

# UKRAINE

Early Childhood Education and Care  
**ECEC Workforce Profile**

*Country report author*

**Nataliia Sofii**

Ukrainian Institute of Education Development

**Citation suggestion:**

Sofii, N. 2024. "Ukraine – ECEC Workforce Profile." In *Early childhood workforce profiles across Europe. 33 country reports with key contextual data*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. Munich: State Institute for Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy. [www.seeepro.eu/English/Country-Reports.htm](http://www.seeepro.eu/English/Country-Reports.htm)

Funded by:



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



State Institute for Early Childhood  
Research and Media Literacy



## Contents

1. ECEC governance in Ukraine .....	4
2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?.....	4
2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision .....	4
2.2 Centre leader.....	7
2.3 Centre-based posts of responsibility .....	8
2.4 Coordinating and supervisory staff.....	8
2.5 Specialist support staff.....	8
3. Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity.....	9
4. Initial professional education (IPE) .....	10
4.1 Initial qualifying routes (higher education and vocational).....	10
4.2 Competences, curricula and pedagogic-didactic approaches in IPE programmes .....	12
4.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability.....	15
5. Guided workplace experience (practicum) in the initial professional education of core professionals .....	15
6. Continuing professional development (CPD) of ECEC staff .....	16
7. Working conditions and current workforce issues .....	19
7.1 Remuneration .....	19
7.2 Full-time and part-time employment in ECEC provision .....	20
7.3 Support measures in the workplace for newly qualified and newly appointed staff.....	20
7.4 Non-contact time .....	20
7.5 Current staffing issues.....	21
8. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to staffing and professionalisation issues .....	21
9. Recent country-specific research focusing on ECEC staff.....	22
10. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment .....	24
References.....	25

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

### **ISCED** – *International Standard Classification of Education*

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

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

## About the author

**Nataliia Sofii**, PhD, works at the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development, established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to support the educational reform strategy “New Ukrainian School”. She was previously director of the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation – a national member of the International Step by Step Association. Her professional interests include inclusive education and the professional development of ECEC teachers.

## 1. ECEC governance in Ukraine

Ukrainian legislation on early childhood education and care is based on the Constitution of Ukraine and comprises the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (Verkhovna Rada 1991; 2016), the Law "On Preschool Education" (Verkhovna Rada 2001); the draft of the Law "On Preschool Education", 2021 and other regulatory acts. ECEC is high on the government agenda.

Ukraine has a partially unified system of early childhood education and care. Both centre-based settings for the under-threes – nurseries and nursery-kindergartens – and preschool/ pre-primary education for children from 3 to 6/7 years of age come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (*Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrayiny*). The latter are part of the state education system.

Home-based childcare settings and health support childcare centres for children under 4 years of age fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health (*Ministerstvo okhorony zdorov'ya Ukrayiny*).

National ECEC policies are determined by the legislation mentioned above, and regional state (*oblast*) administrations (including Kyiv city administrations, local executive and self-governing bodies) are responsible for the management of ECEC settings. Almost 99% of ECEC settings are funded and managed by local authorities.

## 2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

### 2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

According to the Law on Preschool Education, staff in ECEC settings comprise:

**Early Childhood Teachers** (*vykhovatel*). These are the core practitioners, and they have to have a higher education degree (minimum Bachelor's degree, optional Master's) to work with children aged 0 to 6 years in centre-based settings.

In 2016, the new position of **Early Childhood Teaching Assistant** was introduced for inclusive settings, with one post being allocated to each inclusive classroom (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2016b; Ministry of Education and Science 2016). According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019), Early Childhood Teaching Assistants help to provide a child-centred focus in the educational process, participate in the development and realisation of the child's individual development programme and help to make necessary adaptations.

Both Early Childhood Teachers and Early Childhood Teaching Assistants receive an additional 20% to their salaries for their work in inclusive classrooms (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2004).

Based on the recommendations of the Inclusive Resource Centre and at the parents' request, ECEC settings can include a post as **Child Assistant**. Child Assistants are responsible for the social support of children with complex disabilities. Child Assistants do not refer to pedagogical positions. Their training is provided by the regional (*oblast*) centres of social services. The duration of their training should be no less than 60 academic hours. After training and medical tests, an

agreement is reached between the kindergarten and the Child’s Assistant according to the parents’ requests (Law of Ukraine “On Comprehensive General Secondary Education”, Verkhovna Rada 2020).

Each preschool classroom, including inclusive classrooms, is allocated a post of (technical) **Teaching Assistant** (*Pomichnyk vykhovatelya*) – one per classroom. The basic requirements for this position are a minimum age of 18 years and quarterly medical testing. Teaching Assistants (*Pomichnyk vykhovatelya*) work under the supervision of the Early Childhood Teacher.

Table 1 distinguishes between different types of contact staff and also categorises the core practitioners (i.e. staff with group or centre responsibility) according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see Box 1 at the end of this chapter).

Table 1

Ukraine: ECEC staff in centre-based settings

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
<b>Early Childhood Teacher</b> <i>Vykhovatel</i>  <i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Yasla / dytyachyy sadok</i> <b>Nursery/nursery-kindergarten</b> 2 months–5(6) years <sup>1</sup>  <i>Doshkil’nyy navchal’nyy zaklad</i> <b>Early childhood education setting/ kindergarten</b> 3–5(6) years  <i>Spetsial’nyy doshkil’nyy navchal’nyy zaklad</i> <b>Special early childhood education setting/ kindergarten</b> 2–5(6) years  <i>Tsentr rozvytku dytyny</i> <b>Child development centre</b> 5–6(7) years	Core practitioner with group responsibility  Centre Leader	2 months–5(6) years	Bachelor, 4 (or 3) years university study route  ECTS credits: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 6

<sup>1</sup> **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. However, in the Ukrainian legislation, the age range is stated as 3–6(7); children with SEND may start school one year later.



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
<b>Early Childhood Teaching Assistant</b> <i>Asystent vykhovatel</i>	<i>Yasla – dytyachyy sadok</i> <b>Nursery/ nursery-kindergarten</b> 2 months–5(6) years  <i>Doshkil'nyy navchal'nyy zaklad</i> <b>Early childhood education setting / kindergarten</b> 3–5(6) years	Qualified co-worker in integrative groups/settings	2 months – 5(6) years	Bachelor, 4 (or 3) years university study route  ECTS credits: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2011: 6
<b>Early Childhood Technical Assistant</b> <i>Pomichnyk vykhovatelya</i>	<i>Yasla – dytyachyy sadok</i> <b>Nursery/ nursery-kindergarten</b> 0–2 years 2 months – 5/6 years  <i>Doshkil'nyy navchal'nyy zaklad</i> <b>Early childhood education setting/ kindergarten</b> 3–5 (6) years  <i>Spetsial'nyy doshkil'nyy navchal'nyy zaklad</i> <b>Special early childhood education setting</b> 2 – 6 (7) years	Unqualified co-worker	n/a <sup>2</sup>	No formal IPE requirements
<b>Child Assistant</b> <i>Asystent dytyny</i>	<i>Doshkil'nyy navchal'nyy zaklad</i> <b>Early childhood education setting/ kindergarten</b> 3–5 (6) years	Support of children with complex disabilities in integrative groups/settings		Minimum 60 hours (2 ECTS credits)

<sup>2</sup> n/a not applicable



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

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

## 2.2 Centre leader

According to the Law of Ukraine “On Preschool Education” (Ministry of Education and Science 2015), the management of early childhood institutions/kindergartens is provided by the **Centre leader/Director** (*zaviduvach*). A Director should have Ukrainian citizenship, be fluent in Ukrainian, have a Master’s degree (full higher pedagogical education) and a minimum of three years of practical experience, possess organisational skills and have the physical and psychological prerequisites for fulfilling this professional function. The setting founder/provider has the right to nominate a person for the position of Director and to sign a contract.

