EVERY DAY QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

ECEC curriculum implementation at ECEC centres and in family day care
Introduction

Between 2017–2019, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) implemented an evaluation project which examined the curricula for early childhood education (ECEC) as instruments supporting the provision and implementation of ECEC as well as the implementation of these curricula in the daily ECEC. This summary focuses on the second part of the two-phase evaluation.

The results of the evaluation show that the National core curriculum for early childhood education (2016; 2018) as a whole directs ECEC pedagogy in line with the objectives laid down in legislation and provides good guidelines for the implementation of high-quality ECEC. However, the content-related objectives of the National core curriculum are not achieved everywhere as required in the curriculum.

The objective of this summary is to serve as a concrete aid in the development of ECEC. The key results and the development recommendations based on them are described in the summary. The sections presenting results include self-evaluation questions targeted at pedagogical staff. The questions are intended as instruments enabling comparisons of the evaluation results with one’s own work at the level of persons, teams or units.

“This type of national evaluation has not been previously carried out in the Finnish ECEC. Thus, for the first time, we were able to obtain an overall idea about the quality of our ECEC services and how the objectives of the national curriculum have been achieved.” – The evaluation team
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The evaluation was implemented by an evaluation team chaired by Virpi Mattila, Director of Finnish Early Childhood Education at the City of Espoo. The other members were University Teacher Mervi Eskelinen from the University of Jyväskylä (as from 3 June 2019, Senior Officer at the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira), Director of early childhood education and care Lillemor Gammelgård from the City of Vaasa (until 30 April 2019), Professor Marja-Kristiina Lerkkanen from the University of Jyväskylä, Postdoctoral Researcher Maiju Paananen from the University of Tampere and Senior Officer for Educational Affairs Jyri Ulvinen from the Regional State Administrative Agency for Northern Finland. At the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, Counsellor of Evaluation Laura Repo was responsible for the evaluation, Senior Advisor Jukka Marjanen for the statistical analyses and Anne Kivistö served as the evaluation expert. University Teacher Hanna Hjelt from the University of Tampere also participated in the analysis and reporting of the qualitative analysis. In addition, higher education trainee Sini Leikkola participated in analysing the material.
Implementation of the evaluation

The national evaluation was targeted at the pedagogical activities of ECEC staff. The activities were evaluated by the staff themselves in proportion to the objectives set for ECEC in national and local curricula. The staff also assessed the contents of the National core curriculum as well as the factors that enable curriculum implementation. Heads of ECEC centres in turn evaluated both their own activities and the activities of their staff. Both data materials were collected in a survey addressed to staff working in municipal and private ECEC, heads of the ECEC centres as well as municipal childminders working in family day care.
The survey participants included:

- **91** municipalities
- **581** heads of ECEC centres
- **911** childminders working in family day care
- **1772** ECEC teachers
- **2069** ECEC childcarers
“It is wonderful that the functioning of the National ECEC core curriculum is evaluated so broadly. Filling in the evaluation survey also helped us to conduct a well-structured evaluation of the activities of our own ECEC centre and determine which matters require further examination and which of them we have already managed to implement very well.”

– survey participant
2 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to establish how the National core curriculum governing ECEC and the local curricula based on it are implemented in the child groups of both ECEC centres and in family day care. The purpose of the evaluation was also to produce information on factors that promote or hinder the transformation of the statutory plans governing ECEC into pedagogical activities in everyday ECEC situations.

**The evaluation questions were:**

- How are the content-related objectives set in the National core curriculum implemented at ECEC centres and in family day care?
- What factors promote or hinder the implementation of the National core curriculum at ECEC centres and in family day care?

**Enhancement-led evaluation in ECEC**

In Finland, the evaluation of education is guided by the principles of enhancement-led evaluation. The key feature in enhancement-led education is that information is produced to enhance the activities, not for the external evaluator. Thus, the evaluation is not aimed only at examining the state of the matters, but the intention is to find both strengths and development needs. One of the purposes of the evaluation is to help ECEC staff to enhance the pedagogical activities. The report was based on the self-evaluation of staff and it highlighted the development needs they brought up themselves regarding the activities.
3 Results

In this summary, we want to encourage the reader to examine the themes presented in the results as broad entities and to compare the strengths and areas for development presented in the results with his or her own work.

