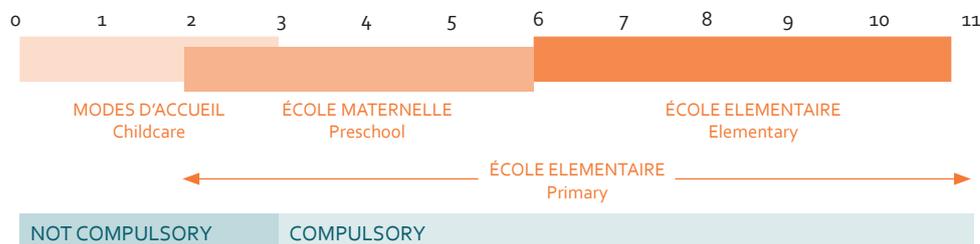
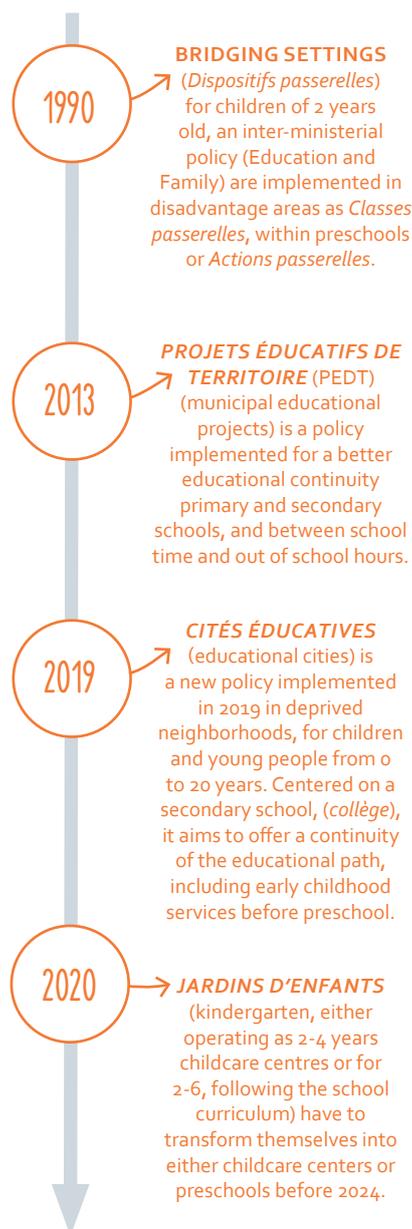


FRANCE

STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION



TIMELINE OF RECENT POLICY MEASURES ON TRANSITIONS



CHILDCARE



ATTENDANCE

Childcare is attended by 59% of children under 3. Family day carer (*assistante maternelle*) is the most common (33%), followed by childcare centres (21%) (*full time or part time crèches*). Costs for parents are mainly linked to parents' income. Places are unequally accessible: disadvantaged families are significantly underrepresented (due to less childcare centers in poor areas and family day carers are too expensive for them).



PROVISION

The Ministry of Solidarities and Health Affairs is responsible for regulations, missions and recently, curriculum. *Departments* are responsible for the authorisation and monitoring of childcare centers. The majority of childcare centers are managed by municipalities, some by non profit organisations, while private providers (with public subsidies) are increasing.



PERSONNEL

In childcare centers, qualified personnel must make up at least 40% of the staff. Childcare workers (a majority of secondary vocational degree, *auxiliaires de puériculture*, ISCED 3B) are responsible for 6 children (or 1/5 for infants then 1/8 for toddlers). Centers are led by paediatric nurses (*puéricultrices*) or educators (*éducatrices de jeunes enfants*). Family day carers must follow a mandatory 120 hours of pre-/in-service training

PRESCHOOL



ATTENDANCE

The *écoles maternelles* are attended by 99% of the 3-5 years old, about 10% of the under 3 in 2021. In 2019, the age of compulsory instruction start at 3 (instead of 6). In 2021, preschool became compulsory from 3, with derogation in special cases for "home schooling".



FINANCE

Public schools are free of charge (except for lunch and the out of school hours). The State is in charge of the curriculum and the teachers' training and salaries in public schools and in most of the private *écoles maternelles*, which contracted with the state. Municipalities are in charge of the public buildings, material, assistants, and out of school services (before/after school hours, lunch, holidays) (*centres de loisirs*)



PERSONNEL

The *professeurs des écoles* have a Master degree (ISCED 7) and the same training is required for teaching in *école maternelle* or *école élémentaire*. On average there is one teacher for 22 children. Teachers are assisted by specialized territorial agents (*Atsem*) (secondary vocational degree, ISCED 3B) depending of financial territorial inequalities. During lunch, before and after school hours and holidays, *animateurs* with a short training are in charge of the children.