Successful candidates can be assigned as a Centre leader/Director regardless of the type and provider of the institution. In most cases an experienced Early Childhood Teacher Methodologists becomes a Centre leader/Director. Job descriptions of the Directors are specified in the regulations of the early childhood institution. The Director nominates all other positions according to the relevant legislation.

According to the Law “On Preschool Education”, the governance bodies include the Director of the early childhood setting/kindergarten, who is responsible for the management of the setting and the Pedagogical Board.

The **Pedagogical Board** is a collegiate governance body which acts according to the relevant ECEC legislation. Members include all pedagogical staff, medical workers, other specialists, the representatives of parents’ committees and other relevant persons involved in the educational process. The Pedagogical Board can invite representatives of non-governmental organisations, secondary school teachers and parents to its meetings. All invitees have an advisory vote. The head of the Pedagogical Board is the Director of the early childhood institution/kindergarten.

The functions of the Pedagogical Board include the following:

- Approval of the educational programme of the kindergarten, evaluation of its implementation and implementation of the educational standards
- Developing a system of internal monitoring of the quality of education
- Developing the work plan of the kindergarten
- Approval of the annual plan of continuing professional development of the ECEC Teachers and their reports during the process of attestation
- Developing ways of cooperation between the kindergarten and families
- Initiating institutional audits, and other issues.

Early childhood institutions/kindergartens may also have other governance bodies:

- Self-governance bodies of the pedagogical staff
- Self-governance bodies of parents
- Self-governance bodies of other stakeholders in the educational process.



## 2.3 Centre-based posts of responsibility

The Law of Ukraine “On Preschool Education” does not provide for specific qualification requirements for different kinds of teaching position (a decree, which had approved this, was repealed). It just states the names of the positions and number of hours per week they should work.

It is the responsibility of the Director to develop and approve the job descriptions for each post according to the National Classification of Professions (2010), in particular for nine types of posts, which refer to pedagogical assignments: Early Childhood Teacher, Early Childhood Teaching Assistant, Early Childhood Teacher Methodologist, Teacher Defectologist (Special Needs Pedagogue), Speech Therapist, Educational Psychologist, Music Teacher, Sports Instructor, and Handicraft Teacher.

The Centre Leader/Director can also make use of the Professional Standards for Early Childhood Teachers and Directors approved in 2021.

## 2.4 Coordinating and supervisory staff

Co-ordination and supervision are provided by the **Early Childhood Teacher Methodologist** (*vyxovatel-metodyst/starshyj vixovatel*) whose main responsibilities include the following:

- Providing methodological support to teachers, including developing the teachers' plans
- Supervision of teachers' educational activities
- Providing necessary information about child development to parents
- Organisation of the planning process (monthly, quarterly, annual)
- Organisation of the didactic-methodological unit in the early childhood institution/ kindergarten
- Supporting the development of teachers' professional communities, moderating the exchange of “best” professional practices and analysing these
- Organising the mentoring process for young ECEC Teachers and during the students' pedagogical practicum
- Cooperating with other educational institutions, especially with primary schools to ensure a smooth transition between early childhood and primary education.

## 2.5 Specialist support staff

According to the Law of Ukraine “On Preschool Education”, the following positions are in most cases part of the regular on-site staff alongside the Early Childhood Teaching Assistants and Child Assistants:

- Social Pedagogue
- Educational Psychologist
- Music Teacher
- Sports Instructor
- Special Needs Teacher
- Speech Therapist
- Handicraft Teacher.



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

According to the Statistical Bulletin, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, at the end of 2021 the ECEC workforce comprised 138,772 persons working in a pedagogical capacity and 172,996 persons working in a non-pedagogical capacity – see *Table 2*.

*Table 2*

#### Ukraine: Total number of persons in the ECEC workforce

Directors of early childhood institutions/kindergartens	11,359
Early Childhood Teachers	90,833
Methodologists / Pedagogical Advisers	4,832
Educational Psychologists	4,525
Social Pedagogues	375
Teaching Assistants	4,781
Other pedagogical staff	22,067
<b>Total number of pedagogical staff</b>	<b>138,772</b>
Medical staff	11,523
Technical staff	161,473
<b>Total number of persons in ECEC workforce</b>	<b>311.768</b>

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2021

The ECEC workforce comprises 136,951 women. Among them are 37,572 women under 35 years of age, 87,816 women aged 36–60 years and 13,384 women aged 61 years old and older.

In terms of qualifications at the end of 2021, 41,668 Early Childhood Teachers from a total of 138,772 were staff with a Junior Bachelor's degree and 94,096 of the remaining staff also had a higher education degree (Bachelor/Specialist/Master).

*Table 3*

#### Ukraine: Structural composition of ECEC workforce – qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Staff category	Year/provision/proportion of workforce*
Staff with specialist higher education degree	2021: 30% Junior Bachelor degree (see <i>Chapter 4.1</i> ) 70% Bachelor's or Master's degree
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	n/a
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	n/a
Staff with non-specialist qualification (other qualification)	No data available
Unqualified staff	No data available
Specialist support staff (e.g. special needs teachers)	No data available
Male staff	No data available
Staff with a background of migration	No systematically compiled national data

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2021

## 4. Initial professional education (IPE)

### 4.1 Initial qualifying routes (higher education and vocational)

According to the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” (Verkhovna Rada 2014), professional education, including teacher education, is provided according to four levels of higher education. These are the beginning level (short cycle); the first level (Bachelor’s degree); the second level (Master’s degree) and the third level (Doctoral degree).

After completing relevant educational programmes at each of the levels, graduates are awarded the following diplomas/degrees:

- 1) Beginning level – Junior Bachelor diploma (120 ECTS credits)
- 2) First level – Bachelor’s degree (180-240 ECTS credits)
- 3) Second level – Master’s degree (90-120 ECTS credits)
- 4) Third level – Doctoral degree (PhD)

Initial professional education courses for prospective Early Childhood Teachers are offered by Pedagogical Colleges (beginning level (Junior Bachelor) or the first level (Bachelor)), Pedagogical Institutes, Pedagogical Universities and classic Universities, which can provide Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

The minimum admission requirement of *Pedagogical Colleges* for Junior Bachelor or Bachelor degree programmes is a completed secondary education. Some of the pedagogical colleges have signed transfer agreements with pedagogical universities or classic universities. According to these agreements, holders of Junior Bachelor diplomas from pedagogical colleges are granted priority and may enter university level teacher education studies in the third semester. *Pedagogical Universities* train teachers for lower and upper secondary schools and for colleges. However, many of the pedagogical universities along with the pedagogical colleges provide training programmes for Early Childhood and Primary School Teachers. Bachelor degree holders may continue their pedagogical education at universities to pursue a Master’s degree.