The evaluation must not direct anyone to a way of thinking in which phenomena and the results related to them are generalised into a permanent state of affairs. It may be necessary to develop an area at the local level even if the same area has been highlighted as a strength at the national level.

Self-evaluation questions have been added to the sections discussing the evaluation results in this summary with the aim of helping the reader to reflect on the theme in question from the point of view of his or her own work. The questions are based on FINEEC’s ongoing work on indicators, in which self-evaluation questions are used to specify the broad indicator themes into a form that enables more concrete evaluation.
4 Strengths of pedagogical activities

Strengths of pedagogical activities in early childhood education and care

In a large proportion of ECEC centres, the content-related objectives of ECEC are mainly achieved well, whereas in some ECEC centres and family day care groups, their achievement is poor. Staff considered the atmosphere in ECEC to be mainly positive. According to their evaluations, both children and adults feel safe in the ECEC environment. The examination of the overall situation also showed that the play-based pedagogy referred to in the National core curriculum was mainly implemented well. This means that play is valued and children have the opportunity to play with other children every day. Based on the results of the self-evaluation of childminders, the activities in family day care included activities referred to in the National core curriculum. According to the childminders in family day care, different areas for learning were available in the small groups of children in many places on a daily basis.
A safe and positive atmosphere for children and adults

According to the respondents, almost all of the children had a daily opportunity to play with other children (99% of the respondents agreed either partly or completely). Similarly, 91% of the respondents agreed partly or completely that the children and adults in the groups felt safe. In addition, 90% agreed completely or partly that there was a strong feeling of togetherness and a positive atmosphere in the group.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- talk to the children?
- respond to the children’s need for closeness?
- encounter the children in different situations during the day?
- try to recognise children’s feelings?
- encourage and inspire the children as individuals and as a group?

The child’s right to play and the implementation of play-based pedagogy

According to staff, children’s play was observed systematically (79% of respondents). 72% of staff were of the opinion that staff participate actively in the children’s play and 86% thought that staff actively widen all children’s opportunities to participate in a large variety of different play and games.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- create conditions for long-term play?
- modify the play environment for the children?
- modify the play environment with the children?
- participate in the children’s play and games?
- tell the parents about the children’s play and games?
**Physical education**

Based on the results, physical education in line with the National core curriculum was implemented fairly well. Attention was paid to physical activity, its diversity and amount, and the staff were able to estimate whether the amount was sufficient. This is probably supported by the fact that the recommendations for physical activity in early childhood as well as different physical activity projects have increased public awareness of the importance of physical activity.

**In our ECEC centre, how do we**

- implement regular and systematic activities that make children get out of breath?
- engage a wide variety of activities in different environments?
- encourage children to be physically active by setting an example themselves?
- observe the development of fundamental movement skills?
- involve children in the planning, implementation and evaluation of physical activity?

**Food education**

94% of staff reported that mealtimes are used as systematic learning situations on a daily or weekly basis and according to 97%, the group's mealtime practices promote a positive attitude to food at least every week.

**In our ECEC centre, how do we**

- ensure that the instructions related to food and meals are in line with the meal recommendations issued for ECEC?
- support each child's independence at meals?
- promote children's ability to identify feelings related to food (hunger, thirst, preferred tastes)?
- make use of different senses when familiarizing with food?
- ensure that meals are unhurried and pleasant events?
5 Areas for development in pedagogical activities

According to the evaluation, there were also shortcomings in the implementation of the curricula. Based on the self-evaluation of staff, not all of the matters required in the National core curriculum were implemented at day-care centres or in family day care. Staff’s concerns about the quality of the pedagogical activities should be taken seriously. Shortcomings were observed especially in pedagogy focusing on children aged under three. Additionally, shortcomings were in many places found in the contents of art education, expression, music, physical activity, literacy skills and activities developing multiliteracy.

