2030+** and the development of the Czech education system.

- In recent years, efforts have been made to amend the **Act on Pedagogical Personnel** to enable the recruitment of new teachers (especially **lateral entrants**). However, due to a change of government, the law was presented and accepted in 2023 in an amended form and did not include this issue. The key reform is the introduction of a teacher adaptation period of two years from the time of entry into practice and the introduction of the position of the so-called Accompanying Teacher from January 2024.
- One of the most important policy initiatives of the last five years has been the active effort to **gradually increase teachers' salaries** (including those of Kindergarten Teachers). The current government has set a target of maintaining average teacher salaries at 130% of the average salary in the Czech Republic, despite the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war crisis in Ukraine.

Further, in 2021, the Ministry of Education identified **six areas** where innovation in teacher development is needed, the first three of which are closely related to the initial professional education of pre-primary teachers:

"1. **Building a culture of continuous quality improvement based on a shared vision.** There is a lack of an explicitly articulated common vision of the goal of teacher preparation; mistrust exists between the main actors (universities and other IPE institutions – Ministry of Education) and information about the quality of graduates is missing. The available information shows that Czech graduates clearly lag behind their European counterparts, especially in terms of motivation to learn and critical thinking.

2. **Close links between university faculties and practice.** The proportion of practicum experience in teacher education has increased significantly but is still among the lowest in the European countries studied. However, the quality of practice and its conditions are crucial: professionals are not adequately remunerated for their work, there is insufficient training and support, and practice does not focus on the best professionals. Faculties have a wide network of practice nurseries and kindergartens, but the intensity of collaboration with them and the involvement of trainers with active teaching experience in teacher training are insufficient.

3. **Promoting innovations in teacher education and supporting regulation.** The Ministry of Education's framework "guarantees a minimum standard in teacher education, but significantly limits the scope for innovation." (MŠMT 2021c, 4, 16).

The Ministry of Education therefore included among its goals until 2023, for example, the creation of a **competence profile for university graduates** (published in October 2023²²), closer cooperation between the faculties with a reduced network of seminar schools, a professional standard and appropriate funding of mentors, etc.

These steps can be seen as positive in terms of the university preparation of teachers. However, the plan does not address the qualification level of professionals in kindergartens, for whom upper secondary education is still the minimum qualification level. On the one hand, this is understandable, as the education system is currently under great strain due to the economic crisis and the influx of refugees. On the other hand, a one-year compulsory kindergarten was introduced in 2017, and the Act on Pedagogical Personnel (MŠMT 2016) requires a Master's level degree for all other teachers providing compulsory education. Therefore, there seems to be still a considerable need for improvement in this point.

8.2 Childcare sector – Children's Groups

An important positive reform is the change in the requirements for Children's Group Caregivers, which is foreseen in the amending law of autumn 2021: Since July 2022, all Children's Group Caregivers must have a training in health care. At the same time, an education professional must be in the group for at least 20 hours per week if a 3-year-old child is present (MPSV 2021a, b). This is undoubtedly a positive measure. On the other hand, the pay conditions in Children's groups are still worse than in kindergartens and the work with young children in these settings does not have to follow the national educational programme applicable to work in kindergartens; also, the requirements for pedagogical quality are lower in Children's Groups than in kindergartens.

²² For Pre-primary Teachers, a self-assessment tool describing the development of teacher competences in different areas has been developed as a tool for the development of professional competences (Koželuhová, Koželuh, and Podpera 2023).

9. Recent country-specific research focusing on ECEC staff

Programme PROGRES Q17: Teacher education and the teaching profession in the context of science and research (2017–2021)

Source: Charles University, Faculty of Education 2021 (see *References* for full details)

Aims and procedures: Thematic areas of the research programme were: 1. School theory and the teaching profession (paedeutics), 2. Literacy and education, 3. Pupils, 4. Inclusion, 5. Teacher preparation. Faculty researchers addressed sub-themes within the above topics. The Chair of Preschool and Primary Education dealt, among other things, with the content of professional training for teachers working in kindergartens and primary schools. All Bachelor's degree programmes in pre-primary education established under the new accreditation conditions at universities in the Czech Republic were compared. In response to the ongoing pandemic, the topic of "teacher training as remote learning" was also included in the study.