*Universities* provide training for teachers within the study programme “Education”; classic universities may have pedagogical institutes as part of their structure. Bachelor degree programmes at universities have a nominal study length of four years (three years for persons with the Junior Bachelor diploma). Master’s degree programmes normally take one year to complete; in some cases, the Ministry of Education and Science has approved a length of 1½ years. The duration of the Master’s degree programme for the holders of a Bachelor degree may be determined individually, based on the differences between Bachelor and Master’s degree curricula.

Persons with a basic secondary education and sufficient knowledge and skills in ECEC activities may enrol in a **Junior Bachelor** study programme (2½ to 3 years) to obtain a Junior Bachelor’s degree. The usual length of a higher education **Bachelor** programme is four years (240 ECTS credits), although for the early childhood field only 180 ECTS credits are required. In ECEC settings all graduates perform the same duties and tasks.

Table 4

**Ukraine: Early Childhood Teacher**

<b>Job title in Ukrainian:</b> <i>Vykhovatel</i> <b>Profile:</b> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
<p><b>Entry requirements:</b> Completed secondary education (9 or 11 years of schooling)</p> <p><b>Professional studies:</b> 4 years at a <i>Pedagogical College</i> for students with 9 years of secondary education; 3 years for those with 11 years of secondary education. The regular length of studies for Bachelor degree programmes at pedagogical colleges is 4 years for full-time students and 5 years for part-time students and remote learning courses.</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>4 years (3 years for persons with the Junior Bachelor diploma) study route “Education” at a <i>University</i>. This study route can be followed by a 1-(or 1½-) year of Master Degree programme.</p> <p><b>Award:</b> Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education</p> <p><b>ECTS credits:</b> 180</p> <p><b>EQF level:</b> 6</p> <p><b>ISCED 2011:</b> 6</p> <p><b>Main ECEC workplaces:</b> Nurseries/nursery kindergartens (2 months–5(6) years), early childhood education settings/kindergartens (3–5 or 6 years, special kindergarten (2–6 or 7 years), child development centre (5–6 or 7 years).</p>

**Note:** Higher education institutions are not required to provide employment for all graduates. Graduates are free to apply for a post of their choice, with the exception of those studying with the support of state funds or local budgets. These graduates are obliged to work at the proposed post in accordance with a procedure established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (1996). They sign an agreement with the administration of a higher educational institution to work in the state sector for at least three years on completion of their studies. Graduates who agree to work for at least three years in rural areas or towns are provided free housing, heating and electricity by the state within the established legal norms (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2011). If graduates refuse and do not wish to take up the proposed employment, they must reimburse the full cost of their education to the state budget (Paragraph 2 of the Presidential Decree 1996).

Centre Leaders/Directors of Early Childhood Centres and Pedagogical Advisers (Early Childhood Teacher Methodologists) follow the same study route as Early Childhood Teachers (see above, Table 4).

At the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year, the following number of students studied the specialist area of “Preschool Education”:

Table 5

**Ukraine: Number of ECEC students by educational level**

Educational level	Number of students as of 2021/2022 school year	Number of graduates from initial professional education institutions in the 2021/2022 school year
Young Specialist	542	470
Junior Bachelor	1,222	-
Bachelor	126	15
Master	3,676	477

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2022

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

### Early Childhood Teacher (*Vykhovatel*)

#### Competences

Competences to be acquired by Early Childhood Teachers are generally structured according to subject specific (professional) competences and general competences (generic competences, transferable skills).

There are also other equally important, universal competences that students learn to master during the IPE programmes. These apply to all levels of the teaching profession and include:

- Learning to learn
- Mastering a foreign language and basic information technologies
- Communicating with children, parents and colleagues
- Being able to look for and use information independently
- Following the strategy of life-long learning
- Being able to reflect
- Taking into account the individuality of children
- Being able to organise materials and present them appropriately
- Determining the child's developmental level
- Establishing a stimulating and age-appropriate environment for the children without forcing or accelerating the learning process.

Graduates of the Bachelor's study route on early childhood education should be able to:

- Analyse socially significant problems and processes and be able to use research methods in professional and social activities
- Organise their work on a scientific basis, using the newest methods
- Have a basic knowledge of employment relations
- Cooperate with colleagues and work in a team
- Know the basics of pedagogical skills
- Reflect on their own experience and analyse personal capabilities
- Acquire new knowledge, using modern information technologies
- Implement the most appropriate teaching approaches in their daily work with children
- Improve their own personal and professional competences and teaching skills and
- Provide appropriate approaches for children with developmental difficulties, disadvantaged children or those who are experiencing or have experienced crisis and conflict situations.

#### Professional Standards – Early Childhood Teacher

In October 2021, standards for the profession of Early Childhood Teacher were issued and approved by the Ministry of Economics of Ukraine (2021).

The Professional Standards describe the main goals of the professional activities of the Early Childhood Teacher. They set out the working conditions and admission procedures to the profession; they list documents which verify the professional and educational qualifications acquired through initial and continuing professional education as well as the legislation which regulates professional activities; and they describe general and professional competences.

General competences of the Early Childhood Teacher/Educator include the following:

- Civic competence



- Social competence
- Cultural competence
- Leadership competence
- Ethical competence.

The professional competences are structured according to specific tasks or functions and include the following:

#### **A. Organising, providing and implementing the educational process.**

- Prognostic (the ability to plan and predict the outcomes of the educational process; to document professional activities)
- Organisational (the ability to provide early childhood education in the Ukrainian language; to select effective methods according to the needs of children and their parents; to provide conditions of acquiring early childhood education for children with special needs)
- Evaluative-analytical (ability to conduct and to interpret the results of the monitoring of educational activities in order to make necessary changes according to the needs and opportunities of children; ability to identify the level of children’s competence development according to the educational standards), and
- Subject-methodological (ability to develop the key competences according to educational standards).

#### **B. Participating in the development of a healthy, safe and inclusive educational environment.**

- Health protection (ability to organize a physically and psychologically safe educational environment) and
- Project management (ability to organise activity centres based on universal design principles<sup>3</sup> and appropriate furnishings).

#### **C. Partnerships with participants in the educational process**

- Psycho-emotional (ability for self-control, interacting tolerantly, reacting flexibly to changes, resilience)
- Pedagogical (ability to cooperate and communicate effectively; ability to involve all participants linked to the educational process based on the principles of partnership and mutual responsibility; ability for teamworking)
- Moral-ethical (ability to consider individual cultural, religious, social and language characteristics of families and to challenge stereotypes and discrimination).

