

LUXEMBOURG

Early Childhood Education and Care ECEC Workforce Profile

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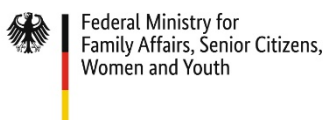
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Contents

- 1. ECEC governance in Luxembourg..... 4
- 2. Who belongs to the early years workforce? 5
 - 2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision 6
 - 2.2 Centre leader..... 10
 - 2.3 Centre-based posts of responsibility 11
 - 2.4 Co-ordinating and supervisory staff..... 11
 - 2.5 Specialist support staff..... 11
- 3. Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity..... 11
- 4. Initial professional education (IPE) 15
 - 4.1 Initial qualifying routes (higher education and vocational)..... 15
 - 4.2 Competences, curricula and pedagogic-didactic approaches in IPE programmes..... 17
 - 4.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability..... 20
- 5. Guided workplace experience (practicum) in the IPE of core professionals 21
- 6. Continuing professional development (CPD) of ECEC staff 23
- 7. Working conditions and current workforce issues 26
 - 7.1 Remuneration 27
 - 7.2 Full-time and part-time employment in ECEC provision 27
 - 7.3 Support measures in the workplace for newly qualified and newly appointed staff..... 28
 - 7.4 Non-contact time 28
 - 7.5 Current staffing issues..... 29
- 8. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to staffing and professionalisation issues 29
- 9. Recent country-specific research focusing on ECEC staff 30
- 10. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment 33
- References..... 34



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-eqf>

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 authors

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1. ECEC governance in Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, national policies aim to place children’s social and educational rights and needs at the centre, while considering the multilingual and multicultural nature of the Luxembourgish society (MENJE and SNJ 2021; MENJE 2022). The Luxembourgish system of ECEC for children up to the age of 6 comprises **formal** and **non-formal** educational institutions. Formal education – with compulsory schooling at preschool level starting at the age of 4 – is organised within the official school system, while non-formal education occurs in out-of-school educational settings (MENJE and SNJ 2021). This chapter will briefly discuss both sectors.

Since 1963, all municipalities in Luxembourg have been required to provide voluntary early childhood education and care (*jardins d’enfants, Spillschoul*) for children aged 4 and 5 years (MEN 1963). In 1976, preschool education (*éducation préscolaire*) became compulsory for children aged 5, and in 1992 for children from the age of 4. Furthermore, in 1998, the government introduced a year of non-compulsory early education for children aged 3 (*éducation précoce*). One of the aims was to increase opportunities to learn Luxembourgish, especially for children of lower socioeconomic status and with a non-Luxembourgish mother tongue, to ease the transition to compulsory schooling (Honig, Schmitz, and Wiltzius 2015).

The 2009 Schools Act integrated “early education” (*éducation précoce*) and preschool (*éducation préscolaire*) into formal schooling (*école fondamentale, cycle 1*). As a result, all Pre-primary Teachers must follow the national curriculum that specifies competences for pre-primary education with children at the ages of 4 and 5 (MENFP 2009a). Teacher trainees no longer need to complete a specific training to work in pre-primary education, instead, they follow the general teacher training for primary schools.¹ In addition, since then, all municipalities are required to provide *éducation précoce* from 2009/2010 (Kneip 2009, 710; Oberhuemer, Schreyer, and Neuman 2010, 295). The *éducation précoce* has a unique position in Luxembourg’s education system. There are various important aspects to consider: (1) In terms of administration, *éducation précoce* is part of the basic education system (*enseignement fondamental*), and its staff are Primary School Teachers. (2) Early education is offered free of charge. (3) There is no obligation to attend *précoce*, meaning that the first year of basic education in *Cycle 1* is optional. Therefore, *éducation précoce* is a link between school and non-school educational contexts. Indeed, many 3 year-olds in Luxembourg who go to a *crèche* (non-formal education) during one part of the day attend *éducation précoce* during the other part. Thus, the 3 year-olds navigate complex and diverse education and care arrangements that structure families’ everyday lives (Bollig, Honig, and Nienhaus 2016).

In 2013, the administrative and political responsibility for out-of-school and early childhood care facilities (non-formal education) was transferred from the Ministry of Family Affairs (*Ministère de la Famille, de l’Intégration et à la Grande Région, MFI*) to the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth (*Ministère de l’Éducation nationale, de l’Enfance et de la Jeunesse, MENJE*). At the same time, new regulations transformed the childcare sector into an independent and uniformly regulated *non-formal education* sector for children and young people to define it separately from the organisation of *formal education* in schools. In this process, the clear distinction between formal and non-formal education gradually replaced the difference between education

¹ Nevertheless, the first cycle of education in elementary education is defined in Art. 1 of the Schools Act as *éducation précoce* and *éducation préscolaire*, i.e., as *early education and pre-school education in school*.



and care. This process had consequences for the educational and social governance of Luxembourg's ECEC provision. Different types of institutional settings were created (*crèche, maison relais pour enfants, foyer de jour, garderie, assistants parentaux*). Distinct regulations apply to each institution, depending on its organisational form: for-profit, non-profit and municipal and those with or without a contractual agreement.

Later, all settings were regrouped under the *Services d'Éducation et d'Accueil pour enfants (SEA)* (Bollig 2018; Bollig, Honig, and Nienhaus 2016). The SEAs are different organisations that children can attend depending on their age and the number of hours they already spend in formal education settings². 3 year-olds, for instance, can attend early education as well as SEA, one institution in the morning and the other in the afternoon. School children may attend a *maison relais* to have lunch or do schoolwork. Being classified as *non-formal education* is not just a case of adjusting terminology but also introducing a new understanding of 'education', which includes early childhood and out-of-school provision (MFI 2018).

The Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth (*MENJE*) governs each sector with different jurisdictions and responsibilities. The ministry is responsible for policy implementation in the formal education sector and enabling the non-formal sector to reach policy goals. In the latter sector, this is ensured by granting operating licences (*agréments*) and entering into contractual agreements (*conventions*) with private (non-profit and commercial) providers. However, some municipalities assume responsibility for implementation. The proportion of publicly run ECEC settings is relatively tiny compared to the much larger number of private settings, both non-profit and commercial³. The expansion of ECEC for the under 4 year-olds was accompanied by defining the goals of early childhood education in the 'curriculum framework for non-formal education' and by developing corresponding practices across the different care providers.

This report builds on the previous SEEPRO Workforce Report for Luxembourg (Honig and Bock 2017) and was partially rewritten and updated with the latest information on new regulations and data.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

The early years workforce in Luxembourg comprises professionals working in the two sectors of early education and care. The Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Young People (*MENJE*) controls both sectors. There are separate pathways of professionalisation depending on whether personnel qualify for the formal or non-formal education sector.

- (1) Professionals working in **formal education** have undergone training as Primary School Teachers, certified by a university degree at Bachelor's level (French: *Bachelor professionnel*). In

² The term "ECEC settings" in the context of this report refers primarily to the *services d'éducation et d'accueil (SEA)* for children under age 4; they are defined in the so-called SEA Regulation issued in 2013, modified in 2018 (MFI 2018). The term also includes the *éducation précoce* classes, which can be understood as non-compulsory preparatory classes for primary schools).

³ The relationship between the state and private providers of educational and therapeutic support services is regulated by the 1998 ASFT Act (amended in 2011, see Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 1998). The act is the codification of a Luxembourgish variant of the subsidiarity principle in Germany and forms the basis of the legislation and regulations, which propelled the transformation of day care services into a sector of non-formal education.

addition, childhood Educators with a vocational qualification (*éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)*) assist teachers in the first non-compulsory stage of formal ECEC.

- (2) The **non-formal education** sector is less unified and regulated than the formal sector and employs a diverse workforce. Some have been trained as Social Workers/Social Pedagogues, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in social and educational sciences (Fr. *Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives*); others have undergone vocational training graduating with a state diploma. Depending on the type of qualification, educators can work with specific age groups. They may work in *crèches* (children of ages 0–3)⁴, *garderies* (0–8 year-olds), the new *mini-crèches* (0–12 year-olds), *foyers de jour* and the *maisons relais* (school children of ages 4–12) (Kneip 2009).

Until the founding of the country's first university in 2003, Luxembourgish staff with a university degree were predominantly educated and trained abroad (Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland), while many were trained in pre-university educational programmes in Luxembourg resembling short-cycle tertiary or applied tertiary education. Therefore, the diversity of qualifications in ECEC settings is particularly pronounced in Luxembourg.

Language requirements and educational criteria further restrict access to the education and care sector. The following chapters provide an overview of the different qualifications required to work in formal and non-formal education and care and show the current demographic composition of the workforce.

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

Employment in the **non-formal sector** of ECEC in Luxembourg mainly depends on specific formalised qualifications and language requirements. Since the sector comprises various ECEC provisions, different pathways qualify for employment as an educator. Over the past decades, the non-formal ECEC workforce has changed due to new developments in the professionalisation of educators, increasing demand for early care and education, and changes in the legal situation and formal degree requirements. Today, the early childhood workforce consists of personnel with different levels of qualification across the various types of ECEC institutions, catering to different age groups of children and parental needs.

The **public education** system, with its *éducation précoce* for 3 year-olds, employs Primary School Teachers with university degrees and Educators with vocational degrees. Both work in a team. Primary School Teachers are employed in preschools (*préscolaire*) attended by 4 to 5 year-olds. Staff in the formal education sector are state employees.

Home-based ECEC providers (Luxembourgish: *Dageselteren*) are responsible for up to five children aged 0 to 12 years. Their tasks and responsibilities are regulated by a law passed on November 30th, 2007 (MFI 2007) that introduced rules for their accreditation. However, home-based ECEC providers are not an official part of Luxembourg's public education and care system. Above and beyond the formalised qualifications needed by ECEC personnel in the non-formal education sector and in home-based ECEC provision, language requirements for accreditation usually include sufficient knowledge of at least one of the official languages (Luxembourgish, French, German).

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: **0–2** years for children **up to 3** years of age and **3–5** years for 3, 4 and 5 year-olds. In the case of Luxembourg, the formats may vary, depending on the kind of setting (non-formal or formal) in focus, but generally they are **0–3** years and **4–5** years.

