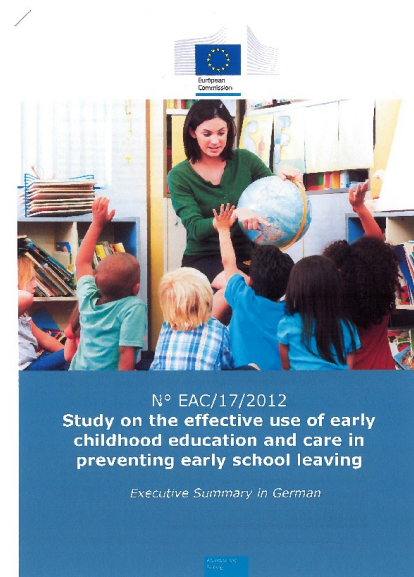




Putting ECEC into the learning continuum

*The main results of the Study on
effective use of ECEC in
preventing early school leaving
Commissioned by DG Education and
Culture*

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Specific aims of the study (ToR)

- link between high-quality ECEC services and low rates of ESL across EU28, EFTA and candidate countries;
- evidence from research and practice
- gaps in research
- recommendations for actions at the EU and national level

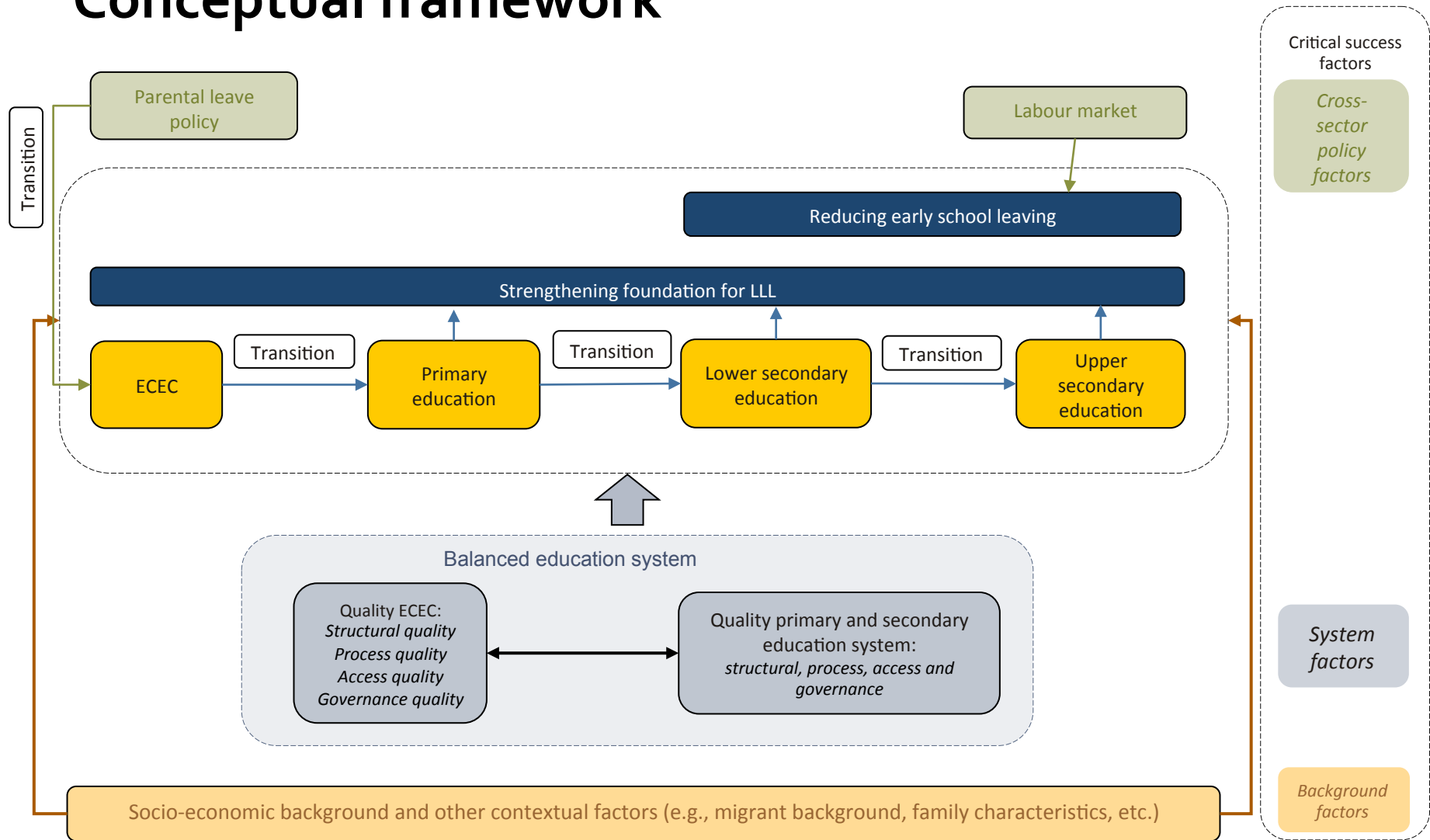


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Conceptual framework



Research Stages

Stage	Rationale	Description and methods
Research review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> links between quality ECEC and children's development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> desk research research mapping questionnaire for national experts 36 countries: 28 EU MS, 4 EEA MS and 4 candidate countries
Policy mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy towards ECEC and ESL Selection of the case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 European countries (28 EU MS, 4 EEA MS and 4 candidate countries) Policy mapping questionnaire
Case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities/challenges of the policies and measures; Identifying chain of factors influencing children's development ; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> desk research national experts used case study guidelines semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from ECEC, primary and secondary education, NGO and policy level; focus group discussions in AU, BE, CR, FL, FR, IT, LT , SP, SE, UK.