#### **D. Professional development**

- Life-long learning (ability to reflect and self-assess, to plan professional development)
- Informational-communicational (ability to use ICT and e-resources effectively in the educational process, to be aware of and use safety rules in the digital environment).

All competences described in the Professional Standards are translated through the specific knowledge and skills. They are now used widely used in the CPD programmes for Early Childhood

---

<sup>3</sup> See UN 2006. “Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (UN 2006, 4).



Teachers. All CPD providers are expected to include them when developing their training programmes. They also can be used by initial professional education institutions, by the Directors of early childhood institutions/kindergartens and by other stakeholders.

### **Professional standards – Directors of Early Childhood Institutions (Centre leaders)**

In September 2021, Professional Standards for the Directors of early childhood institutions were issued and approved by the Ministry of Economics of Ukraine (2021).

The Professional Standards for Directors are structured according to the same goals as those for the Early Childhood Teacher and include the following professional tasks/functions and competences:

#### **A. Organising a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment.**

- Health protection (ability to provide a physically and psychologically safe learning environment and ability to organise the work of psychological and social-pedagogical services in the kindergarten)
- Planning (ability to plan and analyse the effectiveness of the educational process).

#### **B. Managing an early childhood institution/a kindergarten**

- Operational management (ability to secure the financing of the kindergarten, organisation and control of nutrition and medical services in the kindergarten, management of human resources)
- Organisational-methodological (ability to organise the educational programme, the work of the psychological-pedagogical support team, the methodological support of the pedagogical staff)
- Communication (ability to communicate effectively with all participants involved in the educational process and other stakeholders).

#### **C. Ongoing personal and professional development**

- Life-long learning (ability to reflect and self-assess, to plan professional development)
- Informational-communicational (ability to use ICT and e-resources effectively in the educational process, to be aware of and use safety rules in the digital environment).

#### **D. Leadership and partnership**

- Leadership (ability to present the early childhood institution/kindergarten, to show resilience and flexibility, to support conflict resolution and the prevention of professional burn-out)
- Emotional-ethical (ability relating to self-regulation, to display tolerance, to conduct constructive and sustainable interactions with the participants of the educational process).

#### **E. Strategic development**

- Strategic governance and strategic development (ability to conduct strategic planning, to develop a strategy for the kindergarten, to develop a system of quality control)
- Strategic communication (ability to present the kindergarten to different stakeholders)
- Normative-legal (ability to use legal documents in the professional activities).

The Professional Standards for the Directors of early childhood institutions/kindergartens are – like those for Early Childhood Teachers – widely used by different CPD providers. They may also be used by the initial professional education institutions and other stakeholders.

The recommendations (in Ukrainian) about how to use these Professional Standards were issued in 2022 by the Ministry of Education and Science and shared on the websites of the Ministry and the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development.

### **Curriculum – Bachelor study route**

The Bachelor study route comprises different educational blocks. The first is a general section aimed at the overall development of personality, the formation of values, leadership skills, self-knowledge, and a child study. The second block comprises general pedagogical knowledge and includes psychology and pedagogy. During this block a course on early childhood pedagogy begins which includes the intellectual development of the child and possibilities of influencing children's development.

Graduates of the Bachelor degree programme on early childhood education should have knowledge about:

- Basic sciences in the field of humanities and social-economical sciences, as well as ethical and legal standards that govern people's relationship to society, the environment
- The nature and social significance of their future profession
- A holistic view of the processes and phenomena occurring in society and nature; the ability to use these principles when deciding appropriate educational objectives
- Scientific understanding of healthy lifestyles, the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Cultures and laws of thinking.

### **4.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability**

In Ukraine, core pedagogues working in ECEC institutions need the full formal qualification as an Early Childhood Teacher. There are no alternative qualifying routes apart from the ones described above which allow for a more flexible approach or accept alternative entry requirements. Men and women without a formal qualification are only permitted to work as Early Childhood Technical Assistants. Technical staff usually receive some form of on-the-job training while working in a kindergarten.

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

The form, duration and organisation of workplace-based learning in the IPE of ECEC core practitioners are defined in the curricular framework provided by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine (1993). According to the *Concept of the Development of Pedagogical Education* (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2018) the pedagogical practicum is a compulsory part of IPE, and should include a minimum of 30 ECTS credits in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, starting from the first year of study. At least half of the duration should include practical professional activities.

Each HEI (college/institute/university) develops internal regulations regarding the pedagogical practicum. These include the general goal and the objectives, the types of pedagogical practica and schedules, the responsibilities of trainee teachers, supervisors from the HEI and supervisors from the early childhood institutions, a description of the assessment process, documentation examples, etc.



In most cases there are three types of practicum: (1) educational, (2) pedagogical, and (3) pre-diploma practicum.

Table 6

**Ukraine: Types of ECEC practicum**

Type of practicum	Semester	Number of weeks
Educational	5	2
Pedagogical		
– In classrooms for children up to 3 years of age	6	2
– In classrooms for children of preschool age (3–5 years)	7	5
– Pre-diploma (mainly at the place of the student’s future employment)	8	6
– Pre-diploma with additional specialisation	8	2

Source: Ivano-Frankivsk College 2015.

**Mentoring support**

There are two types of mentorship in early childhood education settings/kindergartens: (1) for newly-qualified teachers and (2) for all team members through a Pedagogical Mentor/ Teacher Methodologist (see *Chapter 7.3*). These tasks are included in the annual plan of the ECEC centre. Specific mentoring arrangements for students who spend their practicum in a kindergarten are provided by the head of the host setting.

## 6. Continuing professional development (CPD) of ECEC staff

Continuing professional development used to be regulated by the *Regulation on the Certification (Attestation) of Teaching Staff* (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2010). Certification (attestation) of teaching staff was obligatory and had to be conducted once every five years. The purpose was to confirm the current qualification level of each teacher or to achieve a higher one. The main condition of teachers’ certification was their participation at the compulsory courses at specialised departments of teacher training institutions, institutes, and universities, or at advanced training and retraining institutes and at In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT) institutions at least once every five years. There was no clearly defined annual allocation of time that should be devoted to professional development.

The new **Regulation on the Certification (Attestation) of Teaching Staff** was developed in September 2021 and is in the process of approval (Ministry of Education and Science 2021b). The main difference between the two sets of regulations in 2010 and 2021 is the specification of minimum hours for CPD as a requirement for teachers’ certification (attestation). According to the 2021 Regulation, the minimum hours of CPD to be completed within five years by Early Childhood Teachers should be no less than 120 hours (4 ECTS credits). For Primary School Teachers it is 150 hours (5 ECTS credits) every five years. It was recommended that teachers should participate in professional development activities annually, but without a clear distribution of credits for each year. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019) specified that all pedagogical staff should participate in continuing professional development on a permanent



basis and have the right to choose both the provider and the form of CPD services (demonopolisation of INSETTs).