In the non-formal sector, proficiency in multiple languages is required in publicly funded ECEC institutions because of the plurilingual education programme introduced in 2017. The programme requires educators to develop children’s skills in Luxembourgish or French, familiarise them with French or Luxembourgish (depending on the institution), and value their home languages (Kirsch and Seele 2020). These language requirements and selective admission procedures make it difficult for residents who immigrated to Luxembourg and cross-border workers to work in public ECEC institutions. Nevertheless, given the recognition of various qualifications in Luxembourg, cross-border workers who commute daily from neighbouring countries can work in the commercial sector, where only one of the official languages is required. However, SEAs need to have staff speaking several languages if they offer plurilingual education. Due to the high number of commuters from France, French has become the dominating language in commercial ECEC institutions. Portuguese is highly prevalent in home-based care, especially in regions with a sizeable Lusophone population (Bollig 2018; Kirsch and Aleksić 2021). As a result of language policies, professionalisation and credentialisation, the staff in public institutions and formal education are more homogenous in origin and qualifications than the workforce in the non-formal sector and privately-run ECEC settings. Teachers in the formal sector must be proficient in Luxembourgish, German, and French.

Table 1 provides an overview of the different types of ECEC staff in Luxembourg, their qualifications and possible workplaces. There are three types of staff: Teachers, Social Pedagogues/Social Workers, and Educators. Home-based ECEC providers make up another growing group of child-care workers. Significant differences and inequalities exist in how these staff categories are distributed across the formal and non-formal education sectors and settings. Furthermore, core professionals (i.e. persons with a group or centre responsibility) are classified according to five profiles adapted from previous SEEPRO studies (see Box 1).

Table 1

Luxembourg: ECEC staff in centre-based settings (formal and non-formal education sectors)

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age range	Main roles and positions	Main age-range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
Formal education sector				
School Teacher (Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary) <i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional	<i>Éducation précoce</i> Early education as part of basic education 3 year-olds Cycle 1 (the first year is non-compulsory) <i>Éducation préscolaire</i> Preschool as part of basic education (école fondamentale) 4–5 years Cycle 1	Core professional	3–12 years	4 years university Award: <i>Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation (professionnel)</i> ECTS credits: 240 EQF: level 6 ISCED 2011: 655



Job title	Main ECEC work- place settings and age range	Main roles and positions	Main age- range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
	(compulsory from the second year) <i>École fondamentale</i> Primary school 6–12 years Cycles 2–4 (compulsory)			
Educator <i>Éducateur/ éducatrice di- ploma(e)</i> <i>Profile:</i> Social and Child- hood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Éducation précoce</i> Early education as part of basic educa- tion 3-year-olds (non-compulsory)	Qualified co- worker, as teacher’s assistant	All ages	3 years (post-)second- ary education <i>Award: Diplôme d’état d’éducateur/éducatrice</i> ECTS credits: n/a ⁵ EQF: level 4 ISCED 2011: 454 or <i>Bachelor en sciences so- ciales et éducatives</i> ECTS credits: 180 EQF: level 6 ISCED 2011: 655
Non-formal education sector				
Social Pedagogy/ Social Work spe- cialist <i>Éducateur gradué / éducatrice graduée</i> <i>Profile:</i> Social and Child- hood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Services d’éducation et d’accueil:</i> Children’s services in the non-formal education sector All age groups – children and young people Also employed in: Leisure-time cen- tres; special needs services; residential homes for children and young people; workforce integra- tion measures for	Core professional Centre head	All ages, in- cluding adults	3 years university <i>Award: Bachelor en sci- ences sociales et éduca- tives (professionel)</i> ECTS credits: 180 EQF: level 6 ISCED 2011: 655

⁵ n/a = not applicable. The qualifying routes for Educators and Care workers/Assistants (*auxiliaire de vie*, see below) are not anchored in the Bologna system and ECTS credits are therefore not applicable; instead different weightings are made within the course of study according to a coefficient system (the higher the coefficient, the more important the field of study).

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age range	Main roles and positions	Main age-range focus of initial professional education	Minimum qualification requirement ECTS credits EQF level ISCED level
	young people; support services for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; services for older persons			
Educator <i>Éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)</i> <i>Profile:</i> Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Services d'éducation et d'accueil</i> Children's services in the non-formal education sector Also employed in: Leisure-time centres; special needs services; residential homes for children and young people; workforce integration measures for young people; support services for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; services for older persons	Core professional ⁶	All ages	3 years (post-)secondary education <i>Award: Diplôme d'état d'éducateur/éducatrice</i> ECTS credits: n/a ⁷ EQF: level 4 ISCED 2011: 454 or <i>Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives</i> ECTS credits: 180 EQF: level 6 ISCED 2011: 655
Care Assistant/ Care Worker <i>Auxiliaire de vie</i>	<i>Services d'éducation et d'accueil</i> Social care services and children's services in the non-formal education sector	Care assistant in the non-formal education sector	All ages	Upper secondary, apprenticeship-type dual qualification <i>Award: Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle (DAP) – auxiliaire de vie</i> ECTS credits: n/a EQR: Level 3 ISCED 2011: 353

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)

⁶ In the non-formal education sector, educators (*éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)*) can also be employed as Centre Head, see Article 7 in the 2016 law modifying the 2008 law on young people (MENJE 2016).

⁷ See footnote 6.

- **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)

Professional profiles of staff and legal regulations: In the *formal education sector*, the professional profiles of teachers and educators are regulated by law. The core professional with class responsibility is a (Pre-primary and) Primary School Teacher. Educators (*éducateurs/éducatrices*) are employed as support staff, i.e., as teacher assistants (MENFP 2009c, Art. 1). Only teachers with a Bachelor’s degree may be employed as core professionals. The teachers in *éducation précoce* classes have been trained to teach young children, although they are not specialised in working with 3 year-olds. Supporting staff have obtained vocational and upper-secondary qualifications in social pedagogy. One Primary School Teacher and one Educator are assigned to each *éducation précoce* class.

In the *non-formal education sector*, staffing is regulated by a quota system which defines which category of staff may work and in which function for how many childcare hours. The qualifications required for granting an operating licence (*agrément*) are laid out in Article 7 of the Regulations on the Restructuring of the Educational and Social Services (*SEA-Règlement*⁸, MFI 2013, 2018). Staff work according to the ‘curriculum framework for non-formal education in childhood and youth’ (MENJE and SNJ 2021), which follows a process-oriented rather than an outcome-oriented approach. A wide variety of staff is employed in these settings. Social Pedagogues and Social Workers (mainly lead staff), Educators and Care Workers may also work as core pedagogues or support staff. In these mixed qualification profiles and levels, the proportion of staff with a Bachelor’s degree is smaller than in the formal education sector.

The SEA-regulations also define the tasks assigned to staff. The general staff mainly does necessary coordinating work regarding day-to-day activities. In addition, the staff are responsible for the direct pedagogical work with the children, preparing educational activities, participating in staff meetings, and communicating with the parents and teaching staff in schools. Participation in professional development activities is also one of their duties (*SEA-Règlement*; MFI 2018, Art. 11).

2.2 Centre leader

Unlike all other staff types, the centre heads do not typically have regular contact with the children. In the non-formal sector, the head must have completed initial professional studies in the psycho-social or socio-educational field (*SEA-Règlement*; MFI 2018, Art. 8).

To be promoted to lead a non-formal ECEC institution, sufficient prior work experience in ECEC provision is a crucial requirement. In recent years, extended studies in education and social services at the Master’s level have become essential to take on a leading role in an ECEC institution. The head’s tasks are regulated by the *SEA-Règlement* and include the organisational development of the centre, compiling a dedicated educational programme that is applied by the centre’s personnel and supervising the staff in its implementation.

⁸ The SEA (*services d’éducation et d’accueil pour enfants*) regulations are an extension of the so-called ASFT law (MFI 2011) passed in 1998. This legislation regulates the relation between the State and private providers of human services in Luxembourg and defines minimum standards for social and therapeutic work.



2.3 Centre-based posts of responsibility

Pedagogical and administrative responsibility at ECEC institutions is distributed among the centre staff depending on their formal qualifications. In SEA care facilities, 60% of the total hours of childcare must be carried out by staff with a recognised professional qualification in a psycho-social, educational, or socio-pedagogic profession awarded by a state-recognised vocational school or a university. Up to 40% of the total hours provided at a childcare facility may be carried out by staff with music, arts, or physical education qualifications. Paediatric nurses may work in childcare, which is reminiscent of the French childcare system rooted in healthcare. Up to 20% of the total childcare hours may be provided by care (or literally: life) assistants with a *Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle (auxiliaire de vie)* or who have obtained a certificate as an *aide éducatrice* (educational helper) after attending 100 hours of training. Their role in ECEC centres is complementary, and they may work in *crèches* with children from 0 to 3 years old and in *maisons relais* for children aged 4–12.

In addition to these qualification-oriented responsibilities, each centre designates a specialist for multilingual education (*référent(e)s pédagogiques pour l'éducation plurilingue*) and a specialist for inclusive education (*référent(e)s pédagogiques "inclusion"*). Their task is to address pedagogical issues in their area of specialisation and to coordinate the implementation of multilingual and inclusive education, respectively.

2.4 Co-ordinating and supervisory staff

Generally, the main daily coordinating work and supervision is done by the head of each ECEC institution. Pedagogical evaluation, through which *process and orientation quality* are assessed, was introduced by the Youth Act of 2016 (MENJE 2016).

ECEC providers are required to develop a pedagogical concept showing how the centre intends to address the curricular goals laid out in the national framework. The concept needs to be updated every three years and is assessed by the *agents régionaux* appointed by the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth. The *agents régionaux* are experts who evaluate the institutional concepts and check whether they comply with the national framework.

To guarantee the quality of work, the educational staff must participate in professional development offers aligned with the national educational framework. Continued professionalisation is monitored by a commission that coordinates staff professional development and approves educational measures. On top of that, staff need to engage in permanent self-evaluation.

2.5 Specialist support staff

There are no specialist support staff, such as therapists and special needs staff working in ECEC settings aside from the pedagogical specialists for multilingual and inclusive education selected among the regular staff. Currently, no data are available on how many children receive therapeutic support based on recommendations made by the regular ECEC staff.