Results of the literature review

- 467 sources
- Review of international comparative studies on ECEC and its outcomes (OECD, UNESCO, OSI, etc.)
- Few longitudinal studies to identify patterns in the relationship between ECEC and educational achievement.
- Research literature (34 Eur. countries):
 - quality ECEC (governance + process + access + structural quality);
 - Role of ECEC in strengthening foundations for LLL
 - Transition policies and their effect on educational success
 - Factors of underachievement/early school leaving

Developmental delays before the age of six are difficult to compensate later in life because EC is a particular sensitive period for brain formation.

Nadeau et al, 2011



Importance of ECEC in preparing children for LLL

skills which are developed in early years persist into future periods *(Cunha et al. 2005; Camilli, 2010)*

exposure to high-quality education in the early years leads to better developmental outcomes *(Barnett, 1995; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000; Leseman, 2002, 2009; New and Cochran, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2008)*

Importance of ECEC in preparing children for LLL

More socially and emotionally mature *(Barnett, 1996; Puma et al., 2012; Zupančič and Kavčič, 2006; Kruszewska, 2011).*

Better prepared for school *(OECD, 2010; FaHCSIA, 2012; Dursun, 2009; Erkan and Kirca, 2010; Unutkan Polat, 2007; Gormley, Phillips and Gayer, 2008, OECD, 2010, FaHCSIA, 2012)*