The professional development of pedagogical workers, including Early Childhood Teachers, is set out in the CPD plan approved by the educational institution in which they work. At the same time, teachers also have a right to make use of opportunities beyond this plan.

CPD providers should be officially registered and publish the current programme on their websites. Each programme should include the number of allocated credits, a list of the competences aimed for as well as other information.

Recommendations on the implementation of the Professional Standards for the Directors of early childhood institutions issued by the Ministry of Education and Science (2022a) mention that CPD providers should focus their programmes on the competences included in the Professional Standards. Although recommendations on the implementation of the Professional Standards for Early Childhood Teachers have not yet been approved, they include a similar recommendation regarding focusing on the competences listed in the Professional Standards.

Paragraph 1.7 of the *Regulation on the Certification of Teaching Staff* (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2010) stipulates that teachers should be assessed and certificated once every five years or, if a teacher wishes to achieve a higher status more quickly, she/he can apply to be assessed out of turn, but not earlier than one year after the previous assessment. This procedure is called *re-certification*.

In order for Early Childhood Teachers to receive a **promotion** they are required to attend a formal CPD course which, since 2019, they may select themselves.

Since the beginning of the 2020 school year, **Certification Commissions** organise the certification process at three different levels: at the 1<sup>st</sup> level they are established at the early childhood institutions/kindergartens; at the 2<sup>nd</sup> level at the local educational authority; and at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level at the Ministry of Education.

Certification Commissions are organised for one year and their responsibilities are as follows: At the 1<sup>st</sup> level they are responsible for the certification of teachers; at the 2<sup>nd</sup> level they supervise the certification of the Directors of educational institutions; and at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level they are responsible for the certification of the governing bodies.

Certification Commissions of the 1<sup>st</sup> level (up to March 15<sup>th</sup> of any one year) are expected to familiarise themselves with the professional experience of teachers who applied to participate in the certification process by attending their lessons, studying their documentation and professional activities and also items developed by the Director of the educational institution. The final decision regarding the professional qualification is made during a meeting of the Certification Commission where the teachers give a presentation and can provide additional information.

**Formal CPD courses** for all levels of the teaching profession have similar objectives:

- Developing standards oriented towards the modernisation of the professional development and further training of teachers and school leaders
- Implementing modern technology in the professional development and training of educational, scientific and pedagogical staff in the educational system according to the requirements of innovative developments in education
- Ensuring the proactive nature of the training of educational, scientific and pedagogical staff to meet the needs of education reform and the challenges of modern social development (Decree of the President of Ukraine 2013).

Teachers' professional development is financed through regional and municipal budgets. Changes in the process of **funding CPD** started in 2019 after the Resolution of the Cabinet of



Ministers № 800 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2019) had been approved. According to the Resolution, the planning process includes two stages:

- (1) During the first stage the educational institution is expected to develop a plan of professional development based on the teachers' proposals. These should include the directions of their professional development, CPD providers and the cost of their services. Such plans should be developed by December. If the plan is approved by the Pedagogical Board, it is then uploaded on to the website of the educational setting. Training providers (INSETT) which are funded through the regional (*oblast*) budgets make their financial applications based on the plans of the educational institutions, taking into consideration the number of teachers who have declared their willingness to participate in such courses.
- (2) The second stage of the planning is provided by the Director of the educational institution, who has to include costs for professional development into the institution's annual plan and budget.

In all Ukrainian educational institutions, including kindergartens, CPD is considered an integral part of their professional work. However, CPD activities **do not take place during working hours** but after closing hours or during school holidays.

Teachers appreciate the on-site activities carried out by the CPD providers in their kindergartens. This **kindergarten-based training** is very popular, especially among teachers living in rural areas; it means they can benefit from the CPD programme without having to leave their families. Also, through this model, kindergarten teams can ask the provider to design a programme which corresponds to a specific problem or to the latest local or government policy initiatives. Consequently, the training takes into account the teachers' interests and thus contributes towards improving the quality of professional development. Sometimes courses are also organised for ECEC Technical Assistants.

There are no problems regarding **participation** in professional development courses, since in most cases access depends entirely on the person's own wish. CPD activities are acknowledged in terms of **career advancement**.

Starting from 2020, when quarantine requirements caused by COVID-19 were introduced in many regions of Ukraine, CPD courses and the certification process were provided online.

### **Reforms regarding the continuing professional development of staff in ECEC provision**

Since independence in 1991, the Ministry of Education has paid a lot of attention to reforming the system of teacher education/training to accommodate the needs of a society marked by social, economic and cultural changes. In particular, in 2011 the State programme "Teacher" was developed (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2011). It envisaged coordinated efforts to improve the quality of IPE and CPD in Ukraine.

The latest reforms in the education system, known as "New Ukrainian School" reform (which also influence early childhood education and care) are related to the adopting of the new Law of Ukraine "On Education", which came into force in September 2017 (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2017).

After the Law of Ukraine "On Education" was approved, the *Concept of Development of Pedagogical Education* was developed (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2018). The main goal of the Concept was to improve the system of the initial professional education of teachers and to develop alternative forms of teachers' professional development. The concept emphasised the following aspects of the reform: developing a qualifications framework and professional standards, including standards on digital competence; developing an internal system of

quality enhancement in education; key objectives of each level of higher education (in total four levels); increasing the amount of time allocated to the pedagogical practicum.

One of the main reforms foreseen by the Law “On Education” is the *decentralisation of the system of in-service training* (Cabinet of Ministers 2019). Until that time, teachers (both from kindergartens and schools) were encouraged to improve their professional knowledge only through courses at the regional INSETT institutes, which were free of charge for them. The frequency of such in-service training was once every five years.

The new Law of Ukraine “On Education” envisaged extending the introduction of structural reforms to the ECEC system, introducing new educational standards for preschool education called the Basic Component of Preschool Education (approved by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science (2021a); and the Professional Standards for Early Childhood Teachers and Directors of early childhood institutions/kindergartens described in *Chapter 4.2*.

Another important reform in the CPD field was the reform of existing network of Methodological Centres and establishing a network of Centres of Professional Development for Teaching Staff (2020) in local communities. The main goals of the Centres of Professional Development are to promote CPD of teaching staff in local communities, providing psychological support and consultations. More specific tasks include the following:

- Summarising and sharing information related to professional development
- Coordinating professional learning communities
- Sharing the data base of CPD providers (programmes, participant’ feedback) and other resources
- Providing psychological support to teaching staff
- Organising and conducting consultations to teaching staff on such issues as: individual professional development plans; certification issues; strategic planning and other issues.

## 7. Working conditions and current workforce issues

### 7.1 Remuneration

In accordance with the Law on Education, the Accreditation Regulations (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2010) state that a teacher is subject to assessment and certification once every five years, the results of which determine the teacher category level and thus directly affect the teacher’s salary.

As from January 2017, official salary tariffs were changed (Resolution No 1037, Cabinet of Ministers 2016a). As a result, new salaries are based on the 1st tariff category established regarding the subsistence minimum for able-bodied persons on 1 January 2017 which was at that time 1,600 UAH (€54,57) per month.

