

FRANCE

ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report author

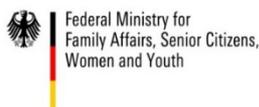
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1. ECEC governance

In France, the system of early childhood education and care is split between a childcare sector and an education sector. Provision for the under-threes (both centre-based and family day care) comes under the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Families, Childhood and Women's Rights (*Ministère des familles, de l'enfance et des droits des femmes*) and local authorities.

Centre-based settings for children up to 3 or 4 years of age include both full-time provision, mostly *crèches collectives* and *mini-crèches* for the under-threes, and in some cities *jardins d'enfants* for 2- to 4-year olds, and part-time sessional care (*haltes-garderies*) for the under threes. Some centres combine various options and are known as *établissements multi-accueils*. They can be publicly run, associative and parent-run. During Sarkozy's presidency (2007-2012), private *crèches* were authorised and these are currently increasing in number.

Pre-primary¹ education settings (*écoles maternelles*) for 2- to 6-year olds fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche*) and, although not compulsory, are part of the primary school system. *École primaire* is an umbrella term for both pre-primary (*école maternelle*) and primary school (*école élémentaire*) for children aged 2 to 11 years.

Out-of-school and leisure-time facilities come under the auspices of the Ministry of City, Youth and Sports and are organised by local authorities. They provide for children aged 2 to 11 years during the substantial lunch-break and during out-of-school hours in both pre-primary and primary school settings.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

In both the childcare and pre-primary education sectors the ECEC workforce is characterised by hierarchical structures. The childcare sector, where the majority of staff has a paramedical background, is also characterised by diversity in staffing requirements for core practitioners. In both sectors there is currently a shortage of professional staff.

2.1.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

The initial professional study requirements for all staff in the childcare sector are currently undergoing a series of reforms.

The main categories of staff working in centre-based settings for under-threes, mostly *crèches collectives* and *mini-crèches*, are:

Paediatric Nurses (*puéricultrices/puériculteurs*)

The 1983 initial professional studies curriculum for *puéricultrices* (consolidated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration in 2017), prepares them for medical consultations with mothers (prenatal to 16 months), as well as working as a centre leader in a *crèche* or open door

¹ To establish a degree of comparability between the country reports, the term 'pre-primary' is used in this report when describing the institutions that precede compulsory schooling, i.e. the *écoles maternelles*. In France, however, the *école maternelle* is termed 'pre-elementary school' since – together with the *école élémentaire* – it forms the primary school (*école primaire*) for 2- to 11-year olds.

centre for family day carers (*relais assistantes maternelles – RAM*) (Bosse-Platière 2008; Albérola and Olm 2011; Onyszko 2013). Currently there are debates under way as to whether the requirement for this paramedical profession should be changed from a four-year (3+1) qualification route to a Master’s degree (3+2).

Early Childhood Educators (*éducatrices/éducateurs de jeunes enfants*)

Curricular requirements for the professional preparation of early childhood educators for working in the childcare sector and, sometimes, in bridge classes with 2-year olds in *écoles maternelles* (Dupraz 1995; Villain and Gossot 2000), were updated in 2005. According to an inter-ministerial circular (2011), the minimum requirement was changed from a post-secondary qualification to a Bachelor’s degree (implementation still in progress). Currently, as for paediatric nurses, a Master’s degree as a requirement for entry into the profession is under discussion.

Auxiliary Paediatric Nurses (*auxiliaires de puériculture*)

The 2006 curricular requirements for this qualification were recently consolidated (Ministry of Health and Solidarities 2017). However, there are ongoing discussions regarding both level and content, and reforms have been proposed in a report commissioned by the Minister of Families, Childhood and Women’s Rights (Giampino 2016), which was the product of a broad consultation process with stakeholders in the childcare sector.