Benefits of Quality ECEC for disadvantaged pupils ECEC

Closing the language gap

Reducing grade retention

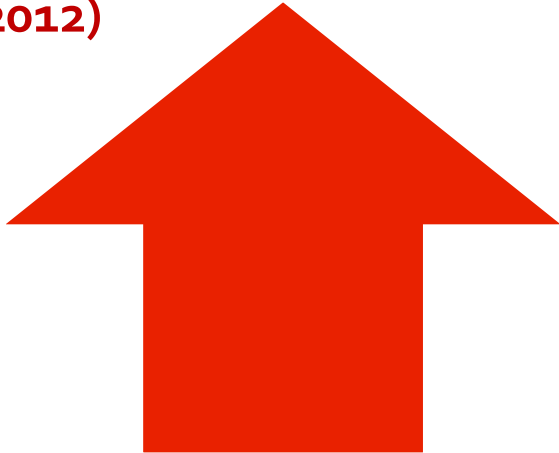
Better integration

Reducing risk behaviour

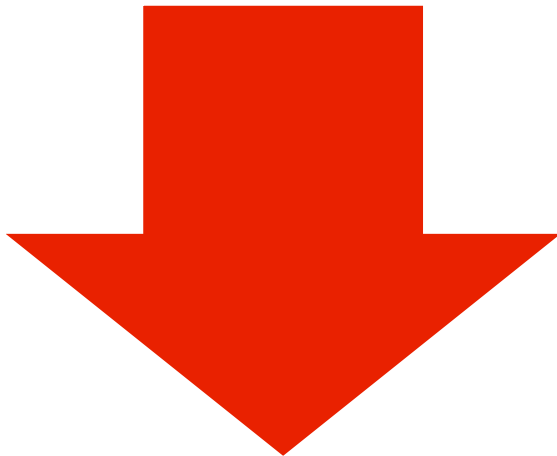
Physical and mental health

(Heckman, 2008; World Bank, 2006; C. Nelson, Thomas, & de Haan, 2006; Lynch, 2005; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997; Schulman, 2005; Kagitcibasi et al. 2009; Black et al., 2010; Dumas & Lefranc, 2012; Spiess, Büchel, & Wagner, 2003; Drange & Telle, 2010; Fredriksson et al., 2010).

Invisible (low or unqualified) assistants up to 40/ 50% of the workforce (CoRe, 2011; Van Laere, Peeters, Vandebroek, 2012)



Important role towards parents and children especially for disadvantaged groups(bridge function) and children with special needs



Few qualification requirements
Limited access to qualifying in-service training

Focus on practical caring tasks may jeopardise holistic pedagogical approach

Roles and tasks of assistants (Core, 2011, Van Laere, Peeters, Vandebroek, 2012)

- Caring role
 - = practical help and addressing physical needs
 - = responsible for individual well-being and emotional needs

“Assistants ensure that children learn to like school”

“She really cares”

“Too many children experience the transition to school as a culture shock, and each day brings too many challenges or wrong kinds of challenges” *(Borstrom, 2005)*

Transitions



Push factors for smooth transition

Positive or negative experience during transition to school (emotional and academic) is critical factor for children's future success and development *(Dockett and Perry, 2007; Dunlop and Fabian, 2007; Margetts, 2007; Peters, 2010; Woodhead and Moss, 2007; Einarsdottir, 2007; Moss, 2013).*

Children from low SES more difficulties in transition *(Alimisis et al. 2007, Neuman 2000, Stamm, 2012)*

Different visions of ECEC and primary teachers *(Hollerer, 2002)*

Outcomes of positive transition experience

Children perceive school as an important place, positive attitude to learning and positive expectations of their abilities to succeed at school

(Alexander and Entwisle, 1998; Dockett and Perry, 2007; Dunlop and Fabian, 2007; Margetts, 2007; Peters, 2010).

Neutralizing the negative effects of unequal opportunities at the entrance of compulsory education and promoting pupil's resilience

(Hayes, 2011, Vrinioti, Einarsdottir and Brostrom, 2010).

Successful transitions=school readiness?

- “School readiness does not reside solely in the child, but reflects the environments in which children find themselves” (Nolan et al., 2009).
- preschool skill-based assessments of children’s performance have proven to be poor predictors of subsequent school integration and achievement (La Paro and Pianta, 2001; Pianta and La Paro, 2003).



What are the competences, ESL lack ? Which of these competences could have been supported by ECEC earlier?

Cognitive characteristics		Non-cognitive characteristics	
Early school leaver	ECEC graduate	Early school leaver	ECEC graduate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor reading literacy • Poor verbal skills • Poor language skills • Poor analytic thinking, and abstract reasoning • Lack of problem solving skills • Lower IQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early literacy • language (receptive language and expressive language) • general knowledge numeracy (mathematics) • . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem, academic self-concepts and perception of self-efficiency • Lack of communication skills and constructive conflict management • Problems with focusing attention and staying on the goal. • Bad attitude towards teachers and school • Bored, too disruptive or too quiet in class. • Low motivation • Anxiety (peculiar to early school leaver) • Open to new experiences (peculiar to early school leaver) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-social behaviour (sharing, co-operation, compliance, peer sociability) • self-regulation (autonomy, social and emotional maturity, self-esteem) • learning dispositions (academic motivation, on-task behaviour, capacity for independent work, responsibility in doing tasks)

Strengths and weaknesses of ECEC system and transition to primary in Flanders

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Governance quality	0-3: new decree on Childcare 2.5-7: autonomy in teaching methods, staff curricula, pupil assesment, pedagogical projects- No national testing	Split system In some schools lack of school management capacity
Structural Quality	Holistic view: not only focused on learning New decree: Professionalisation of o-3 (2024) and Pedagogical framework Diversity in workforce 0 to 3; approach to inclusion children special needs	High staff turn over 0-3: level of qualification to low Child/staff : 0-3 and 2.5-4 to high Lack of diversity in workforce (ethnic and gender)- ; to many children in special education High rate of grade retention
Access quality	0-3: number of places increases despite of crisis 2.5-6: very high participation, fee free, free school choice, equal opportunities decree	2.5-6: in large towns: shortage of places Many schools not adapted to children with special needs and ethnic diversity
Process quality	Focus on well-being and belonging	Transitions not smooth; role of support persons not focused on increasing competences teachers