Familiarity with the National core curriculum

There were shortcomings in the staff’s familiarity with the National core curriculum and their ability to transform the core curriculum into more concrete local curricula. A significant part of staff were of the view that the local curriculum leaves too much responsibility to staff in the interpretation of the National core curriculum. In this case, the core curriculum was not considered a useful tool. The respondent’s estimation of his or her own familiarity with the curricula was linked to the respondent’s evaluation of the operating culture in the unit. If the respondent considered himself of herself well familiar with the National core curriculum and the local curriculum, the respondent’s evaluation of the operating culture was also positive.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- ensure that the entire staff is familiar with the curricula governing the activities?
- promote the pedagogical discussion conducted on the basis of the ECEC curriculum?
- discuss the values directing the functioning of the curriculum and any difficult or unclear concepts?
- ensure that the objectives set in the local curriculum are transferred to the staff’s activities?
- support the staff in drawing up the children’s individual early childhood education plans?
- include the children and their parents in the planning and evaluation of activities that are in line with the plan?
Art education, explorative activities and multiliteracy

According to the evaluation, visual arts education and partly also music education were not part of the daily work in ECEC. Instead, their implementation in some of the ECEC centres and groups in family day care was sporadic. One third of staff at ECEC centres reported that visual arts education was offered every month or less frequently. In addition, two thirds of the respondents reported that drama, dance and theatre were offered every month or less frequently. In some of the centres, the amount of activities that encourage exploration was insufficient. Approximately 10% of the staff at ECEC centres said that no activities strengthening multiliteracy were available at all.

In early childhood education and care learning areas should be implemented in a way that enables integrative broad-based examination and exploration of matters and phenomena in the activities. Children's interests and questions serve as a key premise for the activities. Multiliteracy is closely connected to thinking and learning skills. It is founded on a broad conception of text according to which different texts may be, among others, written, spoken, audiovisual or digital.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- implement systematic and guided artistic expression (e.g. painting, drawing, drama, theatre, multimedia presentations)?
- enable children's spontaneous artistic or musical expression?
- pay attention to the use of the entire staff's competences in artistic activities?
- make use of children's wondering attitude towards nature, the environment and technological phenomena in planning the activities?
- support children's creative and inventive building projects and problem-solving?
- discuss the media experiences important to children and the media content related to their life with them?
Emphasis on areas for development in groups of children under 3 years of age

According to the answers to the open-ended questions, the content-related shortcomings related to the implementation of pedagogy were emphasised especially in groups of children aged under three. In early childhood education and care, consideration should be given to how a versatile learning environment is organised when children are very young, what art education of young children or the activities that encourage them to exploration are like, and how the initiatives of young children are observed.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- use the information gained from observing play in the planning of activities for young children or developing them?
- use play as a means of learning with young children?
- ensure that the staff say nursery rhymes, sing and read with the children every day?
- observe the children’s roles in play and games and support the participation of children who do not have a central role in them?
- take into account the areas of interest of young children in the development of the play environment?
**Friendships**

One fifth of the respondents (21%) reported that there was a child or children with no friends in their group. Still, the majority of the respondents said the group had together discussed operating methods to prevent bullying. Some of the answers proposed that finding friends was the child’s own responsibility and depended on the child’s independent activity. Although respecting the child’s own efforts is important and should be supported, it is still the adults’ responsibility to ensure that the child becomes part of the community.

**In our ECEC centre, how do we**

- observe and support the interactive relationships between the children in the group?
- take into account the interactive relationships when planning the daily pedagogical activities?
- create a community spirit in our own group?
- model and support children in expressing the willingness to help and take into consideration another person?

**Linguistic environment**

Each day in ECEC should contain activities that support rich interaction such as linguistic play, nursery rhymes and reading books. Only one half of staff reported that their group says nursery rhymes, makes up rhymes and plays with sounds and syllables every day. In addition, only one half of the respondents said that books are read in the group on a daily basis. Staff would need support for creating a linguistically rich environment for children under 3 years of age and for reconciling a linguistically rich environment for all children and strengthening the skills in Finnish as a second language. Additionally, support was needed for supporting linguistic development if the child’s linguistic development does not progress as expected.

**In our ECEC centre, how do we**

- create structures for daily reciprocal discussions with children?
- make it possible to read to children every day?
ensure that pedagogically selected literature suitable for the children's age is freely available to them?
• pay attention to reciprocal interaction with those children who mainly communicate by means other than words (for example, young children who are still learning to speak) or in a language that the staff does not know.

Unclear division of work between professional groups

Some of the respondents reported that the atmosphere in the work community was poor. Problems in the work community were visible as differences of opinion and as attitudes towards the curricula and the work. The answers highlighted resistance to change in the work community, inflexibility, undervaluation of the work of others, lack of willingness to commit to what has been agreed together, rudeness and lack of motivation. Some of the respondents felt that the curricula did not encourage childcarers to participate and that the role of childcarers in the planning, implementation and recording of the activities was unclear. Childminders in family day care did not identify with all aspects of the National core curriculum.

