

Title: Project: *How and under what conditions does quality in early education and care matter? A study across four European countries - First results from Poland*

Author/presenter: Olga Wysłowska (1), Joana Cadima (2), Pauline Slot (3)

Affiliation:

(1) University of Warsaw, Faculty of Education, Department of Education Policy and Social Research on Education

(2) University of Porto, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences,

(3) University of Utrecht, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Child, Family and Education Studies

Abstract

A growing body of research shows that high quality ECEC provision may effectively enhance children's cognitive and socio-emotional development (García et al., 2016; Mashburn et al. 2008; Melhuish et al., 2013).

Most commonly, quality is referred to the compilation of *structural characteristics* of the classroom, namely group size or teacher–child ratio, and *process quality*, which is defined by the actual day-to-day experiences of children, such as children's interactions with teachers and peers. Children's experiences are also related to the activity setting (e.g., free play, structured) in which children engage throughout the day (Cabell et al., 2013; Early et al., 2010; Fuligni et al., 2012; Howes et al., 2011). However, little is known about the extent to which process quality varies as a function of the type of activity.

The overarching aim of this research project is to explore variation of process quality across typical activity settings provided to two and three year old children in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centres in four European countries. In this presentation, results from Poland will be presented.

In Poland, the study was conducted in 30 public settings providing educare for children 0-4 years old. In each classroom, four activity settings, such as meals, free play, pre-academic activities and arts were observed. The CLASS Toddler version (La Paro, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012) was used, which includes two broad domains: Emotional and Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning.

The first results reveal that on both classroom and activity levels, the Emotional and Behavioral Support is scored in the mid-to-high range, whereas Engaged Support for Learning in the low-to-mid range. However, there appeared differential patterns depending on the type of the activity setting. These findings will be discussed in view of possible implications for practice and policy.

Key words: ECEC quality, teacher-child interactions, activity setting, CLASS Toddler

Total words: 294