Discussion

Sustainability of positive outcomes for children depends on learning experiences in subsequent levels of education

- ECEC as essential part of quality education system
- Fragmentation of education system

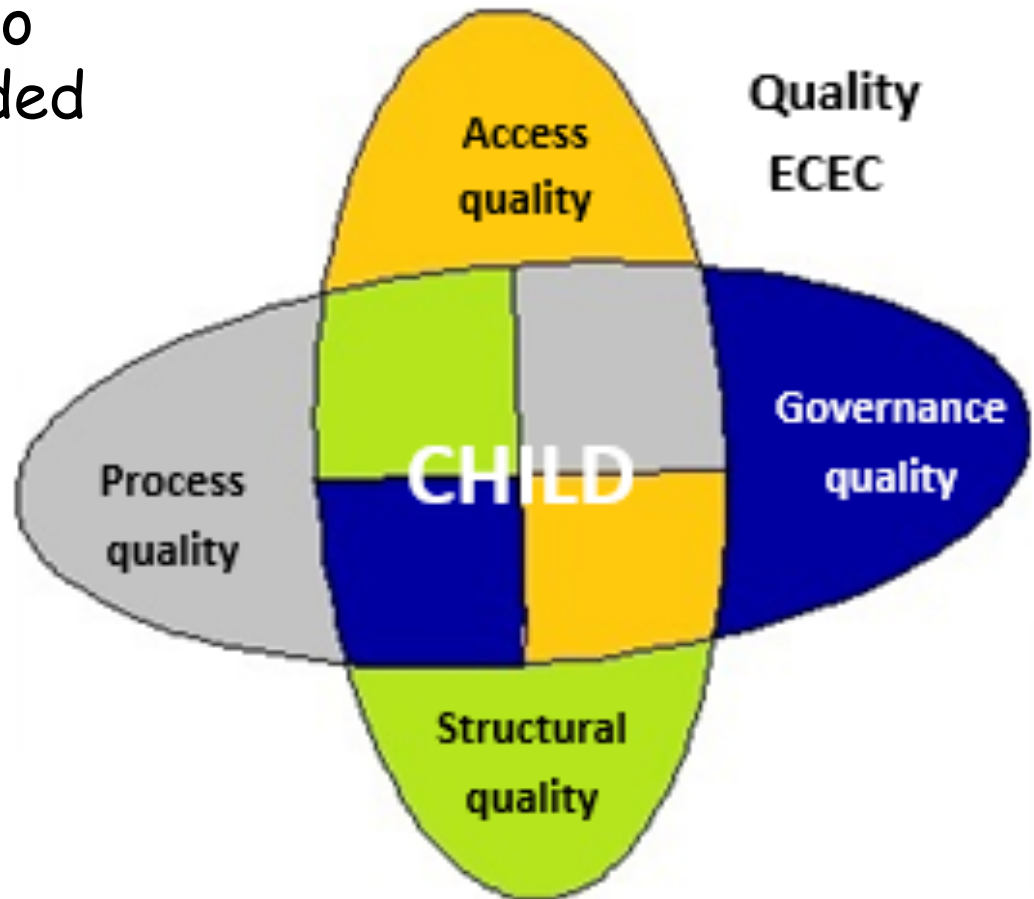


Key messages



Key message 1

Holistic approach to
quality ECEC is needed



Key message 2

Foundations laid in high-quality ECEC are necessary for success in primary and secondary education.



Key message 3

...but they are not sufficient, because acquired **competences can become invisible** in an environment that fails to translate them into **capabilities**.