Selected findings and implications: The result at the implementation level was the development of a new accreditation document for the Bachelor's degree programme in Early Childhood Education, which takes into account the existing tradition and at the same time aims to introduce new models and topical issues into the initial professional education of educators. The research results are professional articles and an English-language monograph that provide insights into the concepts and contents of pre-primary and primary school teacher education.

Project: Early childhood education and care in ECEC settings in the Czech Republic (2019–2022)

Source: [TACR] Technology Agency of the Czech Republic 2022 (see *References* for full details)

Aims and procedures: The project focused on innovative research that will contribute to the development of early childhood research in the Czech pedagogical discourse: It captures the experiences of key actors in different types of childcare facilities for children under 3 years of age using different research tools and analyses them together with current discussions on early care and education in broader sociological, pedagogical and historical contexts.

Selected findings and implications: With the help of the research findings, the topic of early care and education will be implemented in the professional education of education professions both at the level of higher education and at the level of Lifelong Learning at the Faculty of education of Masaryk University. The inclusion of the topic in the curricula of vocational education secondary schools will be actively supported.

Project: A model of teacher education for diversity (2019–2021)

Source: FPE ZČU – Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia, Pilsen 2022 (see *References* for full details)

Aims and procedures: The main aim of the project was to contribute to the adaptation of teacher education to the new challenges associated with the education and upbringing of multilingual children and to create a model for school education under intercultural conditions, which would then be disseminated among teachers and, above all, used in an appropriate way to adapt IPE programmes for pre-primary and primary education. Since October 2019, a team of Polish researchers from the Faculty of Humanities and Computer Science and their Czech colleagues from the Faculty of education at ZČU have been working on the theoretical background

of education of migrant pupils and conducting surveys among school administrators, teachers and parents of these children in both countries.

Selected findings and implications: The data was then analysed and conclusions and resulting recommendations were formulated for the necessary changes in the support of these pupils and teachers in mainstream schools as well as for changes in the university study programmes for teachers to prepare them for working with migrant pupils. The main outcome is an electronic publication available in English, Polish and Czech. From the perspective of the professional education of educators, the specific recommendations for systematic support of pedagogy students regarding the education of migrant children and the intercultural context of our society are particularly interesting.

10. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

The following aspects can be described as **immediate challenges** with regard to the qualification, recruitment and support of early childhood education staff:

- (1) **New career system:** A complex system of qualification and promotion possibilities (so-called qualification order) for pedagogues in the education system (beginners, mentoring staff, experienced pedagogues with supervisory tasks, etc.) shall be developed and implemented during the coming years. In future, advancement in the career system might be linked to further training, better pay and competence development. A provisional career system was completed in 2017, however a new version is now being prepared, which should be integrated into a reform of the faculties of education from 2024.
- (2) **Ongoing innovation of the IPE programmes** to include current societal issues to a greater extent: Particularly important are the topics of inclusion; working with heterogeneous groups of children; alternative and innovative approaches in pedagogy; individualisation and differentiation; second/foreign language education in kindergarten; effective cooperation with parents; support for children under 3 years of age; transitions; socio-pedagogical tasks of professionals in cooperation with families, etc. At present, these topics are even less represented in the current vocational school upper secondary programmes and at the tertiary professional schools than is the case in other Western European and Scandinavian countries. University curricula have changed a lot in these areas in recent years, but faculties still have important work in terms of innovation.
- (3) **Lack of support staff in kindergartens:** As a rule, two core pedagogues are responsible for a group/class with 24 children (or often with 28 children), whereby their working hours usually overlap for only 2½ hours per day. This leads to an excessive workload and the possibility to adequately support children with special needs might be limited. Since September 2016, additional supplementary staff (Teachers' Assistants) can be employed in all groups that are also attended by children with special needs. It is currently very difficult for both kindergartens and primary schools to find qualified co-workers as there is an acute shortage of them on the labour market²³.