Beginning with the “New Ukrainian School” reform in 2018, teachers’ salaries were increased by 10% from two main sources: (1) educational subvention and (2) national or local budgets (Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2018). Since Early Childhood Teachers are not directly involved in the school reform, the issue of increasing their salaries depends on local budgets.

In 2022, the salaries of early childhood staff were as follows:

Table 7

**Ukraine: Salaries of early childhood staff per month, February 2022**

Position	UAH	Euros* (as in February 2022)
Centre Leader/Director of early childhood institution	7,464	233
Early Childhood Teacher (without category)	5,265	165
Early Childhood Teacher (1st category)	5,699	178
Early Childhood Teacher (2nd category)	6,133	192
Early Childhood Teacher (highest category)	7,701	241
<b>Inclusive classrooms</b>		
Early Childhood Teachers of all categories + 20% according to categories		
Early Childhood Teacher Assistant	5,265 – 5,699	165-178

\*The exchange rate in February 2022 was 1 Euro/32 UAH, as of September 2022 it was 1 Euro/40 UAH

Source: Onyshchenko 2022

Pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical employees of schools and educational institutions receive a monthly retirement premium corresponding to a certain percentage of their salary, depending on the length of educational work: over 3 years – 10%; over 10 years – 20%; over 20 years – 30% (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2005).

Early Childhood and School Teachers' wage rates are identical. While School Teachers are also paid for checking copybooks, classrooms, Early Childhood Teachers are not.

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

An Early Childhood Teacher usually works 30 hours per week with the children (whereas a School Teacher's workload is 23 hours per week). There is no information available about full-time and part-time employment.

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

There are two types of mentorship in early childhood education institutions/kindergartens:

- (1) Newly-qualified Early Childhood Teachers are supported during their first year of work by a mentor who is a qualified Early Childhood Teacher Methodologist. Support includes planning lessons, answering their questions, observing teachers' practice and providing feedback.
- (2) A Pedagogical Adviser (Early Childhood Teacher Methodologist) supports all in-service teachers, e.g. by helping them to prepare lessons or to cope with developmental issues in certain children. The Pedagogical Advisers review literature and pass on knowledge about innovative approaches. They also make observations in the groups and provide feedback – this is one of the most important aspects of a mentor's work.

There is no additional payment provided for taking on the task of mentor.

## 7.4 Non-contact time

There is no official non-contact time for Early Childhood Teachers in Ukraine. Time spent for work 'without children', i.e. for planning, meetings with parents, participation in professional networks, is not remunerated.

## 7.5 Current staffing issues

Due to the war and the resulting migration of the population, there are many concerns regarding the reduction of employees of Early Childhood institutions. Because of this, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2022c) issued the letter regarding the preservation of the network of ECEC centres and the protection of the rights of staff.

To preserve the network of ECEC centres and teaching staff, the Ministry suggested number of recommendations:

- Organising (re-organising) the number of classrooms depending on demographic situation in the regions
- Maintaining the network of special education classrooms
- Promoting the expansion of private ECEC centres/kindergartens
- Organising short-term groups (Sunday groups, evening groups) for children with parents, especially internally displaced families.

In order to implement these suggestions, the Ministry has recommended:

- Providing two Early Childhood Teachers per shift/per classroom (in total four Early Childhood Teachers per classroom in two shifts) and two Technical Teaching Assistants per classroom;
- Increasing the number of children in the classrooms – 10 children up to 3 years of age in the early age groups, 15 children aged 3–5 years in kindergarten classrooms;
- Providing a flexible daily schedule (from 2 to 12 hours a day)
- Using different educational formats (offline, online, blended).

Re-organisation or closing of the early childhood institutions should be based on local communities' decisions.

The letter (Ministry of Education and Science 2022c) referred to the Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Educators for the period 2021-2025 to provide teaching staff's right to receive their payment regularly. If case teaching staff are unable to work (damaged kindergarten buildings or other circumstances) they should receive two-thirds of their salaries.

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

The main changes relating to ECEC staffing come from adopting the amendments to the Law "On Preschool Education", which introduced the concept of "inclusive education" as well as the position of Early Childhood Teacher Assistant in 2015.

This position is included in the list of pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical staff as approved by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2015) and follows the staff norms of kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Science 2016).

If there is at least one inclusive group in a kindergarten, an Early Childhood Teacher Assistant can be employed.

The position of Child's Assistant (social worker/parents of children with special needs/other persons) was introduced by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in 2017. The relevant Order of the Ministry of Social Policy includes requirements for this position, which is funded by the departments of social protection. Child's Assistants are introduced in the inclusive classroom at

the request of parents of a child with special needs and the relevant recommendations of the Inclusive Resource Centre.

Other recent policy reforms are related to the development of Professional Standards – for Early Childhood Teachers (Order of the Ministry of Economics 2021) and for Directors of early childhood institutions/kindergartens (Order of the Ministry of Economics 2021) – see *Chapter 4.2* for more details.

## 9. Recent country-specific research focusing on ECEC staff

### Improving the quality of early childhood education and care in Ukraine

**Source:** Peeters, J. 2019 (see *References* for further details)

**Background:** The study was conducted by Jan Peeters of the VBJK in Ghent/Belgium and funded by UNICEF-Ukraine in 2018. Reasons for conducting the research were changes in the legislation, in particular: the draft of the Law of Ukraine “On Preschool Education”, Basic Component of Preschool Education (educational standards) and the “New Ukrainian School” concept.

**Aims and procedures:** The general goal of the research was to study the quality of early childhood education and care in Ukraine according to the criteria of the European Quality Framework (2015) and to develop recommendations which would strengthen the early childhood education system in Ukraine within the context of educational reforms. The study focused on the following aspects: access to ECEC; workforce; curriculum; monitoring and evaluation; governance. The study included visits to early childhood institutions, interviews and focus groups with educational policy representatives, tutors in IPE and CPD and early childhood teachers.

**Findings and implications:** The aspect “workforce” included the following general recommendations: existing professional education for teachers is focused mainly on theory and lacks an appropriate practical focus; teacher educators are not sufficiently aware of the latest international studies in the field of early childhood education and care and have difficulties in working with children of early age (0–2 years) and their parents. It is therefore recommended to increase the number of hours allocated to the pedagogical practicum of student teachers, starting from the first year of their studies.

Another recommendation was focused on the role of teacher-methodologists who can play an essential role in improving the quality of early childhood institutions and supporting Early Childhood Teachers in the introduction of innovative teaching methods and approaches. It was emphasised that the training of mentoring skills is critical for teachers-methodologists.

The low salaries for both Early Childhood Teachers and Teacher Educators were highlighted as an issue of serious concern for the quality of early childhood education.

### Criteria of quality in early childhood education – Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation

**Source:** UNICEF in Ukraine and Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation 2019 (see *References* for further details)

**Background and aims:** The research was conducted by the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation in partnership with the Kyiv International Institute of Sociological Studies, with funding support from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and UNICEF Ukraine. It was part of an international project aiming to specify “International quality criteria for centre-based childcare”

and was conducted in 2018–2019. Following countries took part: China, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, and Vietnam.

