Seminar on early childhood education and care (ECEC) services
and promotion of social inclusion

Florence, Istituto degli Innocenti
28 January 2010

Background

The issue of ECEC services is recently receiving a greater attention into the EU framework. This subject has long been an important part of the EU’s social and economic policy and of gender equality policy. At the Barcelona Council of 2002 it was agreed to establish a common target to be reached by EU States, namely the coverage of 33% of places in ECEC services for children from birth to 3 years as well as 90 percent for 3 to 6 year olds.

Such decision shows an important commitment that EU States agreed to undertake, however this quantitative goal was not accompanied by any qualitative specifications.

Aims

The Seminar aims at providing a forum for knowledge exchange among the ChildONEurope partners and other key international governmental and non governmental bodies involved in this field in particular concerning a comparative analysis of the EU situation focusing both on qualitative and quantitative aspects.

The Seminar aims in particular at promoting a reflection on the impact that such services can have in fostering social inclusion and fighting the risk of social exclusion of socially disadvantaged children as well as migrant children in a framework of a universalistic access to services.

Seminar Structure

The Seminar will be structured in a first plenary session during the morning, where some of the most relevant comparative researches will be presented, and the afternoon session dedicated to specific themes to be addressed in working groups. The Seminar will be concluded with a panel session on the basis of the whole day discussion. The working languages will be English and French, nevertheless in the plenary session simultaneous translations will be provided, in Italian and Spanish, while only for some groups this service will be available (see the attached Registration Form for more details).
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Programme

9:00 Registration
9:30 Welcome address
10.00 – 12.45 First session - Plenary session
Chairperson – Aldo Fortunati, Director Documentation, Research and Training Area – Istituto degli Innocenti
“The Child care transition” – What does the Unicef report tell us about ECEC and how to look forward, John Bennet, visiting fellow, Thomas Coram Research Institute, London
Quality dimensions of ECEC services for children, families and the development of policies
Sylvie Rayna, INRP - Université Paris 13
11.00 – 11.15 Coffee break
The role of ECEC services and professionals in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion, Jan Peeters, Director of VBJK, Resource and Research Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education, Ghent, Belgium
Review of ChildONEurope partners national policies on ECEC services,
Erika Bernacchi and Roberta Ruggiero, ChildONEurope Secretariat
12.15 Debate
12.45 Second session - Introduction to Working Groups
13.00 Lunch
14.00 – 16.00 Second session - Working groups:
Children’s identity and the quality of ECEC services
Coordinator: Aldo Fortunati
The Barcelona/Lisbon target of 33% of ECEC within 2010: fulfilling of the target and effective equal opportunities of access
Coordinator: John Bennet
Access to ECEC services, costs and fees for families with special attention to migrant and socially disadvantaged children
Coordinator: Sylvie Rayna
Promotion of children's rights, development of services and prevention of social exclusion
Coordinator: Jan Peeters

16.00 - 17.30 Third session – Panel discussion: results of working groups, debate and conclusions
Moderator – Benoît Parmentier, ChildONEurope Presidency