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

The composition of Luxembourg's ECEC workforce is becoming more and more diverse compared to the predominantly female staff of Luxembourgish origin in the past. In 2018, new regulations relaxed the entry requirements for educators and teachers interested in working in this

sector (European Commission 2019). Changes in the recruitment process had become necessary to combat the staff shortage in ECEC. The education reform addressed the need to increase the ECEC workforce following heavy investments in the ECEC sectors over the past decade, which roughly tripled the number of childcare places. Since 2010, the government has increased the budget for SEA facilities by about five times (Hekel and Simoes Loureiro 2021; MENJE 2020). In addition, during the 2010s the number of home-based childcare providers (*assistants parentaux*/*“Dageselteren”*) almost doubled (Neumann 2018).

The data on the qualifications of the workforce employed in both sectors of Luxembourg’s ECEC system are incomplete (OECD 2022). The most current data on the workforce’s sociodemographic composition are still based on an online survey by the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth (MENJE) in 2016. Before 2016, the National Youth Service (SNJ) collected survey data in 2013 (SNJ 2020). There are no continuing data collections regarding the personnel employed in the non-formal sector.

A considerable proportion of staff obtained their qualifications abroad. The required qualifications range from ISCED level 3 (Care Assistant) to level 7 (Master’s degree), where staff with the lowest qualification typically work with the youngest children. The SNJ data show that in 2013 a total of 3,403 people were employed in ECEC facilities, of which 92% were women and 8% men. Other researchers report a considerably higher number of 13.5% male staff (Krabel et al. 2018). The most recent study that included information on the childcare staff’s gender composition is the PerSEALux project (Hadjar et al. 2021). 522 people fully completed the study’s questionnaire. About 91% of these people are female, which aligns almost exactly with the 2013 government data and reveals little change in the gender composition.

Furthermore, the 2013 data show the age composition: 14% are younger than 25 years old, and another 23% are between 25 and 30, indicating a relatively young workforce. Only 30 people were older than 60.

According to the 2016 survey that already informed the previous SEEPRO report, the ECEC personnel is overall quite heterogeneous in terms of language: About 62% are Luxembourgish, 10% Portuguese, 9% French, 8% Belgian, 5% German and 5% of different origin. French is the most widespread language, with 91% of the staff being proficient. Luxembourgish is spoken by 77% of staff and German is known by 73%. About 16% of the staff speak Portuguese as well. However, these figures do not draw on a representative survey and differ by the type of ECEC centre, whether public or commercial. As one would expect, public institutions have personnel which is more proficient in all three of the country’s official languages. Meanwhile, the private centres employ a relatively large proportion of French speakers.

In relation to nationality, the PerSEALux survey reveals that among the male ECEC staff, Germany and Belgium are (in relative terms) the largest groups of origin aside from the almost 80% men from Luxembourg. About 60% of the female staff are native Luxembourgers. The remaining women are from France, Belgium, and Germany, with around 10% each. The small but significant proportion of Portuguese staff is entirely female.

The relatively low response rates to the voluntary surveys limits valid conclusions and, therefore, the surveys can only give a hint of the current workforce composition in the Luxembourgish ECEC sector. Again, the numbers on qualifications stated in this report are not based on representative data collections but on a relatively small online sample.

The PerSEALux survey also asked staff about their qualifications but included all staff from *crèches* to the *maisons relais* and differentiated between men and women. Overall, 10.4% of male staff and 14.8% of the female workforce report the lowest qualification (*aide éducateur/éducatrice*). The *auxiliaires de vie* make up 5.3% of the women and 2.1% of the men in the sample. The *éducateurs diplômé* comprise 43.8% of the male and 39.9% of the female ECEC



staff, while 31.3% of men are *éducateurs diplômés* and 27.8% of women. In addition, men have more often graduated with a Bachelor's degree (31.3%) than women (26.8%). Given that lower qualifications are needed to work in a *crèche*, it is not surprising that 49.2% of the women in the sample work in a *crèche* compared to 22.9% of the men. However, men frequently work at the *maisons relais* (70.8% of men, 44.1% of women). No differences are reported for the *foyers de jour* and *foyers scolaires*.

The following tables provide more details about the workforce's level of education in both the formal (Table 2) and the non-formal ECEC sector (Table 3).

Formal early childhood education sector

The table shows that a high proportion of staff have obtained a degree requiring at least three years of training. However, graduates with a social sciences and education degree (*Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives*) do not generally work in the formal education sector. Overall, the proportion of male staff is low: well over 90% of staff in *éducation précoce* classes are female.

Table 2

Luxembourg: Structural composition of the workforce in the formal ECEC sector (*éducation précoce*), 2016 (latest available data)

Staff categories	Proportion, in %
Staff with specialist higher education degree	72.8 → 71.2% BA <i>sciences de l'éducation</i> → 1.6% BA <i>sciences sociales et éducatives</i>
Staff with generalist vocational qualification, ISCED level 4 (<i>éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)</i>)	27.1
Staff with non-specialist qualification	n/a
Staff with no formal IPE	n/a
Specialist support staff (e.g. Speech Therapists)	No data available
Male staff	7.1
Staff with residence outside Luxembourg (cross-border workers) ⁹	1.4

Source: [MENJE and SEF] Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth and *Service de l'Enseignement Fondamental*. December 2016.

Non-formal education sector

Table 3 shows the summarised data for the communal, private non-profit and private for-profit settings in the non-formal education sector.

Table 3

Luxembourg: Structural composition of workforce in the non-formal education sector (*services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants*), 2016 (latest available data)

Staff categories	Year/Proportion, in %
Staff with a relevant higher education degree	23 → 16% lower tertiary degree → 7% university degree

⁹ For the formal sector, there are no data on immigrant background. Based on the online survey in the non-formal sector, it refers to place of residence, nationality, and language(s).

Staff categories	Year/Proportion, in %
Staff with relevant vocational qualifications (post-secondary)	37
Staff with relevant vocational qualifications (upper secondary)	See footnote ¹⁰
Staff with other non-specialised qualification (so-called “low skilled”)	26 → 17% <i>aide éducatrice</i> → 9% <i>auxiliaire de vie CAP/DATP</i>
Staff with no formal IPE ¹¹	4
Specialist support staff	No data available
Male staff	7
Staff with an immigrant background (non-Luxembourgish nationality), non-Luxembourgish residency and first language:	
<i>nationality:</i>	LU 62 % → other: 37% (BE 8%, DE 5%, FR 9%, PT 10%, others 5%)
<i>place of residence:</i>	LU 79% → outside Luxembourg: 20% (BE 7%, DE 5%, FR 8%)
<i>language:</i>	LU 77% FR 91% DE 73% PT 16%

Source: [MENJE and SEA 2017] Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth and *Services d'éducation et d'accueil*. February 2017. Online survey in early childhood settings (available upon request).

In non-formal settings, the proportion of female staff is similarly high to that in the formal education sector – over 90% – but this is the only significant similarity between the two early education sectors.

The figures suggest that the proportion of staff with a higher education degree in the non-formal early childhood sector is not nearly as high as in the formal sector (*éducation précoce*). Staff with a post-secondary vocational qualification (37%) comprise the largest group; the proportion of lower qualified staff is comparable to that of staff with a higher education degree. Around 60% of staff have Luxembourgish citizenship; accordingly, the proportion of French- and Portuguese-speaking staff is high.

The summarised figures demonstrate some of the critical *differences between the private non-profit and the private for-profit* sectors. The proportion of staff with Luxembourgish nationality and place of residence is higher in the state-subsidised settings than in the commercial care centres. Thus, the three official languages of Luxembourg (with a dominant role of Luxembourgish at this early stage) are more strongly represented (85%) in state-subsidised centres. In contrast, the proportion of French- and Portuguese-speaking staff is higher in the private for-profit centres, particularly in the southern part of the country, which shares borders with Belgium and France. French is the primary language in these settings. Around 50% of staff in private for-profit institutions speak Luxembourgish and German. Portuguese is the native language of 21% of

¹⁰ In Luxembourg, legislation does not permit the employment of staff with a non-relevant upper secondary vocational qualification in the non-formal ECEC sector for under 4 year-olds. In the online survey, several settings indicate that they do in fact employ staff with an upper secondary vocational qualification; these persons are often staff from another country. No exact figures are available; it could well be that these persons have special competences that were not catered for in the survey questionnaire.

¹¹ Luxembourg legislation does not permit the employment of unqualified staff in ECEC settings. The proportion shown in the table presumably refers to staff who have qualifications acquired in another country and which are difficult to categorise within the classifications provided by the Luxembourg qualifications grid.

staff, 8% more than in the state-subsidised settings in the non-formal sector. A high proportion have the *diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle* (DAP/DAPT) qualification. They are low-paid workers who often speak several languages and thus fulfil two necessary conditions for the commercial providers: profitability and staff coverage.

4. Initial professional education (IPE)

For many years, the initial professional training for practitioners in early childhood education in Luxembourg was influenced by the absence of a university in the country. Before the foundation of the University of Luxembourg in 2003, teachers and educators in Luxembourg used to have only post-secondary degrees. Since 2003, the University of Luxembourg has offered two practice-oriented professional Bachelor programmes for future teachers and educators: the *Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation* (BScE) for future teachers in primary schools and the *Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives* (BSSE) for prospective educators and social workers. Not all teachers working in the state education system are trained in the BScE and only around 60% of graduates of the BSSE make up the workforce in the non-formal early education sector, along with employees of other lower or less relevant qualifications.

The following chapters will present the initial professional education routes for Teachers, Educators, and Social Workers in Luxembourg. The workforce in the non-formal ECEC sector is much more diverse, as many Luxembourgish practitioners choose to obtain their initial professional education abroad. In addition, many cross-border commuters from Germany, France, and Belgium work in Luxembourg's ECEC sector.