The main research questions were: "How important are criteria of quality of early childhood education for different target groups?" and "Which criteria are the most/the least important?"

**Procedure:** The basis of this research was the third edition of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3), an instrument for assessing the quality of early childhood education programmes for children aged 2–5 years. The research focused on: interactions between teachers and children (28 criteria)

- 1) Interactions between teaching staff and parents (11 criteria)
- 2) Pedagogical orientation (7 criteria)
- 3) Educational structure (6 criteria).

In Ukraine the survey included the following target groups, which represented four major regions (city/rural population):

- Representatives of local educational authorities
- Early Childhood Teachers from 50 early childhood institutions (one classroom, two Early Childhood Teachers)
- Children’s parents
- Students of IPE institutions.

Methods included telephone interviews, email interviews and online surveys.

**Main findings related to the workforce:** All criteria related to workforce issues were assessed by the highest scores (on average more than 6 out of the maximum score of 7), which demonstrated the general understanding and recognition of the role of competent teaching staff by all stakeholders.

### Assessing process quality in early childhood education institutions according to ECERS-3

**Source:** Ministry of Education and Science 2022d (see *References* for further details)

**Background:** In 2019, the Programme of Government was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which included goals of different Ministries. One of the goals of the Ministry of Education and Science (2022b) was providing equal access to quality early childhood education for every child, including conducting the assessment of the quality of educational process in early childhood institution according to the international instrument Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3). ECERS-3 is the third edition of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS) developed by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer (2014) to assess classroom quality. The main aspects of assessment classroom quality include the following: space and furnishings; personal care routines; language and literacy; learning activities; interaction; programme structure.

**Aims and procedures:** In 2022, a study on the assessment of process quality in early childhood institutions according to ECERS-3 was conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (Ukrainian Institute of Education Development, Institute of Educational Analytics), with funding support from UNICEF Ukraine and the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation.

The main goals of the study were to pilot international instrument ECERS-3 and to assess process quality in Ukrainian early childhood educational institutions. The sample included 200 early childhood institutions, which represented 24 *oblasts* in Ukraine and Kyiv city.

The study was conducted by the local experts who passed the necessary training.

**Findings and implications:** One of the major conclusions of this study was that the “Early Childhood Teacher is a key person in providing quality in the educational process of early childhood

educational institutions” (Ministry of Education and Science 2022d, 129). Professional training should be focused not only on the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills, but also on the development of personal qualities such as flexibility and the ability to adapt learning activities to better react to the individual characteristics of children. The role of Professional Standards for Early Childhood Teachers in developing the necessary competences was also emphasised.

## 10. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

That the role of early childhood education and care is critical to the further success of each person has been emphasised both at the international and national levels. Since 2017, when the educational reform “New Ukrainian School” started, it has become clear that changes should start even earlier than primary school, namely at the level of early childhood education.

Many positive changes have happened. These include developing:

- A new draft of the Law of Ukraine “On Preschool Education” (2021)
- A revised version of educational standards for preschool education (Basic Component of Preschool Education 2021)
- Professional Standards for Early Childhood Educators and Directors of early childhood institutions (2021).

At the same time many challenges remain, in particular:

- The social status of personnel working in the early childhood system is much lower than that of staff working in primary and secondary schools.
- Primary and secondary teachers working within the educational reform “New Ukrainian School” get more financial support due to financial subvention from the state budget and also methodological support.
- There is no correlation between the quality of work and the allocated salary. The quality of work is measured only indirectly (according to the number of years of work, level of education, compulsory attestation). All this leads to a decrease in teachers’ motivation.

The low social status of Early Childhood Teachers leads to the following problems:

- Students with a relatively low level of relevant knowledge who wish to get a higher education degree tend to enrol at pedagogical colleges/institutes because it is easier to complete these qualifying courses since the competition is not very high. However, after graduation, it is likely that they will not get a job because of their low grades.
- Moreover, some graduates with good degrees choose not to work in a kindergarten or work there for just a short time. One reason is the very low salaries of Early Childhood Teachers mentioned above; thus graduates prefer to seek better paid jobs.

The issue of initial professional education/training is also problematic. The majority of graduates who apply for work in ECEC institutions do not meet the expectations of directors and often find it difficult to work with parents. Possible explanations for this situation could be:

- The study programmes are too focused on theory
- The dominance of traditional learning methods such as lectures, seminars
- The absence of the practice of applied research
- A lack of pedagogical themes during the practicum.



Starting on 24 February 2022, when the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine, the country has been faced with a huge number of other problems.

As of 23 September 2022 (Institute of Educational Analytics 2022):

- 819 early childhood education institutions have been damaged
- 82 have been completely destroyed
- 4,798 institutions accept children (331,762 children are enrolled)
- 3,873 ECEC settings use various forms of remote working with parents and children (involving 276,777 children)
- 632 ECEC institutions work in blended format (involving 42,815 children)
- 35,419 institutions provide educational services for 19,289 preschool children among internally displaced persons (IDPs)
- 7,227 children with special educational needs study in 4,167 inclusive groups
- 192 preschool education institutions are used as reception centres for IDPs.

One of the biggest challenges is to collect information about teaching staff who have to leave war zones and move either to other *oblasts* in Ukraine or abroad. As of 01.08.2022, only 76 early childhood teachers (IDPs) have been employed in the safe areas of Ukraine. At the same time 7,781 of children of preschool age, including 280 children with special needs, from IDP families have been admitted to ECEC institutions in central and western parts of Ukraine.

Another challenge is providing psychosocial support to all participants engaged in the educational process. Although the Ministry of Education and Science has established special rubrics on its website, providing recommendations of psychologists and other relevant resources, more work is needed in this area with the involvement of international experience.

## References

- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 1996. Resolution No. 992, *On the Procedure for Employment of Graduates of Higher Educational Institutions, which were Taught According to State Orders* (22.08.1996). <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/992-96-n>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2004. Resolution No 1096 *On Establishing the Size of Additional Payment for Some Kinds of Pedagogical Activities* (25.08.2004). <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1096-2004>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2011. Resolution No 373 *On Establishing the Premiums to the Teaching Staff of Preschool, After-school Facilities, Secondary, Vocational schools, Universities I-II Levels of Accreditation, Schools and Other Institutions Regardless of their Subordination*. (23.03.2011). <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/373-2011-n>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2015. Resolution No 531 *On Amendments to the Decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 14, 1997 No 346 and of June 14, 2000 No 963*. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/531-2015-n>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2016a. Decree No 1037 *On Salaries of Employees of Institutions and Organisations of Budget Sphere*. (28.12.2016). <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1037-2016-n>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2016b. Resolution No 526 *On Amendments to Annex 2 to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of August 30, 2002 No. 1298*. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/526-2016-n>
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2018. Resolution No 22 *On Raising Salaries for Pedagogical Workers*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/22-2018>

- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. 2019. Resolution *On Some of the Issues of Raising the Qualification of Pedagogical and Scientific-Pedagogical Workers*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/800-2019>
- Harms, T., R.M. Clifford, and D. Cryer. 2014. *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3)*. New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Institute of Educational Analytics. 2022. *Education of Ukraine under the War. Informational-analytical publication*. <https://iea.gov.ua/naukovo-analitichna-diyalnist/materiali-komunikatsijnih-zahodiv/2022-2/>
- Ivano-Frankivsk College, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2015. *Naskrizna Prohrama. praktyky za spetsial'nisty: doshkil'na osvita* [Cross cutting programme. Internships in the specialty preschool education]. [https://ifk.pnu.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2018/04/naskriz\\_DO.pdf](https://ifk.pnu.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2018/04/naskriz_DO.pdf)
- Ministry of Economics of Ukraine. 2021. *Order "On Approval of the Professional Standard "Early Childhood Teacher" (19.10.2021)*. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-zatverdzhennya-profesijnogo-standartu-vihovatel-zakladu-doshkilnoyi-osviti>
- Ministry of Education of Ukraine. 1993. *Terms and Conditions of Practice of University Students in Ukraine*. (08.04.1993 N 93). <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0035-93>
- Ministry of Education of Ukraine. 2001. *The Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education."* <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2628-14>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2005. *Order No 557 On Streamlining the Terms of Remuneration and Approving the Tariff Disbursement Schemes for Employees of Educational Institutions and Scientific Institutions (26.09.2005)*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1130-05>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2010. *Regulation on the Certification of Teaching Staff*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1255-10>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2011. *State Programme "Teacher."* <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/379-2002-n>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2015. *Ukrainian Law "On Preschool Education", 2001 No. 2628-III. Amendments from 24-12-2015*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2628-14>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2016. *Order No 544 on Amendments to the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (04.11. 2010) No 1055*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0821-16>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2017. *The New Law of Ukraine "On Education."* <http://mon.gov.ua/activity/education/zagalna-serednya/gromadske-obgovorennya-zakonoproektu-«pro-osvitu».html>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2018. *Order No 776 On Approval Concept of Pedagogical Education (16.07.2018)*. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-zatverdzhennya-konceptiyi-rozvitku-pedagogichnoyi-osviti>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2021a. *Order No 33 On Approval Basic Component of Preschool Education (State Standard of Preschool Education) new edition (12.01.2021)*. [https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/rizne/2021/12.01/Pro\\_novu\\_redaktsiyu%20Bazovoho%20komponenta%20doshkilnoyi%20osvity.pdf](https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/rizne/2021/12.01/Pro_novu_redaktsiyu%20Bazovoho%20komponenta%20doshkilnoyi%20osvity.pdf)
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2021b. *Order On Regulation on Certification of Teaching Staff (draft) (September 2021)*. <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/gromadske-obgovorennya/2021/09/06/Polozh.pro.atest.ped.prats.06.09.pdf>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2022a. Letter No 1/6015-22 from 03.06.2022. *On Methodological Recommendations of Implementing of the professional Standard of Director of Early Childhood Institution*. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-metodichni-rekomendacyi-vprovadzhennya-profesijnogo-standartu-kerivnika-direktora-zakladu-doshkilnoyi-osviti>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2022b. *Order No 615 On Approval the Report on the Results of the Main Stage of the Field Study of Assessment of the Quality of Educational Process in the Early Childhood Educational Institution according to ECERS-3. (07.07.2022)*. <https://osvita.ua/doc/files/news/870/87085/62ebb87028f3d957719069.pdf>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2022c. Letter No 1/6887-22 from 22.06.2022. *On the Preservation of the Network of Preschools and Protection of the Rights of their Staff*. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/shodo-zberezheniya-merezhi-zakladiv-doshkilnoyi-osviti-ta-zahistoprav-yih-pracivnikiv>

- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. 2022d. *Order of the Ministry of Education and Science as of 07.07.2022 № 615 "On approval the report on the results of the main stage of the research of the quality of educational process in early childhood institutions according to ECERS-3"*. <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/uploads/public/62e/bb8/702/62ebb87028f3d957719069.pdf>
- Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. 2017. *Order No 518 On Approval of Directory of Qualification Characteristics of Professions "Social Services" (29.03.2017)*. <https://www.msp.gov.ua/documents/2427>.
- Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M. J. Neuman. 2010. *Professionals in Early Childhood Education and Care Systems – European Profiles and Perspectives*. Opladen and Farmington Hills, MI.: Barbara Budrich.
- Onyshchenko, V. 2022. *Oplata pratsi pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv: posadovi oklady 2022. Bukhhalteriya dlya byudzhetu ta OMS* [Remuneration of teaching staff: official salaries 2022. Accounting for the budget and local government]. <https://www.budgetnyk.com.ua/article/467-oplata-prats-pedpratsvnyk-posalov-oklady-2022-roku>
- Peeters, J. 2019. *Improving the quality of ECEC services in Ukraine* [in Ukrainian only]. VBJK. Ghent. <http://www.ussf.kiev.ua/ccdeditions/329/>
- President of Ukraine. 1996. *Decree Measures to Reform the System of Specialist Training and Employment of Graduates of Higher Education Institutions* of 23 January 1996, No.77/96, Paragraph 2. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/77/96>
- President of Ukraine. 2013. *Decree On the National Strategy for Development of Education in Ukraine for the period till 2021*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/344/2013>
- State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2021. *Early Childhood Education in Ukraine*. <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua>
- State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. *Doshkil'na osvita v Ukrayini* [Preschool education in Ukraine]. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2022/osv/osv\\_rik/dosh\\_osv\\_Ukr\\_2021.xls](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2022/osv/osv_rik/dosh_osv_Ukr_2021.xls)
- UNICEF in Ukraine and Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation. 2019. *Criteria of Quality of Early Childhood Education*. Study report within an international project "International criteria of quality of early childhood educational programmes". <http://www.ussf.kiev.ua/ccdeditions/328/>
- [UN] United Nations. 2006. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>
- Verkhovna Rada – Parliament of Ukraine. 1991. *Law of Ukraine "On Education", Article 61. Financial and Economic Activities of Educational Institutions and Establishments, Organisations, Enterprises of the System of Education*. Kiev. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1060-12/page3>
- Verkhovna Rada – Parliament of Ukraine. 2001. *Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education" as of 11.07.2001 No 2628-III (Law 2628)*. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2628-14>
- Verkhovna Rada – Parliament of Ukraine. 2014. *Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" as of 01.07.2014 No 1556-VII*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18>
- Verkhovna Rada – Parliament of Ukraine. 2016. *Law of Ukraine "On Education", No. 1060-XII, amended on 19.02.2016, Article 61. Financial and Economic Activities of Educational Institutions and Establishments, Organisations, Enterprises of the System of Education*. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1060-12/page3>
- Verkhovna Rada – Parliament of Ukraine. 2020. *Law of Ukraine "On Comprehensive General Secondary Education", No. 463-IX, amended on 19.06.2020, Article 26. Inclusive Education*. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/463-20#Text>