Support from the work community and the head of the ECEC centre had a positive impact on the operating culture. An encouraging and supportive work community, encouragement and respect from others, and the functioning of the team were considered important factors contributing to success. Clear operating structures such as weekly planning meetings, weekly meetings, development days and meetings in the evenings were also linked to this. The centre heads' support, guidance and encouragement were found to play a crucial role in building a positive operating culture.

In our ECEC centre, how do we implement

• the pedagogical responsibility of the ECEC teacher in the activities of the multiprofessional staff?
• the goal-oriented reflection on, evaluation and development of the pedagogy promoted by the ECEC teacher?
• multiprofessional cooperation in the planning, implementation, evaluation and development of pedagogy?
• the use of team members’ competences in the implementation of the activities?
6 Factors hindering the implementation of the activities

The respondents were asked to tell the main reasons why all children cannot manage to participate in the rich pedagogical activities.

Reasons related to the group of children

The most significant single reason was found to be factors related to the children and the group of children, such as the children’s varying needs, their age, support needs and challenges in language development. In many places, staff said they would like to have support in the implementation of activities in line with the local curriculum in the diverse group of children.

The idea that care and learning would in some way be the opposites was expressed in some of the answers. However, early childhood education and care in Finland is based on the idea that care and learning form one whole in which the areas of learning overlap with the daily activities, such as meals and dressing. Care and learning are closely linked.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- ensure that each child has experiences of participation and success?
- support different ways of communicating?
- offer alternative ways to participate in the activities?
- observe the needs for support related to children’s development and learning?
- assess the need for individual support?
Staff sufficiency and turnover, lack of material, limited resources

A total of 40% of staff felt that staff turnover affects the daily activities in ECEC. To enable consistent implementation of the activities and to even out differences in quality, sufficient resources must be guaranteed for the activities in ECEC. In addition to these, it is essential to discuss how situations are solved at the level of pedagogical activities when the resources available at the time are not sufficient.

Based on prior research it is known that the structural marginal conditions such as group size, adult to child ratio and staff structure affect the pedagogical activities in ECEC. Quality is also greatly affected by resources allocated to ECEC, including not just financial resources but also the physical spaces and materials.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- act in an unexpected situation that we cannot solve ourselves?
- outline the shared practices related to exceptional circumstances at the provider level?
- provide support in difficult pedagogical situations?
- collect information on factors that promote the activities and communicate it further?
Factors hindering the implementation of the activities

Importance of in-service training

According to the respondents, in-service training supported the competence of staff in a decisive manner. According to them, in-service training supported their professional development. For example, in-service training developed and renewed their thinking and reflection on their own work, gave new meanings to the content of their work and increased the importance of a systematic approach.

In-house training provides concrete tools, practical examples, tips and instruments for curriculum implementation. Especially trainings focusing in more detail on the different areas of the National core curriculum were found to support its implementation well. Examples of such training included training focusing on pedagogical documentation or the development of children's emotional skills. In-service trainings also helped staff to develop the operating culture of their unit and were found to clarify the work roles of the different professional groups.

In-service training strengthens the work community. According to staff, the best trainings were ones in which the entire work team or centre participated, enabling the direct reflection of information in relation to the group's or centre's practices.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- ensure that the entire staff in our unit has equal access to training concerning the curricula?
- plan participation in in-service training?
- ensure that in-service training is based on a proven need?
Pedagogical leadership

In the evaluation, staff’s evaluations of the implementation of pedagogy were linked to their views of how successful the local curriculum was and how they evaluated the quality of leadership and the available resources. If the respondent thought that leadership in the centre was of a high quality, he or she was more likely to evaluate the pedagogy to be of a high quality. In the evaluation, good leadership was used to refer to pedagogical support received from the immediate head of ECEC centre but also to wider management structures. This meant that the head of ECEC centre had the opportunities and the resources to support the creation of practices that supported the continuity of the groups of children and the permanence of staff and to enable the use of sufficient working time for the planning, preparation and evaluation of the activities and for in-service training.

In the answers given by the heads of ECEC centres, the discussions conducted in the work communities, the work evenings and the different events organised within the unit were considered important opportunities to familiarise oneself with and internalise the content of the National core curriculum. However, 54% of heads estimated that their use of time was not sufficient for the implementation of work in line with the National core curriculum. Similarly, 30% of them felt that they were not able to provide their staff with enough support for the implementation of pedagogy.