²³ Until the reform of the Education Act (September 2016), the kindergarten management had to apply for the employment of supplementary pedagogical staff every year, which meant an enormous amount of time and personal uncertainty. If support for a child with special needs is recommended by the school

Long-term challenges with regard to the qualification, recruitment and support of early childhood education staff include the following:

- (1) **Introducing a higher education qualification requirement for kindergarten core pedagogues:** This measure needs to be linked to further changes (increase in pay, etc.). Compulsory higher education has been planned for a long time (MŠMT 2001), but has not yet been introduced.
- (2) **Redefining the qualification profiles for core pedagogues in Children's Groups and social care settings for under 3 year-olds:** The current qualification requirements are too diverse. Most of the routes followed do not specialise in early childhood education and care. The broad spectrum of qualification paths makes it possible to recruit skilled workers from other fields. This solves the problem of recruiting staff, but does not guarantee quality. The challenges therefore include an increase in the level of training and a deeper specialisation in the education and upbringing of young children for people who work as core pedagogues in ECEC settings for children under 3 years of age. This is also the aim of the amendment of the Children's Groups Act (2021), which introduced a new qualification for Caregivers in Children's Groups. However, this, is not linked to initial professional education but only to an examination which, in comparison to the requirements for employees in comparable facilities in other European countries, is to be seen as problematic in terms of quality assurance. A general issue is that these workers seem to do a relatively similar job to the Kindergarten Workers, but often have a much lower education or even no basic pedagogical training.
- (3) **Redefining the qualification routes for Teachers' Assistants:** The qualifications of those working in this role are also very diverse and the required qualification level very low. Expert discussions in recent years have underlined the fact that the Teachers' Assistants should be educated and trained at a higher formal level.

Diverse quality in IPE qualification programmes in early childhood education: The difference between the good quality university Bachelor programmes at universities and the high competence level of degree holders and the often questionably shortened qualification programmes offered as a distance learning option by some of the private vocational schools are nowadays assessed as problematic. These differences in qualification routes and the efforts required to complete them contrast negatively with the pay, which is more or less the same for all Kindergarten Teachers, regardless of their qualification route (Wiegerová et al. 2015; Syslová 2016a; Loudová Stralczynská et al. 2022).

An interesting phenomenon is that some graduates of secondary vocational schools who are fully qualified according to the legal provisions nevertheless choose one of the forms of tertiary education. At the same time, some choose to study part-time while working. Some applicants for a Bachelor's degree have even completed both lower levels of education (ISCED 354 and 655) and still decide to continue with a Bachelor's degree (or even a subsequent Master's degree in early childhood education). The inadequacy of secondary education and the demand for a minimum Bachelor's degree is a long-recognised fact, not only in the European Union but also in the Czech Republic (Syslová 2016a).

Professional discourse on these issues has been asking whether the vocational schools should

counselling centre, the management can employ a supplementary teacher on the basis of this recommendation, claim the resources for their remuneration and is no longer dependent on the decision of the regional administration.

focus more on preparing staff for home-based childcare provision with lower qualification requirements and whether Kindergarten Teachers should be educated and trained exclusively through a Bachelor level study programme. Also linked to these issues is the position of the tertiary professional schools and their IPE programmes, since in most cases there is no possibility of permeability when wishing to study for a university degree course.

- **Recruitment of male ECEC staff** (combined with status and pay rise).
- The relatively **resistant attitude in some kindergarten teams regarding inclusive approaches and pro-inclusive measures** is a challenge connected to the political and social developments in the second half of the 20th century. Such a resistant attitude used to be a general trend in the Czech Republic which also impacted the education system. Nowadays, Czech society and teachers appear to be increasingly open towards an inclusive approach. An important goal is therefore to positively influence the attitudes of pedagogues in terms of working towards a child-oriented approach, reflecting on their own attitudes (stereotypes, prejudice) and promoting the individual potential of all children in the best way possible. This can be supported, for example, through continuing professional development for kindergarten teams. Such CPD provision is currently offered in the larger towns by non-governmental organisations and is funded through EU projects in the context of municipal integration strategies.
- The key challenge for the initial professional education of pre-primary and kindergarten professionals is to innovate the content and methods of professional training in such a way that it prepares students to **respect the individuality and personality of the child**, to empathise with the child and find an **open and positive approach**. In the practice of Czech kindergartens, we still very often find approaches that do not as yet correspond to the concept of child-centred early education; traditional methods that were characteristic of the pre-1989 education system persist. This is one of the most important challenges in the transformation and reforms of early childhood education and care and the education system in the Czech Republic in general.