Early Childhood Care Assistants (*CAP petite enfance*²)

Created in 1991 for the education system, e.g. for the municipal workers who support teachers (*ATSEM - agent territorial spécialisé des écoles maternelles*), holders of this certificate are now also allowed to work in *crèches*. Although this qualification is on the same level as the qualification of the *auxiliaires de puériculture*, the *CAP petite enfance* certificate has not the same social recognition: some municipalities refuse to employ these workers, who do not as yet have an official name, in their *crèches*. Following the recommendations of the above-mentioned report (Giampino 2016), they have recently been termed as *accompagnants éducatifs petite enfance* (roughly translated: early childhood educational co-workers or accompanying persons). A reform of this qualification route is in progress (Ministry of National Education 2017a).

Table 1 gives a brief overview of key features related to the childcare staff categories. Core practitioners (responsible for a group of children or for the centre as a whole) are categorised according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see Box 1 below).

Table 1

France: ECEC staff in centre-based settings – childcare sector

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF Level/ISCED ³ level
<i>Puériculteur/ puéricultrice</i> Paediatric Nurse <i>Profile:</i> Health Care Professional	All kinds of <i>crèches (collectives, parentales, familiales)</i> Infant-toddler centres 0-3 years They also can work in: <i>Relais assistantes maternelles - RAM</i> Open door centres for family day carers and the	Centre head Early childhood co-ordinator	Intra utero - 16 years	3-year post-secondary qualification National diploma/Nurse (<i>Diplôme d’État d’infirmière</i>) PLUS 1 year course at private or public <i>école de puériculture</i> National diploma

² CAP = *certificat d’aptitude professionnelle* (Certificate of professional competence)

³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2012, 2014.

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF Level/ISCED ³ level
	<p>children in their care 0-3 years</p> <p>Medical consultations <i>Protection maternelle et Infantile - PMI</i> Mother and child protection centres for babies and older children 0 - 16 years</p> <p>Maternity and paediatric hospitals 0 - 16 years</p>			<p>Paediatric Nurse (<i>Diplôme d'État de puériculture</i>)</p> <p>ECTS points: not (yet) applicable EQF level: 6 ISCEC 2013-F: 0913/0922 ISCED 2011: 6</p>
<p><i>Éducateur/éducatrices de jeunes enfants</i> Early Childhood Educator</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional</p>	<p>All kinds of <i>crèches (collectives, parentales, familiales)</i> Infant-toddler centres 0-3 years</p> <p>Mobile services in rural areas</p> <p><i>Jardins d'enfants</i> Kindergartens 2-4/6 years (very few kindergartens altogether)</p> <p><i>Relais assistantes maternelles - RAM</i> Open door centres for family day carers and the children in their care 0-3 years</p> <p>Other services: <i>PMI</i> and remedial centres 0-16 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children's wards in hospitals and mother-child clinics - centres for psychosocial care - <i>Classes passerelles</i> in <i>écoles maternelles</i> Bridge classes in pre-primary settings 2-year olds 	<p>Core practitioner with group responsibility, centre specialist in early childhood education</p> <p>Centre head</p> <p>Early childhood co-ordinator</p>	0-6 years	<p>3-year post-secondary qualification at a private or public specialist training centre (<i>école d'éducateurs de jeunes enfants</i>), which can be part of a broader School of Social Work.</p> <p>National diploma as Early Childhood Educator (<i>Diplôme d'État d'éducateurs de jeunes enfants</i>)</p> <p>ECTS points: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCEC 2013-F: 0112/0922 ISCED 2011: 6</p>
<p><i>Auxiliaire de puériculture</i> Auxiliary Paediatric Nurse</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Health/Social Care Professional</p>	<p><i>Crèches</i> Infant-toddler centres 0-3 years</p> <p>They can also work in <i>PMI</i> (0-16 years) or maternity and paediatric hospitals (0-16 years)</p>	<p>Core practitioner in <i>crèches</i></p> <p>Co-worker in <i>crèches</i></p>	0-16 years	<p>Minimum entry age 17 years; entrance examination for enrolment at a private or public specialist training centre (<i>école d'auxiliaires de puériculture</i>), followed by a 10-month professional training.</p> <p>National Diplo-</p>