ECEC providers must develop practices that ensure the communication of information that ECEC centres and family day care providers have about challenges in the implementation of the curricula from one organisation level to another. The practices should ensure the implementation of the local curriculum, for example, by temporarily or permanently increasing resources and by means of correctly targeted in-service training.

In our ECEC centre, how do we ensure that

- the head of the centre has up-to-date information on the level and development needs of the pedagogical activities in the groups of children?
- the values and operating culture governing the activities in the centre are discussed regularly?
- enough time and resources are reserved for the planning, evaluation and development of pedagogical activities at the level of groups?
The level of concreteness in the National core curriculum for early childhood education

According to staff, the local curricula promoted the realisation of the pedagogical nature of the activities and local features were taken into account in them. The local curriculum was regarded as a pedagogical tool that governed the activities and their development. The respondents found that the local curriculum harmonised local practices and as a result was thought to clarify curriculum implementation and promote equality. However, a significant part of staff was of the view that the local curriculum leaves too much responsibility to staff in the interpretation of the National core curriculum. In this case, the core curriculum was not considered a useful tool. The work community's joint curriculum work and participation in the municipality's/organisation's curriculum process promoted familiarisation with the National core curriculum.

Based on the results, ECEC providers need support in making the local curriculum for early childhood education and care more concrete. Staff must be involved in the concretisation. The development recommendation given in FINEEC's previous evaluation of early childhood education and care (2018) was the following: having the curricula approved by the political decision-making bodies increases their weight but the decision-making system should enable flexible development of the curricula.

In our ECEC centre, how do we

- ensure that the entire staff are familiar with both the local curriculum and the National core curriculum?
- make use of the National core curriculum and the local curriculum in the planning, implementation, evaluation and development of pedagogy?
- ensure that the entire staff has equal access to all trainings that concern the curriculum?
8 Development recommendations

Based on the presented results, proposals for measures aiming to support the content-related development of ECEC are put forward.

1 High-quality activities in accordance with the National core curriculum must be implemented for children under three years of age

According to the results of the evaluation, the children's age was considered one obstacle to curriculum implementation. Staff found that it is not always possible to implement play-based pedagogy, art education, linguistically rich interaction or activities that encourage exploration in the activities of children under three years of age. In the education and in-service training of ECEC staff, attention should be paid to the staff's ability to respond to the pedagogical needs of children under the age of three and the ways of implementing the contents of the curriculum among smaller children.

2 The role of art education in ECEC should be strengthened

According to the evaluation, art education, expression and partly also music education are implemented sporadically. To rectify the situation, the operating culture should be modified to support arts and culture. A narrow interpretation of participation, children's varying hours of attendance, the organisation of the day and the cleaning of the facilities should not become an obstacle to high-quality artistic and cultural activities. In addition, the position and contents of artistic subjects in the education and in-service training of ECEC staff must be examined.

3 Literature and reading aloud should be part of every child's day in ECEC

The importance of a rich linguistic environment (reading aloud, saying nursery rhymes, rhyming with words, and playing with letters, sounds and language) for the development of the child's thinking, learning and interaction skills is widely known. Still, only one half of ECEC staff reported that they read books and texts containing rich language to the children and played with language every day. ECEC staff and heads of ECEC centres must in future increasingly pay attention to offering a rich linguistic environment on a daily basis and organising experiences to all children.
4 The implementation of the contents and methods determined the National core curriculum that are still in the process of becoming established should be strengthened

The National core curriculum includes themes that did not exist in the previous curricula, which were recorded as recommendations. These include activities that strengthen multiliteracy, pedagogical documentation and activities encouraging exploration. Of all the evaluated areas, these new pedagogical activities were the area that was implemented most poorly. For example, some units do not offer activities that strengthen multiliteracy at all. There were also challenges and shortcomings in many places regarding the implementation of pedagogical documentation and activities encouraging exploration. Local curricula must explain in more concrete and clear terms what is meant in practice by activities that encourage exploration, pedagogical documentation and activities that strengthen multiliteracy.

5 The forming and continuity of friendships should be supported for each child

In ECEC, it should be ensured that each child can participate in shared play and games and that each child has the opportunity to form friendships. Some of the groups have children who do not have friends or who are not part of the play and games. The Act on Early Childhood Education and Care defines promoting each child’s interpersonal and interaction skills and ability to act in a peer group as the task of ECEC. The Act also requires that the continuity of the groups of children be safeguarded. This requires that the child can participate in shared play and activities, has friends and that more attention is paid to the continuity of the groups.

