



Enhancing Quality in Family Day Care

Information on Flanders and ECEC in Flanders in general

Belgium is a federal state with three communities (Flemish, French and German Community) and three regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels-Capital) next to the federal level.

Policy areas such as family services, childcare services, education, youth work and welfare are regulated at the community level.

The ECEC system in the Flemish Community is a **split** one, which means that different ministerial authorities are responsible for:

- provisions for children aged 0 to 3 years old: childcare sector / preventive family support and out of school care are under the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health, Family and Poverty Reduction. They are managed by the Flemish government agency Upbringing – Opgroeien (former Kind & Gezin),
- for children aged 2.5 - 6 years old: education sector, under the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training). Preschools are mostly part of elementary schools (2.5-12)

The professionals of the 2 sectors have different qualifications, working conditions, regulations, and different opportunities for professional development. This 'split' encourages the hierarchic division between 'education' and 'care' in ECEC centres. In line with this trend, in preschools (2,5-6 years old), normally childcare workers are partly employed to work for a couple of hours alongside the teacher and are most of the times responsible for caring tasks and for looking after the children outside the 'classroom moments' (during meals at midday, in the playground, during sleeping moments, and before and after school time).

The different professionals normally lack possibilities to reflect together on practice and build a coherent vision. However, In the last years, in the Flemish Community of Belgium efforts have been made on the level of policy and practice to promote an educare approach, with attention to the collaboration between childcare and preschools.

More information can be found in the Flemish country report and via http://www.seeepro.eu/English/pdfs/BELGIUM_Key_Data.pdf