4.1 Initial qualifying routes (higher education and vocational)

Since 2005, the initial professional education for Pre-primary and Primary School Teachers has remained the same. Graduates of the Bachelor's in educational sciences (*Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation, BScE*) are not only qualified to teach in primary schools. They can also choose to work with a qualified educator in an "early education" class (*éducation précoce*), the non-compulsory year of pre-primary education. Until 2020, the entrance exam for the BScE included language tests in the official languages of the country: Luxembourgish, French and German. The study programme aims to foster pedagogical and didactical skills, focusing on practice and developing a reflective stance. In addition, it delivers a competence-oriented and child-centred teaching approach. The BScE does not specialise graduates for working in early childhood education. In 2021, the university admitted around 100 students to the programme, which is expected to rise.

Table 4

Luxembourg: School Teacher (Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary)

<p>Title in French: <i>Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation (professionnel)</i></p> <p>Profile: Pre-primary and Primary School Teacher</p>
<p>Admission requirements: General university entrance qualification (<i>diplôme de fin d'études secondaires</i>) or a diploma recognised as equivalent; entrance exam (until 2020); proficiency in the three languages of Luxembourg</p>
<p>Professional studies: 4 years / 8 semesters, including a mandatory semester abroad</p>

Title in French: <i>Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation (professionnel)</i> Profile: Pre-primary and Primary School Teacher
Award: Bachelor in educational sciences (<i>Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation – professionnel</i>) ECTS credits: 240 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 655 Main workplaces in ECEC: early education in the formal education sector, <i>éducation précoce</i> (children aged 3 to 4) and preschool (children aged 4 and 5).

The Bachelor's degree in social and educational sciences (*Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives, BSSE*) provides initial training for education and social work professionals. Different subjects, including early childhood pedagogy, can be chosen as a focus during the studies. Contrary to the BScE, students' language competencies are not tested before admission to the programme or play less of a role during the studies. In recent years, the BSSE has contributed to the growth of educators with an academic degree in the ECEC sector in Luxembourg.

Table 5

Luxembourg: Social Pedagogue / Social Worker (*Bachelor en Sciences sociales et éducatives – professionnel*)

Title in French: <i>Éducateur gradué / éducatrice graduée</i> Profile: Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional
Admission requirements: General university entrance qualification (<i>Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires classiques</i> or <i>secondaires générales</i>), or a certificate recognised as equivalent; good command of the course languages (minimum B2 level for French and German and minimum B1 for English) Professional studies: 3 years / 6 semesters, including a mandatory semester abroad Award: Bachelor in Social and Education Sciences, <i>Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives – professionnel</i> ECTS credits: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 655 Main workplaces in ECEC: early education in the formal education sector, <i>éducation précoce</i> (children aged 3 to 4); diverse settings in the non-formal education sector, e.g. <i>crèches</i> or <i>maisons relais</i> with the possibility of assuming leading positions in child welfare settings and services

Initial professional studies for the *éducateur / éducatrice diplômé(e)* are offered at the general (technical) secondary school for educational and social occupations (*Lycée technique pour professions éducatives et sociales, LTPES*). Since 1990, this school has also provided specialised training at the tertiary vocational level. Students earn the general university entrance qualification (*diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques*) or are awarded a three-year vocational qualification as a state-recognised educator. The diploma opens the way to a broad spectrum of educational and social occupations and provides the entry requirement for university studies.

Table 6

Luxembourg: Educator

Title in French: <i>Éducateur / éducatrice diplômé(e)</i> Profile: Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional
Admission requirements: 11 years of general schooling, including successful completion of 5 years of upper secondary classical education (<i>éducation secondaire classique</i>) or secondary general education (<i>éducation secondaire général – social or paramedical section</i>), or equivalent

Title in French: <i>Éducateur / éducatrice diplômé(e)</i> Profile: Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional
Professional studies: 3 years (or 6 years part-time) at a tertiary-level vocational college for the education and social occupations (<i>Lycée technique pour professions éducatives et sociales</i>) Award: State-recognised Educator, <i>diplôme d'état d'éducateur / éducatrice</i> ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 4 ISCED 2011: 454 Main workplaces in ECEC: Generalist qualification for social pedagogical work with all age groups in various settings and services, e.g. early education in the formal education sector, <i>éducation précoce</i> (children aged 3 to 4); non-formal education sector, <i>services d'éducation et accueil</i> (0–12 years), e.g. <i>crèches</i> (0–4 years); child and youth welfare settings and services (0–27 years).

The vocational course for prospective Care Workers/Care Assistants (*auxiliaire de vie*) is a three-year long programme, combining one year of full-time school with two years of alternating attendance at school and work in a care service. The diploma for successful programme completion is a 'Diploma of professional competence' (*diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle*, DAP). *Auxiliaires de vie* are part of the low-qualified staff who, according to law, may make up 20% of the staff capacity in non-formal education and care settings. The diploma holders also work in other social care services, such as those providing care for the elderly or persons with disabilities.

Table 7

Luxembourg: Care Assistant/Care Worker

Title in French: <i>Auxiliaire de vie</i>
Admission requirements: Successful completion of 9 years of compulsory schooling Professional studies: 3 years of vocational school, including one year of full-time attendance and two years of alternating weeks of school and internship Award: Upper secondary vocational diploma <i>Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle : auxiliaire de vie</i> ECTS credits: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2011: 353 Main workplaces in ECEC: Assistance in diverse socio-pedagogical and social care services, e.g. in the non-formal education sector, <i>service d'éducation et accueil</i> (0–12 years); children's centres, <i>maison relais pour enfants</i> (4–12 years); child and youth welfare settings and services (0–27 years)

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

School Teacher (Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary) *Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation – professionnel*

The study programme of the Bachelor's degree in education (*Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation professionnel*, BScE) at the University of Luxembourg includes a mandatory semester abroad and an extensive time of internships in all cycles of basic education (*école fondamentale*). Following the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the entrance exam for potential candidates has been replaced by an online admission procedure. Therefore, since 2021, applicants must write a motivation letter, complete an online questionnaire about, among others, their personality traits, and submit two letters.



Competence requirements: The BScE prepares teachers to work with children from a range of age groups: children aged 3–12 years attending the four levels of the *école fondamentale*, students aged 13–15 years enrolled in the lower level of secondary education/ *régime préparatoire*, and children of special needs of all ages in the *éducation différenciée*. The BScE students will develop the pedagogical and didactic skills necessary to recognise and meet the multiple challenges of their future work environment in a highly multilingual and multicultural context.

Curricular areas: The study programme of the BScE has three axes (pedagogy, research, and professionalization) and foregrounds the pedagogical competence of the prospective teachers. Students develop knowledge of teaching and learning theories and carry out projects in various subjects (e.g. language learning, mathematics, science, arts and aesthetics, sports, and health). They also do internships each semester and can spend one semester at a university abroad, enhancing mobility prospects. While students follow introductory courses and can spend a semester abroad in the first two years of their studies, they have a mix of mandatory and optional courses in the remaining two years. In the last year, they write their Bachelor's thesis. The written and oral evaluations of the student's achievements are based on reports, presentations, essays, and pedagogical projects.

Pedagogic-didactical approaches: A close link between theory and practice, active participation, problem- and project-based learning and reflexivity characterise the BScE. Students are encouraged to implement individual and collective projects during their courses and internships in schools or out-of-school settings. During the four years, the students collaborate with teachers, school committees, administrative staff, and parents. Throughout the programme, they have support from a personal tutor and reflect on their development in a personal portfolio.

Social Pedagogue / Social Worker (*Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives – professionnel*)

The initial professional education for the degree in social and educational sciences (*Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives – professionnel, BSSE*) is wide-ranging, combining elements of social pedagogy and social work. Students can choose between optional courses and two specialisations and will be awarded either the degree of a pedagogue or a social worker (*assistant/e social/e*). Graduates of the BSSE may work in the government sector, in public institutions or in private enterprises. In the non-formal education sector, graduates can work as directors or core pedagogues. Finally, students can access subsequent studies in full-time or part-time Master's programmes.

Competences: The study programme aims to help students develop essential theoretical, practical, and didactical competencies necessary for social pedagogy and social work. Students are to become generalist practitioners; they develop practical skills and theoretical knowledge, learn to plan and implement prevention, advisory, educational or care programmes, and design projects in education and social contexts.

Curricular areas: The programme looks at social issues on different levels, combining people's perspectives as individuals, members of social groups and participants in society. Students learn about historical context, laws and regulations, theoretical concepts, and ethical considerations of social work. Thematic areas include inclusion, poverty, violence, diversity, and social inequalities. Course topics cover all life phases, from early childhood to old age.

Pedagogic-didactical approaches: Inter-disciplinarity through a combination of different research disciplines and promotion of self-organisation are fundamental didactic principles of the study programme. It, therefore, offers a broad spectrum of topics and subjects for specialisation.



Internships in potential workplaces are essential in moulding a close relationship between theory and practice. At the same time, the study programme in social work aims to present itself as a research-oriented discipline and introduces students to the corresponding research methods.

Educator (*Éducateur / éducatrice diplômé(e)*)

The three-year initial professional education course to become a state-recognised *educator* (*éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)*) is delivered in secondary general education, the vocational-technical secondary school for educational and social professions (*Lycée technique pour professions éducatives et sociales, LTPES*). During the first two years, the curriculum offers introductory courses in psychology, education, and the social sciences. The third year focuses on the professional preparation of Educators with social pedagogy, childhood, and special needs profile. Graduates from the LTPES can choose to continue their studies at the university level (e.g. BSSE).

Competences: Initial professional studies aim to qualify for work in a wide range of occupational fields in social education. Certificate holders gain competencies for working with young children and school children. With these skills, they work in early intervention, residential care settings, youth clubs, and special education settings. In addition, they are qualified to work with and support children of all ages, persons with special needs, the elderly, and persons with different psychological or social issues.

Curricular areas: The curriculum is organised according to three overarching principles: providing a general theoretical knowledge base, a balanced field-based approach for acquiring practically relevant competencies in everyday learning situations and contributing to students' personal growth (LTPES 2022). In the final year, students can specialise in three areas: social and educational pedagogy, sports, and cultural activities; educational approaches and developmental processes; and organisation and coordination within educational and social teams.

Pedagogical-didactical approaches: The initial professional studies include basic and optional courses, seminars, and practical time in social and cultural institutions in Luxembourg or abroad. The main aim is to link general theoretical learning at the LTPES with practical experiences from occupation fields. Staff members in the field setting and a tutor from the LTPES guide the students.