6 ECEC providers should develop the evaluation and monitoring of the ECEC curriculum implementation together with the staff

The evaluation of the quality of ECEC and the curriculum implementation is still developing. In future, ECEC providers must pay attention to the implementation of quality management and evaluation activities in accordance with the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care. The ECEC provider must also have the operating practices required for supporting the work of staff in cases in which the objectives set for ECEC are not reached. Similarly, the staff’s expertise in curriculum implementation and the factors supporting and hindering the implementation still mainly remains unused. Staff need training and concrete instructions on how curriculum implementation is evaluated. In addition to the level of pedagogical activities, the information obtained from the evaluation should be used at the level of ECEC providers.
7 Heads of ECEC centres should guide and support staff in following a working method that is in line with the National core curriculum in a versatile manner

Evaluation shows the important role of leadership and the local curriculum in the implementation of the National core curriculum. The responsibility of the head of the ECEC centre is to provide the opportunity for the staff to familiarise themselves during working hours with the documents that set the norms governing the work and to support the staff in discussing the content of the documents and how it can be transformed into concrete activities in the groups of children. The responsibility for the pedagogical work and for the implementation of the curriculum in the ECEC centre lies with the head of the centre. The ECEC provider must ensure that the structures and resources of the work of the heads of ECEC centres make pedagogical leadership possible.

8 The role of different professional groups in curriculum implementation should be clarified

The ECEC provider should guide the staff in questions related to the division of work between different professionals in such a way that the different focus areas and strengths in the tasks of the different professional groups can be benefited from. According to the evaluation results, the role of ECEC childcarers in curriculum implementation is partly unclear. In addition, childminders in family day care do not always find the ECEC curriculum a useful tool. Consideration should be given both at a national and at the local level to how the role of ECEC childcarers and the characteristics of family day care could be taken into consideration better.
9 The National core curriculum must be concretised clearly in the local curriculum

The evaluation showed that people working in ECEC are more familiar with the local curriculum than with the National core curriculum. If they found the local curriculum successful, their evaluation was also that the National core curriculum was implemented well. The problems of the local curricula were related to the half-finished state of the work, poor preparation and the content that had remained too abstract. ECEC providers should pay attention to familiarisation with the National core curriculum and the quality of the local curriculum.

10 Resources of ECEC must be safeguarded better

Not all of the aspects of the National core curriculum for early childhood education and care are realised as required by law. According to the evaluation, one of the key reasons for this are shortcomings in the structural conditions. The lack of staff is visible as a sense of rush, insufficient management structures as a poor flow of information from the level of the activities to the level of decision-making, and the lack of facilities and tools as the perception that it is not possible to implement the National core curriculum. Another reason for the inadequate implementation of the core curriculum is related to staff’s competence and coping. The fatigue and stress experienced by ECEC staff should be taken seriously as it is reflected in the quality of the activities as experienced by the child. The financial resources directed to ECEC must be estimated and increased as necessary so that the structural and process-related quality of ECEC can be enhanced and the discovered shortcomings rectified.

“ECEC providers’ and decision-makers’ shared political will to allocate sufficient resources to ECEC is a precondition for changing the ECEC operating culture in a direction where diverse pedagogical activities based on play, physical activity, arts and cultural heritage are carried out.” – The evaluation team
Diverse and continuous evaluation

The evaluation of early childhood education and care is a long-term process that is implemented in many contexts – in the everyday pedagogical activities both in teams and in each ECEC centre as well as at the level of decision-making in municipalities. Evaluation work requires patience as it is possible to develop only a moderate number of areas at the same time. It is indeed advisable to proceed one area at a time in the development work. For this reason, evaluation is a continuous process that will never be completed.

In this summary too, the described results and areas for development focus only on certain areas in the evaluation of early childhood education and care. For example, themes related to worldview education and mathematical thinking were excluded from the evaluation. When selecting the area of evaluation, attention should be paid to joint observations and reflecting on matters that could be the areas of development in our own environment.

The evaluation of early childhood education and care is diverse and can be implemented using a number of different methods. It is important to implement enhancement-led evaluation continuously at the national and local level as well as at the level of pedagogical activities.