FRANCE: 6 CURRENT ISSUES FACING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

1. INCREASING SCHOOLIFICATION OF PRESCHOOLS

FRANCE HAS A SPLIT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SYSTEM. THE GAP BETWEEN CHILDCARE AND PRESCHOOLS HAS INCREASED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 80'S WITH THE SCHOOLIFICATION OF PRESCHOOL FOR INCREASING CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS. THE LAW OF COMPULSORY INSTRUCTION AT 3 YEARS' OLD IN 2019 HAS TURNED TO COMPULSORY SCHOOLING IN *ÉCOLES MATERNELLES* IN 2021. COMPARED TO THAT OF 2015, THE NEW CURRICULUM PUBLISHED IN 2021 HAS REINFORCED THEIR OBJECTIVES IN TERMS OF ACADEMIC LEARNING WITH VERY PRECISE AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS IN NUMERACY AND LITERACY. A NATIONAL EVALUATION HAS BEEN PLACED AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE FIRST YEAR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

2. STANDARDISATION OF THE NATIONAL CHILDCARE REGULATIONS

THE RECENT 2021 REGULATIONS FOR HOMEBASED CARE AND CHILDCARE CENTERS IS THE FIRST NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3: A NATIONAL CHART, *LA CHARTE NATIONALE POUR L'ACCUEIL DU JEUNE ENFANT*. NO LEARNING-CENTERED ORIENTATIONS BUT 10 GENERAL PRINCIPLES (THE RIGHT OF EACH CHILD TO ATTEND A CHILDCARE, FAMILY PARTICIPATION, LOCAL COLLABORATIONS INCLUDING PRESCHOOL, CREATIVITY, MULTIPLE LANGUAGES, ART AND NATURE, GENDER EQUALITY, BEAUTIFUL SPACES, BUT ALSO CONDITIONS FOR REFLEXIVITY AND APPROPRIATE SPECIFIC TRAINING). IN ADDITION A NATIONAL CHART FOR SUSTAINING PARENTALITY (*CHARTRE NATIONALE DE SOUTIEN À LA PARENTALITÉ*) WAS PUBLISHED IN 2022.

→ WHICH FEASIBILITY AND APPROPRIATION OF THIS CHART BY THE PROFESSIONALS? TRAINING ISSUES (FOR INSTANCE ON GENDER EQUALITY), REGULATIONS ISSUES (FOR INSTANCE POSSIBILITIES AND RATIOS FOR GOING OUTSIDE THE CHILDCARE CENTER WITH CHILDREN)

→ USING THIS ACT WITHIN THE BRIDGING SETTINGS WITH PRESCHOOL AND LEISURE TIME CENTERS?

3. SHORTAGE OF ECEC STAFF

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR COMMITTEE WAS SET UP BY THE MINISTRY OF SOLIDARITY AND HEALTH AT THE END OF 2021 FOR FACING THE EROSION OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CHILDCARE SECTOR AT ALL LEVELS (FROM EDUCATORS TO *AUXILIARIES DE PUÉRICULTURES* AND UNDERGRADUATE STAFF FACING DEGRADED CONDITIONS OF WORK). FIRST DECISIONS IN 2022: FACILITATIONS OF GRADUATION. THE *CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL* RECOMMENDED TO UPGRADE THE STATUS OF CHILDCARE PROFESSIONS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND SALARIES, AND TO FACILITATE IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THESE PROFESSIONS THROUGHOUT ONE'S LIFE VIA CONTINUING EDUCATION.

→ BETTER SALARIES, PEDAGOGICAL COORDINATION, CONDITIONS OF WORK'S IMPROVEMENT, ARE EXPECTED

RECENTLY THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS (HIGH ADULT-CHILD RATIO) AND WAGES HAVE BEEN POINTED OUT AS RELATIVELY LOW COMPARED TO EUROPEAN ONES. SOME FRENCH DEPRIVED AREAS ARE ALSO CONFRONTED TO NEW TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES AND LACK OF EXPERIENCE.

4. A PUBLIC CHILDCARE SERVICE?

FACING VERY DEEP LOCAL INEQUALITIES CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL PARENTS IS AT STAKE. CONSIDERED IN 2022 BY THE PRESIDENT MACON, THE PERSPECTIVE IS MAYBE A COMPENSATION IN THE CASE OF THE ABSENCE OF A SOLUTION. BUT EVEN WITH HELP OF THE STATE AND THE FAMILY ALLOWANCE FUNDS (*CAISSES D'ALLOCATIONS FAMILIALES*), FINANCIAL LOCAL AUTHORITIES' DIFFICULTIES REMAIN.

5. PRE-SERVICE ECEC TRAINING:

THE *CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL* RECOMMENDED TO UPGRADE THE STATUS OF CHILDCARE PROFESSIONS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH PRE-SERVICE TRAINING. THE NATIONAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE (NATIONAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE) PROBLEMATISED IN 2018 (IN RESPONSE TO FRANCE STRATÉGIES IN 2017) THE LACK OF SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE.

6. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CHILDCARE STAFF

THE *CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL* RECOMMENDED TO UPGRADE THE STATUS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONS BY FACILITATING IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THESE PROFESSIONS THROUGHOUT ONE'S LIFE VIA CONTINUING EDUCATION. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT AN INTERMINISTERIAL POLICY (WITH MINISTRY OF CULTURE) ON ART AND CULTURE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD, STIPULATED IN 2017 TO INCLUDE THIS MATTER IN THE INITIAL TRAINING OF BOTH CHILDCARE AND CULTURE PROFESSIONAL. SOME *RESIDENCES PASSERELLES* WITH ARTISTS AND CULTURAL ACTORS INTERVENING BOTH IN PRESCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE ARE EXPERIMENTED IN *CITÉS ÉDUCATIVES*.

→ THE NEED FOR A COMMON IN-SERVICE TRAINING WITH ALL THE PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN: EDUCATORS IN DAYCARE CENTERS, ANIMATORS OF LEISURE TIME CENTERS, TEACHERS AND ASSISTANT IN PRESCHOOL