Care Assistant / Care Worker (*Auxiliaire de vie*)

Care Assistants or Care Workers (*auxiliaires de vie*) are part of multidisciplinary teams in health or socio-educational settings. They are mainly concerned with accompanying, guiding, and assisting persons of all ages in supporting their physical and psychological well-being (Beruffer.anelo.lu 2022a, b). The three-year initial professional training can be compared with an apprenticeship and is completed by a secondary vocational qualification (*Diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle, DAP*).

Competences: Care assistants are qualified to work with people of all ages in different socio-educational settings. They can be employed in non-formal early education and care institutions (*crèches, garderies*), socio-pedagogical services (*centres d'accueil, foyers de jour*), care facilities for the elderly and in the home assistance sector (*aide à domicile*).

Curricular areas: The course transmits basic notions of assistance and care. Core content includes practical aspects of personal care and hygiene, preparing meals, household work, and accompanying persons who need appointments or during leisure-time activities.

Pedagogical-didactical approaches: The training focuses mainly on practical learning in work settings. During the first year, students complete the school-based part in one of five lycées in

Luxembourg which offer the training. The remainder of the course in the second and third years takes place in socio-educational settings.

4.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Primary School Teachers, as a prominent part of the workforce in pre-primary education in Luxembourg, can also study for their degrees in Belgium or Switzerland. A reform of educational studies in Belgium is being undertaken to enhance the profession's status and improve the initial professional education. It includes an emphasis on language competence in French and foresees a four-year-long curriculum with the possibility of extending the studies through a Master's degree. Contrary to the studies in Luxembourg (BScE), the Belgian Bachelor's study programme in educational sciences separates pre-primary and primary school teachers' qualifications. In Switzerland, the initial studies do not include a specialisation in early childhood education.

To teach in Luxembourg, all prospective teachers, regardless of the country of study, must pass the state eligibility examination to be employed in the public elementary school system (*école fondamentale*), including the early education classes (*éducation précoce*). Candidates who do not pass the exam may be employed as contract teachers (*chargés*) and are paid a lower salary. Recently, it has become possible for some people with specific higher education degrees to complete a four-week internship and become substitute teachers in primary school. Substitute teachers are employed ad hoc (e.g. if a teacher is on sick leave) or in cases of staff shortages.

Since the academic year 2021/22, a governmental pilot project has tried to counteract the staff shortage of educators by speeding up qualifications and access routes into employment. The highly debated project allows students who graduated from a social sciences section of secondary school (*section sciences sociales, SO*) to immediately access the final year of tertiary-vocational studies at the LTPES. Therefore, students from this section can now become state-recognised Educators after one year of training instead of three.

The most common way of accessing employment in social pedagogy or social work in Luxembourg is by acquiring an equivalent degree in another country. Many Luxembourgish students earn a degree in social pedagogy in one of the three neighbouring countries and return to work in Luxembourg. In addition, many cross-border commuters from Germany, France, or Belgium work in the non-formal education sector of ECEC. Graduates with degrees from universities or other higher education institutions from countries other than Luxembourg may apply for recognition of their diplomas (*Validation des acquis*). This includes officially recognising relevant previous work experience of three or more years. However, many commercial early education and care providers have difficulties recruiting Luxembourgish staff, contrary to the public institutions. Therefore, many staff in the non-formal education sector have foreign qualifications and use French as their primary language in everyday communications. Therefore, many private ECE facilities are francophone and have staff with very different qualifications and levels of experience.

Another possibility to enter the socio-educational work field is to attend the national school for adult education (*École nationale des adultes, ENAD*). This institution offers a part-time course of studies for prospective Educators (*éducateur / éducatrice en alternance*). The ENAD is aimed at young adults aged over 21 years who are already working in the socio-educational sector but have not completed secondary school and therefore do not have a vocational qualification or access to professional development courses. The courses combine principles of school and vocational training. Students can finish their secondary education in two years (*Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires*) or obtain a degree as a state-recognised Educator (*Diplôme d'éducateur / éducatrice*) in one year (ENAD 2022).

It is more likely for Educators in the non-formal education sector to be employed through an alternative entry or qualification route than for teachers or educators in the formal education sector. In addition to the options mentioned above, the legislation allows 40% of staff in a non-formal ECEC centre to have a professional qualification in the arts, music, or sports. Half of this group may comprise low-qualified staff (see *Chapter 2.1*). After a 100-hour professional development course, these persons without a relevant basic qualification in a social or educational area can enter employment in the non-formal sector.

Finally, as part of the non-formal ECEC sector, adults with socio-educational or healthcare training or initial studies in related fields can offer childcare services as self-employed home-based providers (*assistants parentaux*). To obtain the necessary accreditation, applicants must speak at least one of the three official languages, French, German, or Luxembourgish and have completed a pre-training course offered by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. The *assistants parentaux* can offer childcare services in their own homes for up to five children, from birth to 12 years old (no more than two children may be under two years old). In addition to regular training and supervision sessions (at least 20 hours per year), the *assistants parentaux* must submit a development plan (*projet d'établissement*) describing their offer and the pedagogical concept of their childcare. In 2021, there were approximately 430 accredited *agents parentaux* in Luxembourg (Lifelong-learning.lu 2022).

5. Guided workplace experience (practicum) in the IPE of core professionals

Guided workplace experience is an essential component of all the initial professional education for practitioners in ECEC in Luxembourg. While the initial professionalisation of the Care Assistant (*auxiliaire de vie*) is entirely based on workplace-based learning, study programmes of the University of Luxembourg or other training institutions offer alternation between theoretical studies and practical learning experience (internship). Graduates should experience their future work environments over an extended period, focusing on becoming familiar with the different types of institutions and potential workplaces. Through their workplace experience, students are encouraged to reflect and evaluate their practices and determine their personal and professional development aims. Tutors from the education/training or study institution collaborate with practitioners from the respective workplaces to mentor and support the students in their field studies. Students are generally free to choose from possible workplaces in and around Luxembourg for their internships.

As described above, early childhood education is only one of many elements for most initial study programmes for potential ECEC employees. Students are therefore not obliged to spend their workplace-based learning time in an ECEC institution. They might choose to do this in other socio-educational settings, for example, in working with older children, disabled people, or senior citizens. Practical experience and reflection of the framework for non-formal early childhood education are therefore not mandatory for the graduates and potential ECEC employees. This possible shortcoming of initial professional education needs to be compensated for by professional development after entering the workforce.

The following describes the workplace-based learning arrangements for the three study programmes offered by the University of Luxembourg and the LTPES.

School Teacher (Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary) (*Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation – professionnel*)

The modalities of guided workplace-based learning in the BScE were reformed in the academic year 2021–2022. Throughout their studies, students of the BScE have seven periods of teaching practice in schools (internships), one per semester except during the semester abroad. Students must do an internship in each cycle of basic education (cycle 1, cycle 2, cycle 3 and cycle 4). From the third year on, students can choose to continue working in primary school classes during their internships or gain practical experience in other educational domains and potential workplaces. This includes classes of secondary education that prepare students for vocational training (*régime préparatoire*), facilities for children with special needs (*éducation différenciée*), and public international schools. During the first two years of their studies, students complete three internships, each for three weeks (accredited with 5 ECTS). In the third year of studies, the internships last for four weeks (accredited with 7 ECTS), and in the final year of studies, they last for five weeks (accredited with 10 ECTS). Before each internship, the students are expected to observe the school environment for at least three days to familiarise themselves with the teachers, children, and the resources to adapt their practical activities to the context. During the internships, students plan, organise and carry out school lessons and activities in all subjects.

Furthermore, they write weekly self-reflections and participate in exchanges with professors, tutors, and other students to connect their practical experiences with pedagogical theory. Students experience working in different school settings throughout their internships and are accompanied by different mentors. During each of the internships, they are accompanied by a teacher (*formateur/-trice de terrain*) and a tutor from the university. Their role is to introduce the student to the work environment and explain pedagogical concepts and practices. Furthermore, the *formateur/-trice* supports the student in planning and organising activities and gives constructive feedback.

Regarding workplace-based learning in an ECE setting, students of the BScE can therefore conduct at least one internship in cycle 1 of basic education. This comprises the *classe de précoce*, the first year of formal elementary education for children of 3 to 4 years.

Social Pedagogue / Social Worker (*Bachelor en sciences sociales et éducatives – professionnel*)

Students of the BSSE complete two internships during their studies, one in the third and one in the sixth semester. During the workplace-based learning phases, students are mentored by qualified and experienced practitioners from their respective fields and academic representatives from the study programme.

The internships in the third semester consist of around 220 hours of work, of which 125 are spent in a potential work environment, and the rest consist of courses at the university. The students choose the internship place and actively participate in all aspects of daily work life, including team meetings, planning and organisation of pedagogical activities. In addition, students write a short report about their work-based learning experiences. The aim of the first internship is to get to know different areas of work, its organisational and historical development, and field-specific practices and concepts. The internship is evaluated through a subsequent oral debriefing.

Over the sixth semester, the students do a more extended internship, consisting of around 450 hours of practical work in the field and 50 hours in courses at the university (in total, accredited with 18 ECTS). Students choose and contact the workplace for this more extended internship,



depending on their potential work aspirations. Like the internship in the third semester, students prepare, carry out and reflect on their workplace-based learning. The focus lies on methodological and ethical reflections and developing a professional attitude. Students are expected to analyse their practices critically and develop professional relationships with other actors in the field. The evaluation of the second internship is based on an extensive written report.

Educator (*Éducateur/éducatrice diplômé(e)*)

Future state-recognised Educators must do four internships each year of their four-year-long initial professional education. The internships take place in different pedagogical, social, or cultural institutions and aim to prepare the applicants for their diverse potential work environments.

