




ECEC teachers' possibilities to tackle inequalities

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Contemporary discourses
of ECE frame the
professional work in the
ECE institutions

They produce expectations
for the professional
competences and
practices




Investment and reducing the social inequality

ECE is seen as a worthwhile investment, both in terms of the economy and growth at the macro level and human capital and wellbeing at the individual level.

ECEC services are seen to influence the educational outcomes of children in a positive way. Moreover, existing research argues strongly for the beneficial effects of quality ECEC on children from low-income and ethnic minority families

Investing in ECE is argued for as a way of reducing the social inequality of children from divergent and unprivileged social backgrounds.



Lifelong learning and extensive attendance

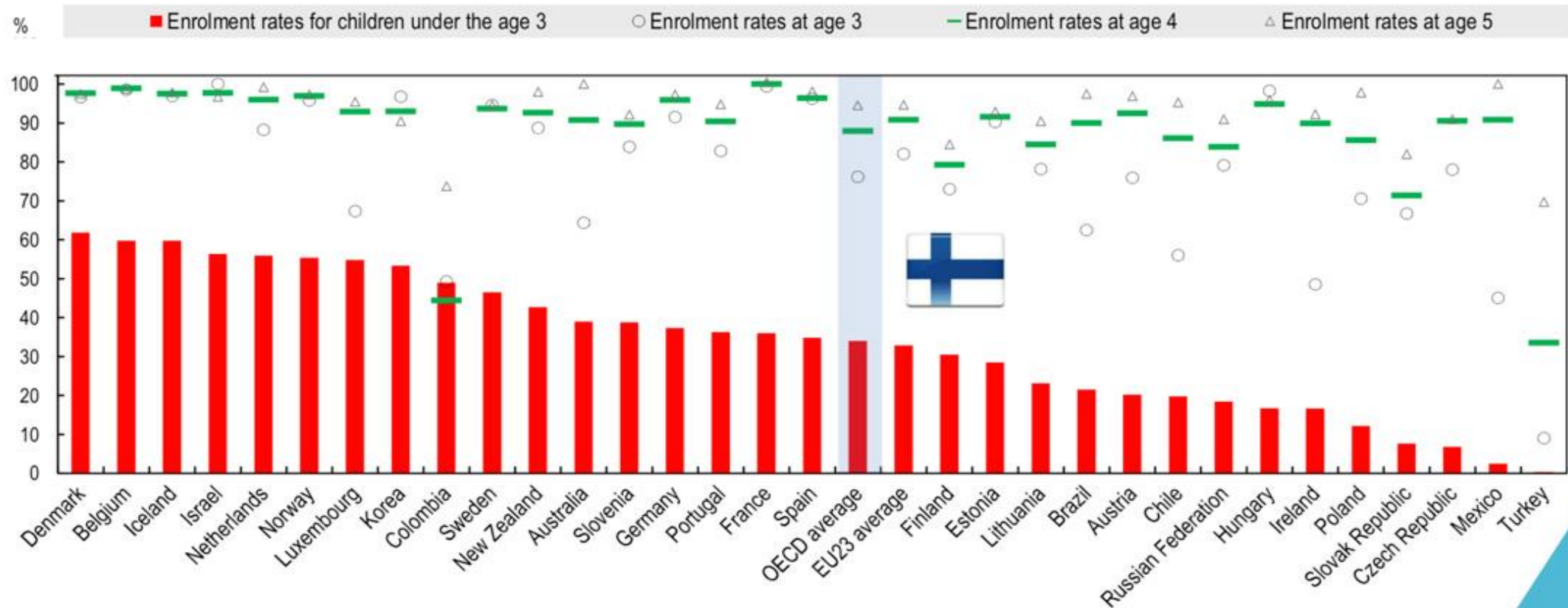
- ▶ ECE is considered, and justified, as the *first stage of children's lifelong learning and education*.
- ▶ ECE attendance is underlined because it is considered to create the foundations for children's later learning, and thus contributes to the knowledge economy, increased socio-economic mobility, and the prevention of marginalisation



Enrolment in early childhood education and care




Enrolment rates in early childhood education and primary education, by age (2016)



Source: OECD (2018), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*



Who attend ECEC services in Finland?

- ▶ Sosioeconomic differences, mother's educational level and position in the labour market play role in childrens' ECEC attendance
 - ▶ Regional variation: children's attendande may vary about 20% in various regions, also variation the types of services (centre-based/clubs/family day care) that are available in various regions
 - < cultural beliefs, local ECEC policies and service guidance
- 
- ▶ Only part of Finnish children are able to get pedagogical support from teachers



Work conditions matter

Challenges in Finland:

- Lack of qualified teachers in certain regions
- Constant changes in child groups
- Time-based fee system
- Increase of the for-profit private provision > some reported problems concerning the amount and responsibilities of pedagogical staff



- Teachers' possibilities to support children's development and learning have become more difficult



Work conditions matter

Possible strengths in Finland:

- New ECEC legislation: The new Act on Early Childhood Education and Care entered into force on 1 September 2018. The most significant amendments concern early childhood education and care staff and development of data production within early childhood education and care.
- New steering document: Guidelines and recommendations for evaluating the quality of early childhood education and care.
https://karvi.fi/app/uploads/2019/03/FINEEC_Guidelines-and-recommendations_web.pdf



Teacher qualifications and competences

Research based knowledge is required

- Learning processes
- Pedagogical processes
- Special education
- Partnership with parents
- partnership with other professionals
- Cultural sensitivity

Teachers' possibilities to tackle inequalities are produced at various systemic levels

International discourses and policies

Local cultures and ECEC policies

Center-level practices

Teacher-child interaction