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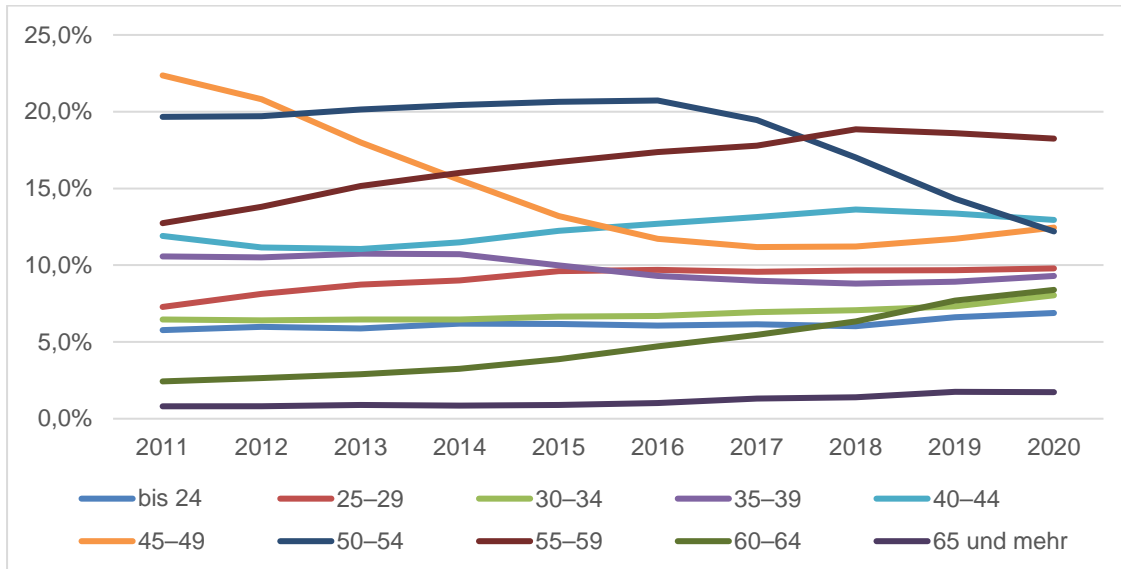
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Appendix

Annex 1:

Czech Republic: Age of core professionals (excluding Centre Leaders and deputy Centre Leaders) from 2011 to 2020



Source: CSI, 2022, table sent as response to a data query

Annex 2:

Czech Republic: Curricular structure of the Bachelor study programme in pre-primary education at Charles University, Faculty of Education

Subject areas – structure of the fields of learning	Semester	ECTS	Professional components	Subject-specific didactics	Pedagogical psychology components	Field-based learning
Pedagogy, pre-primary pedagogy and didactics	1/2/3/4	19	X	X	X	
Professional self-reflection	1	2			X	
Psychology	1//32	10	X		X	
Science education	1/2	7	X	X		
Mathematics education	3/4	6	X	X		
Sports education	1/2/3/4	12	X	X		
Music education	1/2/3/4	12	X	X		
Visual arts education	1/2/3/4	12	X	X		
Drama education	3/4	12	X	X		
Specialisation	5	7		X		
Language, communication and literacy	1/2	9	X	X		
Special education	3/4/6	11			X	
Healthcare competence	4	1	X	X		
Diagnostics and counselling	5	7	X		X	
Social sciences	5	3		X		
Digital technologies in pre-primary education	5	3		X		

Subject areas – structure of the fields of learning	Semester	ECTS	Professional components	Subject-specific didactics	Pedagogical psychology components	Field-based learning
Managing and designing the setting-specific education programme	6	4	X			
Field-based learning (practicum)	1/2/3/ 4/5/6	23				X
Optional subjects	6	9	X	X	X	
Seminar for Bachelor thesis	5/6	11				

Source: Author