The first internship serves as a professional orientation and has a duration of nine weeks (34 hours per week). The students can expand and deepen their practical knowledge during the second internship of six weeks (34 hours per week). The third internship of ten weeks (34 hours per week) is a completion of the students' practical skills and preparation for entering the job market. The fourth internship in the final year of the IPE to become a state-recognised Educator is part of the entry exam to the profession, which is regulated by law. The school (LTPES) and the facility of the trainee's internship sign an agreement (*convention*). They determine the work domains of the internship, its organisation and the tasks and responsibilities of the trainee. Facilities that agree to offer internships to potential educators receive a monthly indemnity of €180.

The aim of the workplace-based learning experience is for students to acquire transversal skills and to be able to apply the knowledge they develop during their theoretical studies in daily work-practice.

A teacher from the school (LTPES) and a tutor working in the internship facility support and mentor the trainee during workplace-based learning. The evaluation of the internships is based on a reflective paper.

6. Continuing professional development (CPD) of ECEC staff

Continuing professional development (CPD) is included in the relevant legislation and regulations for the formal and non-formal education sectors as a statutory duty.

Formal sector

In the formal sector, Primary School Teachers who work in the *éducation précoce* classes are required to attend eight hours of CPD annually. The wide range of courses are conceptualised and planned by the *Institut de Formation de l'Éducation Nationale* (IFEN) with the participation of schools and according to staff needs (INFPC 2022). Educators working in the *éducation précoce* must attend 40 hours of CPD each year (MENFP 2009b, Art. 4; MENFP 2009c, Art. 4).

Non-formal sector

In the non-formal sector, CPD is coordinated at the national level by the *Service National de la Jeunesse* (SNJ)¹², the tasks of which are regulated by the Young People's Act (*Loi modifiée du 4*

¹² SNJ hosts the internet home page www.enfancejeunesse.lu (*Enfance Jeunesse* 2017).

juillet 2008 sur la Jeunesse, Art. 7; Loi du 24 avril 2016 portant modification de la loi modifiée du 4 juillet 2008, Art. 5) (see MENJE 2016). The SNJ is a public service developed in the context of policies for young people.

Some of its assignments are to ensure the pedagogical quality in centre-based and home-based childcare settings, to support the continuing professional development of staff in institutions for children and young people, and to develop appropriate pedagogical material to work with children (*Enfance Jeunesse* 2017). Apart from the SNJ, the primary providers of CPD are the large non-governmental agencies responsible for non-formal education (*Croix-Rouge*, *Caritas*, *Focus*) and the *Entente des Foyers de Jour* (EFJ). The *Entente des Foyers de Jour* is a non-governmental umbrella association of the providers of children's services in Luxembourg. Its members are largely associations and communes who provide nurseries (*crèche*, *foyer de jour*) and out-of-school facilities (*maisons relais*) (EFJ 2017).

- The *Croix-Rouge* (Red Cross) is one of the largest providers in the non-formal education sector in Luxembourg, with numerous childcare centres in different communes. The Red Cross also has its CPD organisation and offers regular CPD activities (Croix Rouge 2017).
- *Caritas* focuses on social inclusion. One of the numerous services provided by the organisation is a quality development programme in the non-formal education sector. In addition, Caritas offers a broad selection of CPD activities focusing on critical topics in the sector (curricular framework, health and nutrition, leadership, and cooperation with parents) (Caritas 2017).
- *Focus* is the CPD organisation of *Arcus*. *Arcus* is a non-governmental association bringing together charities based on Christian ideals that have shared a commitment toward social, educational, pedagogical, and therapeutic work with children, young people, and families for more than 60 years (Arcus 2017a). *Focus* provides a wide-ranging programme of CPD courses related to childcare and educational and social work professionalisation. The courses are related thematically to the national curricular framework for non-formal education (Arcus 2017b).

Article 11 of the decree on the reorganisation of children's services (MFI 2018) regulates the number of hours that staff are expected to spend attending CPD activities. No distinctions are made between core pedagogues, lead practitioners and assistants. Staff employed full-time are required to complete 32 hours of CPD within two years (at least 8 hours annually); requirements for part-time staff are adjusted according to their work hours. The CPD must relate to the *Curriculum Framework for Non-formal Education in Childhood and Youth* (MENJE and SNJ 2021), a national-level requirement for the providers of children's services.¹³ However, this does not mean that staff may not participate in CPD courses on other topics. Courses related to the curricular guidance must be reviewed and certified by the Commission for Continuing Professional Development (*Commission de la formation continue*).

Since the implementation of the plurilingual education programme – *Programme d'Éducation Plurilingue* (Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 2017a) –, staff in non-formal education settings are required to do eight hours of CPD within two years on the topic of 'language development in early childhood'. The law also stipulates that each SEA must name a pedagogical specialist (*référent(e)s pédagogiques*) responsible for implementing the plurilingual programme in early childhood. Furthermore, to be recognised as a plurilingual education professional, the

¹³ The University of Luxembourg research group *Early Childhood: Education and Care* has developed a CPD programme together with the *Entente de Foyers de Jour* within the framework of the 32-hour budget for supporting the implementation of the guidelines in terms of the programme development in ECEC settings for children up to age 4 (Neumann 2014).



designated person must attend a 30-hour CPD organised by the *Service national de la Jeunesse* (MENJE and SNJ 2018).

Expenses incurred by the state-subsidised and commercial providers of non-formal education for the compulsory CPD courses are reimbursed by the State. In addition, the providers regulate the leave arrangements for these compulsory hours of attendance on an internal basis. Therefore, being granted leave for participation in CPD and reimbursed for the compulsory CPD activities is not a significant problem for most of the early childhood settings. Regulations, however, vary according to the setting in terms of meeting the costs for CPD courses that exceed the compulsory amount or go beyond the thematic framework; in most cases, they are partially reimbursed.

Basic vocational courses for low-qualified adults and early school leavers

Since the turn of the century, programmes have been developed that offer low-qualified persons seeking employment (frequently over 40 years old) a dual qualification route into the childcare field. These 'flexi-programmes', which were introduced subsequently under the names *Fogaflex* in 2001, *Qualiflex* in 2001, and *Valiflex* in 2013 were developed and carried out by the *Confédération Caritas Luxembourg* with the support of the European Social Fund (for an assessment of the various measures of managing the quality of care in Luxembourg's ECEC institutions see, for example, Achten et al. 2009). The programmes aim to support re-entry into employment through qualifying options, enhance personal development, increase motivation and competence development (Caritas 2008, 2013), and recruit staff for the expanding childcare services in Luxembourg.

Based on these projects, an advanced modular course has been developed since April 2003 which is recognised by the *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle* and seeks to integrate and validate personal and professional work experiences (see *Table 8*). This 100-hour basic training opens employment perspectives in the childcare field for low-qualified applicants (*aide éducatrice* – other job titles are *formation de base de l'éducation et de l'accueil d'enfants*, *formation aide socio-éducative*). The qualification course is provided in various models by different CPD providers up to 130 hours, not only for adults but also for school leavers. In addition, the training is available for communes and public-sector institutions in the *Institut national d'Administration Publique* (INAP) for persons without an initial professional qualification. It is also offered by the *Entente des Foyers de Jours*, *Arcus asbl* and *Caritas asbl*. To ensure consistent quality across courses, this essential qualification's constituent modules and contents are the same.

Table 8

Luxembourg: Educator's Assistant in the non-formal education sector

Title in French: <i>Aide éducatrice/ éducateur</i>
Admission requirements: None (see Caritas 2016)
Professional studies: 100 hours of basic vocational course in six modules
Award: Certificate of attendance
ECTS points: n/a
EQR level: 3
ISCED 2011: n/a
Main fields of work: Settings in the non-formal education sector/ <i>Services d'éducation et d'accueil</i> (0–12 years), including infant-toddler centres/ <i>crèches</i> (0–4 years), childcare centres/ <i>Maison Relais pour Enfants</i> (4–12 years)

Home-based childcare providers: Due to the high demand for childcare and limited availability of centre-based places, so-called ‘parental assistants’ (*assistants parentaux*) – childminders who take care of children in their own home – were given a political-legal framework that also imposed a state agreement (MFI 2007) to combat a black market of quasi-familial care services that had existed in the Luxembourgish childcare system for years (Wiltzius and Honig 2015). Since 2017 (Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 2017b), parental assistants have been part of the SEA structures. After a professional development course of 100 hours and a minimum of 40 hours of internship within a SEA setting, parental assistants must regularly attend CDP and supervision sessions for at least 20 hours per year to obtain a yearly state agreement.

Leadership qualifications for Centre Heads. There are no specific qualifying courses for the lead staff in non-formal education settings; the only requirement in Article 8 of the SEA Regulations (MFI 2018) is that lead staff must have completed at least three years of work experience. However, since 2011 the University of Luxembourg has been offering a part-time Master’s study programme (original title in German: *Master in Management und Coaching im Bildungs- und Sozialwesen, MAMACO*), which targets this subgroup of the workforce. It aims to provide personnel with leadership and group responsibilities in the educational and social fields with critical competencies to cope with the specific changes in these areas. Participants should be able to question their professional experiences systematically and research and develop, analyse, and lead projects. Degree holders of the Master’s programme can describe and explain the conditions, processes, results, and effects of social interventions; they can also develop and organise such processes and are prepared to shape reform processes with colleagues and institutions and create target-oriented ways of dealing with everyday problems. They should also be able to cope with leadership assignments in their field (Uni.lu 2022c).

7. Working conditions and current workforce issues

Luxembourg is known for its high salaries for teachers, which are well above the OECD average, and constitute the highest salaries in the European Union at all levels of the education system. The wages of (early childhood) teachers and centre heads are the primary expenditures in the formal sector (OECD 2021). However, there is still a shortage in educational staff, partly due to the language requirements, which include command of Luxembourgish, German, and French (European Commission 2019).

This chapter provides an overview of differences in remuneration, working hours and conditions between the formal and the non-formal childcare sectors. Teaching and educating children make attractive occupations. However, there are differences in salary, status, and working hours between the Primary School Teachers and the Educators employed in the formal sector and between Social Pedagogues/Social Workers and non-university educated Educators and Care Workers in the non-formal sector. In addition, the state encourages career changes for people who initially have been trained for a different occupation to meet the growing demand for personnel. This development creates differences regarding staff’s qualification and remuneration. Open and subtle hierarchies among the staff might result from those differences in the multi-disciplinary teams of the *éducation précoce* (SNJ 2020).