Key message 4

Different components of an educational system need to be adequately **balanced** (i.e., ECEC is an important component of education system equally to all others)



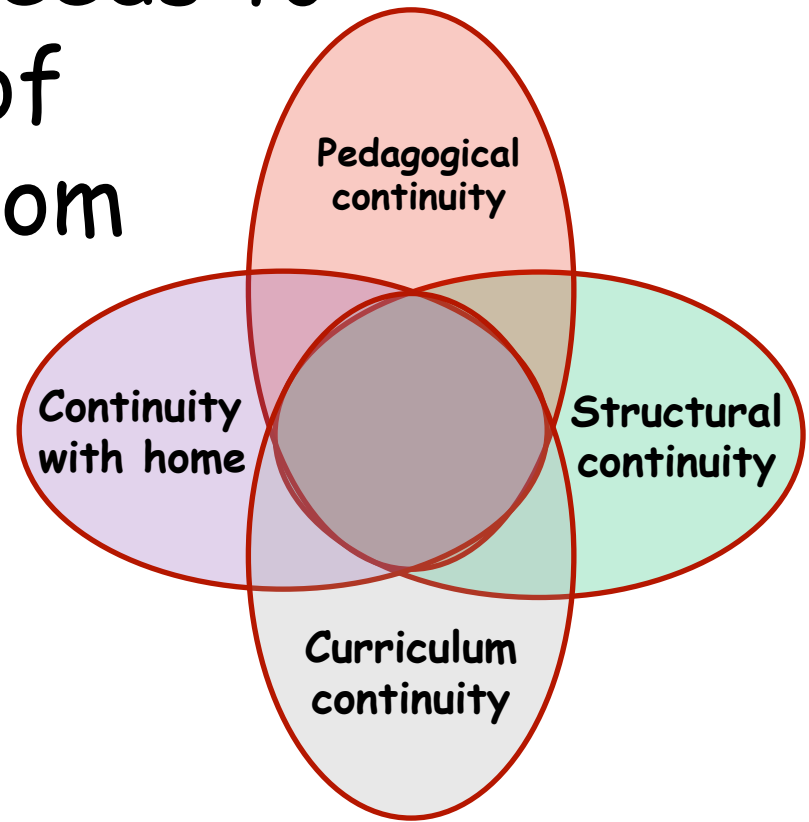
Key message 5

Balance of education system can be reflected in 4 dimensions:

- **Efficiency** (*no part of the system should waste or counteract the results of other parts of the system*);
- **Equity** (*conditions for success of one subgroup are not allowed to damage the prospects of another subgroup*);
- **Cohesion** (*with co-responsibility across the system*);
- **Representativeness** (*diversity of pupils is mirrored by the diversity of staff*);

Key message 6

Education system needs to **ensure continuity** of learning starting from early years



Two important concepts for children's development: especially for children with special needs

- **Competence:** measurable knowledge, skill, ability and/or other characteristic.
in EC difficult to identify measurable competences
- **Capabilities:** child's abilities/competences as a process and ECEC/primary and secondary education as a context that provides or limits opportunities to develop these abilities/competences.

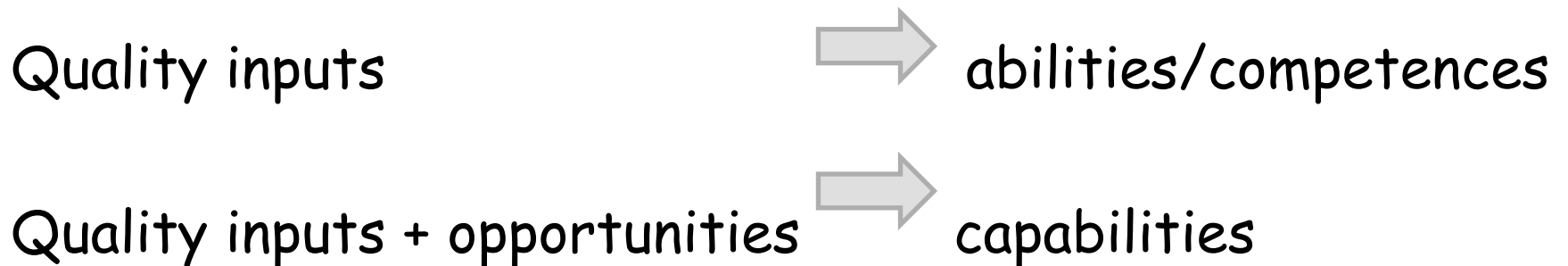




Discussion

Capabilities Approach (Saito, 2003) towards children's development and quality of education system

- It is not only about **quality inputs** (ECEC elements)..
- .. But also **opportunities** (provided by education system) to develop abilities/competences





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