

## CARE „Curriculum Quality Analysis and Impact Review of European ECEC“

### Project Description

In line with the EU strategies for 2020 and the need for a systemic and integrated approach to Early Childhood education and Care (ECEC), the project identifies eight key issues and questions for which effective policy measures and instruments should be developed. They concern assessing the impact of ECEC, optimizing quality and curricula for ECEC to increase effectiveness, raising the professional competencies of staff, monitoring and assuring quality of ECEC, increasing the inclusiveness of ECEC, in particular for socioeconomically disadvantaged children, funding of ECEC, and the need for innovative European indicators of children's wellbeing.

The project will address these issues in an integrative way by combining state-of-the-art knowledge of factors determining personal, social and economic benefits of ECEC with knowledge of the mechanisms determining access to and use of ECEC. In developing a European knowledge base for ECEC, we will add to the existing knowledge in two ways. First, we will include recent and ongoing ECEC research from several European countries. Second, we will include the perspectives of important stakeholders and integrate cultural beliefs and values.

The central aim is to develop an evidence-based and culture-sensitive framework of

- (a) Developmental goals, quality assessment, curriculum approaches and policy measures for improving the quality and effectiveness of ECEC; and
- (b) Effective strategies of organizing, funding and governing ECEC that increase the impact of ECEC.

Our interdisciplinary research team will construct this framework, based on the competencies and skills that young children need to develop in current societies, identify the conditions that have to be fulfilled to promote child development and wellbeing, and identify strategies and policy measures that support access to high quality provisions, and likely to receive broad support of stakeholders, thereby enhancing the impact of ECEC.

### Duration:

The project takes place from January 2013 until December 2016.

### Main Tasks of the FU Berlin

The FU Berlin will lead and be responsible for the completion of the following tasks of the CARE project:

#### a.) *Meta-analysis of results of all European studies on moderators of quality*

We will undertake a meta-analysis of available European studies to illuminate our conclusions on the size and nature of the effects of ECEC. This will include the effects of the “dose” of ECEC (e.g. age of onset, duration, intensity) as well as the quality: structural quality, staff professional requirements, quality regulations, process quality, curriculum. Study of the possible moderators of ECEC effects at the individual and contextual level, such as ECEC quality- and population parameters. Examples could include gender, temperament, parental educational level, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, quality and safety regulations and how they interact with ECEC experience. Also the identification and potential moderators of ECEC effects will be examined in relation to developmental outcomes. In these tasks evidence concerning ECEC effects on disadvantaged children will be given separate consideration. This work will provide evidence on ECEC provision that actually helps to support equity.

#### b.) *Differences in quality monitoring and assurance across Europe*

We will study the links between European countries' systems of ECEC provision and quality monitoring and assurance and possible consequences for the effects of ECEC. As systems of ECEC delivery vary around Europe, we will consider the implications for possible variation in ECEC effects for different countries. This will include a comparative review of European ECEC quality monitoring and assurance systems. The review will result in a typology of quality monitoring and assurance systems that takes account of governance structure, funding systems and the legal framework. It will also include information on access to ECEC for different sectors of the population, including the disadvantaged. The typology will be evaluated by an expert panel. The evidence will be used to consider how systems of ECEC provision may influence child outcomes.

### Cooperating Partners

Partners of eleven European countries will cooperate in the CARE project: Universiteit Utrecht (Utrecht, Netherlands), University of Oxford (Oxford, England), Freie Universität Berlin (Berlin, Germany), Aarhus Universitet (Aarhus, Denmark), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Leuven, Belgium), Jyväskylän Yliopisto (Jyväskylä, Finland), Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (Milan, Italy), Hellenic Open University (Patras, Greece), Instituto Universitario de Lisboa (Lisbon, Portugal), Høgskolen i Vestfold (Vestfold, Norway), Uniwersytet Warszawski (Warsaw, Poland)

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