Most Primary School Teachers and Educators are women. In contrast, a similar number of men and women work at secondary schools.



7.1 Remuneration

Generally, Primary School Teachers receive higher salaries than staff working in the non-formal sector. Within the non-formal sector, publicly funded institutions pay better than commercial childcare centres. The different wages are mainly a result of contractual differences. Staff in the publicly subsidised SEAs are paid via the collective bargaining agreement. In contrast, staff in commercial day-care centres are not subject to the collective bargaining agreement.

Formal education sector

Primary School Teachers working in the *éducation précoce* are civil servants and are remunerated accordingly. The starting salary of (Pre-)Primary School Teachers in Luxembourg is 69,076€ and gradually increases after 10 years in service (OECD 2023).

Non-formal education sector

The differences within the non-formal sector are profound. Private for-profit institutions (*non-conventionnés*) pay considerably less than private providers that are not-for-profit (*conventionnés*). The differences between the sectors and within the sectors have resulted in a segregated workforce in ECEC. Luxembourgish residents and citizens who meet the language requirements can seek employment in better-paying institutions. Commuters from Belgium, France and Germany usually take the less well-paid jobs at the for-profit centres because they are still better paid than similar jobs at ECEC institutions in their countries of residence. While foreign qualifications are recognised and do not impede employment, the language requirements in public institutions work as a barrier for foreigners seeking employment in Luxembourg's ECEC system, steering them away from the highest-paid jobs.

To sum up, the remuneration paid by private not-for-profit (*conventionnés*) providers is laid out in the contractual agreement between the state and the provider based on the collective bargaining agreement. In contrast, the salaries paid by commercial, for-profit providers (*non-conventionnés*) are solely determined by the contract between the provider and their personnel.

The differences in remuneration also result in differences in working hours. The lower pay in the non-formal for-profit institutions makes it necessary for the employees to work full time to earn a sufficient salary. Since these people are mainly commuters from neighbouring countries, the additional commuting cost certainly requires maximising the potential income. Staff shortages in the for-profit sector also play a role. Staff from Luxembourg working in not-for-profit settings can afford to work part time more easily.

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

The working hours of the ECEC workforce are difficult to estimate as there are no official and representative statistics for each sector. Indeed, for the formal sector, no data are available. At the same time, numbers for the non-formal sector are based on the non-representative sample drawn in the online survey conducted by the government for the previous SEEPRO publication. Therefore, the numbers reported here reflect the situation of 2016. *Table 9* shows the percentages of staff in the non-formal sector working full time and part time.

Table 9

Luxembourg: Staff in full-time and part-time employment in not-for-profit and commercial ECEC settings, 2016

	Private not-for-profit providers (with contract)	Private for-profit providers (without contract)
Staff in full-time employment (35.5 hours or more)	36.5%	93.5%
Staff in part-time employment	63.5%	6.5%

Source: Honig and Bock 2018

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

Multiple measures support staff beginning to work at the different ECEC institutions in the formal and non-formal sectors.

Formal education sector

Newly qualified graduates of the *Bachelor en sciences de l'éducation* enter an induction programme taking a maximum of three years at a specific primary school that is coordinated and supervised by the *Institut de Formation de l'Éducation Nationale* (IFEN 2017). The IFEN is a subsidiary institution of the Ministry of Education and works with Primary and Secondary School Teachers in the Luxembourgish education system. The induction programme is a type of internship that comprises three components that link theoretical and practical training:

- (1) Practical introduction to the school setting
- (2) Completion of a general modular course of 108 hours
- (3) Mentoring.

Non-formal education sector

Support for newly employed non-formal staff is much less formalised. As there is no educational route preparing specifically for employment in the non-formal ECEC sector, the institutions must invest time and financial resources in newly hired staff. For example, the centre might assign a mentor to beginners or provide a professional exchange, guidance and learning materials to new staff. In addition, new staff may attend courses offered by providers of continuing professional development to learn about the government's early childhood curriculum.

7.4 Non-contact time

Working hours are assigned differently to the various tasks in the formal and non-formal sectors.

Formal education sector

The working hours of Pre-primary and Primary School Teachers (MENFP 2009b) and Educators (MENFP 2009c) are regulated by law. Article 4 of the *Règlement grand-ducal du 23 mars 2009 fixant la tâche des instituteurs de l'enseignement fondamental* specifies that teachers should spend 60 hours a year on meetings with educational staff and staff in childcare centres, 40 hours on cooperation with parents, 18 hours on administrative work and eight hours on professional development (MENFP 2009a, Art. 4). On average, over a 50-week year, this amounts to roughly 2.5 hours of non-contact time per week (own calculation).



The same regulations apply to the Educators (*éducateurs/éducatrices* diplômé(e)s) who work as Teacher Assistants in the *éducation précoce*. However, the time allocated for professional development is more extensive (40 hours).

Non-formal education sector

Article 11 of the *règlement grand-ducal* on the restructuring of ECEC that established the *services d'éducation et d'accueil* (SEA) (MFI 2018) specifies that full-time employees in childcare services must spend 103 hours annually of their total working hours on team consultations and the preparation of educational activities; this regulation applies both to personnel in contracted and non-contracted services. The number of hours is adjusted proportionally for part-time staff. On average, over a 50-week year, this amounts to roughly 2.1 contact-hours per week (own calculation).

7.5 Current staffing issues

Overall, staff shortages are an ongoing issue across the ECEC sectors in Luxembourg. While pre-primary (*éducation précoce*) and primary institutions can deal with the problem by recruiting career changers and substitute staff, the non-formal sector faces more severe issues revealed in the government's online survey of 2016.

In particular, the for-profit centres have more difficulties finding qualified staff, partly due to the lower salaries compared to the not-for-profit and publicly funded institutions. Since the non-formal sector cannot rely on a pool of substitute staff or provide its system with measures to recruit and train career changers, the primary way of addressing the problem is to require the existing team to work full-time and overtime. In addition, mandatory staff-to-child ratios always make it necessary to keep a minimum number of staff present at the centre, which can result in overtime and merging groups of children in order to comply with the ratio requirements.

Moreover, problems arise from a labour market that does not provide enough applicants with the necessary qualifications and experience in ECEC. As quality and CPD requirements increase, recruitment issues may also arise. The growing misalignment further exacerbates these issues in the linguistic diversification of the population. A decreasing proportion was born and raised in the country, thus speaking all three official languages, and quickly meeting the professional language requirements. As the immigrant population is growing and more languages are spoken in the country in many spheres of daily life, such as English and Portuguese, fewer people will be fluent in the official languages. This development will likely result in increasing staff shortages or more difficult recruitment procedures. In addition to language requirements, limited-time contracts are a common issue in ECEC services, making the job less attractive for people who want to build their future.

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

National Framework for Non-Formal Education in Childhood and Adolescence

Following the modifications of the Youth Act in 2016 (MENJE 2016) in which several mechanisms of quality development and monitoring have been established (see MENJE 2022), Luxembourg introduced its first official curriculum for the non-formal sector – the National Framework for Non-Formal Education in Childhood and Adolescence (*Nationaler Rahmenplan zur non-formalen*

Bildung im Kindes- und Jugendalter / Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non-enfants et des jeunes) (Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 2017c), which was first published in 2018 (see for the latest version: MENJE and SNJ 2021). This framework is a mandatory curricular requirement for all state-subsidised and commercial services in the non-formal education sector in Luxembourg which means that ECEC professionals may have to develop a different understanding of their profession. Rather than offering mere “care” to children, they have to offer education. Furthermore, the framework defines pedagogical goals and guidelines regarding the work with children in the non-formal sector. It also conceptualises legislative and administrative initiatives to improve structural and process quality. A commission comprising representatives of the MENJE, the communes, the providers, the parents, and scientific experts examine and revise it every three years.

Plurilingual education programme

The *Programme d'Éducation Plurilingue* (Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 2017a) acknowledges the language diversity in Luxembourg in the formal and non-formal education sectors. The programme has three pillars: language education, collaboration with parents and networking. It aims to familiarise children at an early age with Luxembourgish and French and values children's home languages, among others, through close cooperation with the parents. All ECEC centres must implement the three pillars in their centres and indicate in their action conception how this will be done. The guidelines for implementing the plurilingual programme in the general action conception (CAG) were first published in a separate document, “*Guide pour la réalisation d'un concept local de l'éducation plurilingue pour jeunes enfants*” in 2018. As of 2021, the guidelines are part of the national framework (MENJE and SNJ 2021). Each centre also needs to document the daily language practices.

Since 2018, the *mini-crèches* have opened a pathway for home-based childcare providers (‘parental assistants’) to offer plurilingual education (Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 2018). The main requirement to run a multilingual *mini-crèche*, which must be set up outside the staff's home, is that one of the two professionals can speak Luxembourgish and the other one French. The *mini-crèches* are small-scale childcare facilities and aim to tackle the growing need for places in ECEC.

Within each ECEC setting, there must be at least one pedagogical member of staff with a C1 level in Luxembourgish and a C1 level in French. Providers only benefit from childcare vouchers (*chèques-service accueil*) if they implement the programme. In addition, the legislation aims to ensure equal educational opportunities for children from different language backgrounds, a challenge with special significance for Luxembourg with its multilingual population (Brachmond, Günnewig, Kirsch, and Seele 2015).

9. Recent country-specific research focusing on ECEC staff

Since 2009, the Luxembourgish government has a contractual agreement with the university regarding research, development, and consultation in national ECEC policies. Within this framework of cooperation, several expert reports have been produced which analyse the Luxembourg system of early childhood education and care (e.g. Honig and Haag 2011; MENJE/Université du Luxembourg, Unité de recherche INSIDE 2015; Wiltzius and Honig 2015); further studies focus

on curricular concepts and programme development (e.g. Bollig, Honig, and Mohn 2015; Brachmond, Günnewig, Kirsch, and Seele 2015), some of which were published in a brochure series issued by the Ministry of Family Affairs (later Ministry of Education). In addition, the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth has established its own Research and Development department (SCRIPT) and the SNJ published educational guidance on early multilingual education in the Luxembourg context (SNJ 2017). Beyond this, the university has conducted independent research projects focusing on issues particularly relevant to Luxembourg, which provide links to the international debate on early childhood education and care. All refer directly or indirectly to the role of early childhood personnel in ECEC settings.

Developing multilingual pedagogies in early childhood (MuLiPEC)

Source: Université du Luxembourg (Uni.lu 2022a) (see *References* for further details)

Research team: Claudine Kirsch (PI), Katja Andersen, Simone Mortini, Laurence Di Letizia, Gabriëla Aleksić (from September 2017)

Duration: May 2016–April 2019

Funding: *Fonds National de la Recherche, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse*

Aims: The project MuLiPEC addressed the need for the development of multilingual pedagogies in early childhood education in Luxembourg. To this end, the research team offered a professional development (PD) path to Pre-primary Teachers (formal education sector) and Care Assistants working with 2 to 5 year-olds in the non-formal education sector (e.g. *crèches*). The aims of the research project consisted of analysing the influence of the PD programme on the practitioners' attitudes, knowledge, and practices; comparing practices across settings; and investigating the influence of multilingual practices on children. Simone Mortini, the PhD candidate within the project team, focused on the children in the four institutions and investigated the 'linguaging' practices and the agency of eight children over one academic year.

Procedure: The project used quantitative methods (i.e., a survey done before and after the PD) and qualitative ones (i.e., observations, video recordings, interviews, and documentation). The researchers also asked the professionals to video-record activities and regularly interviewed the practitioners. The analysis of the quantitative data drew on content analysis, paired samples *t*-test and correlational analysis, whilst the qualitative data were analysed with thematic analysis and a socio-cultural perspective of conversation analysis.

Findings: The findings from the questionnaires before and after the PD, show a positive influence of the training on the participants: the practitioners had developed knowledge about multilingualism and language learning, changed attitudes towards 'translanguaging' and home languages, and became more interested in organising activities in children's home languages. The longitudinal study in the schools and ECEC centres provided further details. The findings indicate that the professionals implemented activities in languages other than the institutional ones and developed a positive stance towards 'translanguaging'. Furthermore, their flexible language use facilitated communication and promoted participation, language learning, and well-being. The professionals of the various settings differed, however, in how they designed their multilingual learning environment and used multiple languages. These differences could be explained by their perspectives on multilingualism, their own experience of multilingualism, language ideologies, qualification, and their ability to monitor children's linguistic needs.

Implications: The findings had concrete implications for the design and the content of professional development courses as well as for the content of some courses in teacher education. For instance, some teacher educators focused more on strategic translanguaging and translanguaging pedagogies (i.e., stance, design, shift).



Selected publications:

- Kirsch, Claudine. 2020a. „Heranführung an die mehrsprachige Pädagogik durch Filmaufnahmen in der Lehrerbildung in Luxemburg“ [Introduction to multilingual pedagogy through videos in teacher education in Luxembourg]. In *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 25 (1): 507–28.
- Kirsch, Claudine. 2020b. "Opening Minds to Translanguaging Pedagogies". In *System* 92: 102271. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102271>
- Kirsch, Claudine. 2021. "Practitioners' Language-Supporting Strategies in Multilingual ECE Institutions in Luxembourg". In *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (3): 336–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2021.1928721>
- Kirsch, Claudine, and Gabrijela Aleksić. 2018. "The Effect of Professional Development on Multilingual Education in Early Childhood in Luxembourg". In *Review of European Studies* 10 (4): 148-168. <https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v10n4p148>
- Kirsch, Claudine, Gabrijela Aleksić, Simone Mortini, and Katja Andersen. 2020. "Developing Multilingual Practices in Early Childhood Education through Professional Development in Luxembourg". In *International Multilingual Research Journal* 14 (4): 319–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1730023>
- Kirsch, Claudine, and Simone Mortini. 2021. "Engaging in and Creatively Reproducing Translanguaging Practices with Peers: A Longitudinal Study with Three-Year-Olds in Luxembourg". In *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1999387>
- Schwartz, Mila, Claudine Kirsch, and Simone Mortini. 2020. "Young Children's Language-Based Agency in Multilingual Contexts in Luxembourg and Israel". In *Applied Linguistics Review* 13(5): 20190050. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2019-0050>

Collaboration with parents and multiliteracy in early childhood education (COMPARE)

Source: Université du Luxembourg (Uni.lu 2022b) (see *References* for further details)

Research team: Claudine Kirsch (PI), Gabrijela Aleksić, Sascha Neumann (January–March 2020), Valérie Kemp, Laura Colucci, Džoen Bebić-Crestany

Duration: January 2020–December 2023

Funding: *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse, Service National de la Jeunesse, Fonds National de la Recherche*, University of Luxembourg

Aims: This project examines the multiliteracy practices in day care centres and partnership building in Luxembourg. To help educators develop their understanding of the importance of diverse literacies and collaboration, design productive activities, and enhance collaboration, the team offered a professional development programme to 30 childcare centres. The project aims to examine, firstly, how educators, parents and children engage in multiliteracy activities and adults establish home–crèche collaboration and, secondly, the influence of the multiliteracy practices and collaboration on the actors' attitudes and literacy engagement.

Procedure: The mixed-method study used questionnaires with educators and parents as well as interviews and observations in three ECEC centres over the academic year 2020-21.

Findings: The findings show that about half of the parents and three-quarters of the educators reported in surveys that they read or told stories daily and that many used several languages, mainly French and Luxembourgish, but also English, German, and Portuguese. Results from the fieldwork confirm that reading and telling stories did not occur daily in all day-care centres and that singing happened more frequently. The 3 year-olds were also frequently observed looking at books on their own. Speaking with children about symbols and scripts was rare.

Furthermore, the questionnaire data of the educators as well as the observations in three childcare centres, indicate that the professionals regularly exchanged in daily communication and

organised seasonal feasts. However, these practices were strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities where educators and parents jointly engaged children in the three observed day-care centres depended on the centres and the parents. On such occasions, parents offered literacy activities in their home languages. These collaborative events influenced the communication between parents and educators. This latter result was confirmed in the questionnaires that showed that goal-directed communication was predicted by the educators' attitudes, according to the educators, and the parents' satisfaction, according to the parents.

Implications The findings address research gaps in relation to partnership building at the micro-level, the engagement in multiliteracy activities of 3 year-olds, their parents, and educators, and, finally, the influence of collaboration and multiliteracy on attitudes and engagement. The results were disseminated in conferences, workshops, a parent guide as well as peer-reviewed papers.

Selected publications:

Aleksić, Gabriejal, Dzoen Bebić-Crestany, and Claudine Kirsch. 2024. "Factors influencing communication between parents and early childhood educators in multilingual Luxembourg". *International Journal of Educational Research* 124, 1–14

Kirsch, Claudine, and Lisandre Bergeron-Morin. 2023. "Educators, parents and children engaging in literacy activities in multiple languages: an exploratory study". In *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(4): 1386-1403. DOI: 10.1080/14790718.2023.2195658

Kirsch, Claudine, and Gabrijela Aleksić. 2021. "Multilingual Education in Early Years in Luxembourg: A Paradigm Shift?" In *International Journal of Multilingualism* 16(4): 534–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.1905643>.

10. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

Early childhood education and care in Luxembourg have experienced continuous organisational and conceptual changes over several years, the latest ones being the national curricular framework, the programme of multilingual education, and different ways of training and qualifying educators and teachers. Staff in the formal and non-formal education sectors are under considerable pressure to implement new policies and regulations and would benefit from more training and guidance. Although the formal and non-formal education sectors are under the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth, they remain very different. As a result, the professionals who must implement the multilingual education programme, for instance, receive different training.

Below are several challenges identified by the authors of the report:

1. The tasks of ECEC professionals continue to multiply and become more complex in highly heterogeneous Luxembourg; therefore, it is essential to guarantee that all staff are well-qualified. Unfortunately, there are neither study programmes for teachers to become early years specialists nor for educators to develop this specialist profile.
2. Luxembourg is a multilingual country, but more and more staff members in ECEC settings seem to lack the necessary pedagogic and language competencies to address diversity and deliver a multilingual programme. The issue is particularly prominent in large commercial centres where many staff members commute daily from neighbouring countries to work in Luxembourg. They speak predominantly French and these centres, which offer lower wages,

find it challenging to recruit staff who speak Luxembourgish and can deliver a multilingual programme. There is some indication of a tendency to introduce children to English, a global language, rather than Luxembourgish.

3. The ECEC system in Luxembourg is highly diverse and encompasses the formal and non-formal sectors, compulsory and non-compulsory elements as well as public and private providers. Standardisation seems to be an issue, particularly regarding public and private providers. The lack of standardisation regarding the educators' and teachers' skills as well as resources in ECEC institutions that go beyond material equipment and may involve language resources and education styles, may drive early inequality.
4. With the growing language diversity in Luxembourg, it is not only necessary to be able to communicate in several languages but, even more, to be open to all parents and children with ethnic minority backgrounds and create inclusive environments. While recent studies have shown that language practices in ECEC centres have become more diverse, they have also pointed to existing language hierarchies.
5. To guarantee and improve the quality of the provision, early childhood staff need continuous guidance and training. There have been recent moves by the Ministry of Education to coordinate the CPD programmes in the non-formal sector, as the quality differed considerably. While continuing this effort, it is crucial also to train the trainers and regional coordinators (*agents régionaux*).
6. The issue of providing ongoing coaching and consulting for staff in the non-formal sector has not yet been answered adequately. In particular, the numerous small settings at the local level need coordinated support at the regional level. A further challenge is the need to include the growing number of commercial CPD providers in a conceptually and administratively coordinated system of quality development.
7. Many staff commute from neighbouring countries and work for commercial childcare providers for low wages. It is therefore possible to talk of two classes of professional staff in the *services d'éducation et d'accueil* (SEA). The transformation of childcare into a field of non-formal education, therefore, needs to find effective ways of involving the commercial providers.
8. Home-based childcare providers, primarily female, represent a special category of early childhood personnel. They are not the subject of this report, but they play an essential role in Luxembourg in what is essentially an ethnically segregated childcare market. Therefore, if ECEC is to contribute to social inclusion, the position of these home-based carers must be clarified and regulated within the system.

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