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF Level/ISCED ³ level
				ma/Assistant Paediatric Nurse (<i>Diplôme d'État d'auxiliaire de puériculture</i>) ECTS points: n/a ⁴ EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0913/0922 ISCED 2011: 3
<i>"CAP petite enfance"</i> Early Childhood Educational Co-Worker Pre-primary Educational Co-Worker (ATSEM)	<i>Crèches (collectives, parentales)</i> Infant-toddler centres 0-3 years <i>Écoles maternelles</i> Pre-primary education settings 2-6 years	Co-worker, in <i>crèches</i> Teacher's co-worker in <i>écoles maternelles</i>	0-6 years	2-year vocational secondary school course (<i>lycées professionnels</i>) Award: CAP-Certificate (early childhood) ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0913/0922 ISCED 2011: 3

2.1.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

Pre-primary Teacher (*professeur des écoles*)

The qualification route for Pre-primary and Primary School Teachers (*professeurs des écoles*) takes place, after the completion of a Bachelor's degree in a chosen discipline, at a University College for Teaching and Education (*ESPE - Ecole supérieure du professorat et de l'éducation*). Successful candidates are awarded a Master's degree in 'Professions of teaching, education and training' (*MEEF - métiers de l'enseignement, de l'éducation et de la formation*).

During the first year of the two-year Master's degree course, students have to complete a specific academic recruitment examination (*CRPE - concours de recrutement des professeurs des écoles*). Those who fail the *CRPE* are permitted to follow other qualification routes for occupations other than teaching in schools, for example in a different area of education such as adult education.

At the beginning of the Master's degree course, students choose between a range of different options which can be proposed by the universities associated with the *ESPE*, where they then attend courses in these key areas and receive mentoring support throughout the two years of study and during the preparation of their Master's thesis.

During the second year of the Master's degree course students are paid (1,700€ per month) to work half-time as a teacher while they continue studying. This recent measure of paying a salary aims to attract more students in order to solve the current problem of staff shortages (there is a current lack of teachers).

Since 2013 (Law 2013-595), Pre-primary and Primary School Teachers follow their initial professional studies in an *ESPE*, which have replaced the former university institutes responsible for the preparation of teachers (*instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres - IUFM*). In 2016, there were 32 university colleges (*ESPE*) in the 30 school districts (*académies*) in France.

⁴ n/a not applicable

The district rector organises the recruitment examination (*CRPE*) for the area and the students' workplace-based learning.

The ESPE university colleges are also open to parents with three children and high level athletes without a Bachelor's degree. Instead, the personal and professional skills of the applicants are evaluated through a specific validation process (*VAPP - Validation des Acquis Professionnels et Personnels*).

Qualified teachers are national civil servants. They can work with children (2-12) both in *écoles maternelles* and *écoles élémentaires*.

Auxiliary staff (*ATSEM*)

In *écoles maternelles*, Pre-primary Teachers are supported by auxiliary staff (*ATSEM, agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles*). These are local municipal civil servants specialised in working with pre-primary age children.

Each class for 2- to 3-year olds (*toute petite section, TPS*) and for 3- to 4-year olds (*petite section, PS*) generally has its own *ATSEM*, who helps the teacher, cleans the room, cares for the children (Garnier 2010) and is in charge of them during out-of-school hours. The *ATSEM* mediate between the pre-primary institutions and families (Garnier 2008). According to a report by the General Inspection of National Education (Bouysse 2011), there are significant disparities between municipalities, with some providing support for greater educational involvement and others continuing to regard *ATSEM* as the former *dames de service* whose only tasks were cleaning the classroom and helping children in the bathroom. Some cities have one *ATSEM* in each pre-primary class. In some settings, teachers and *ATSEM* can cooperate as complementary members of a team (Vasse 2008).

Table 2

France: ECEC staff in centre-based settings – pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*)

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF Level/ISCED level
<i>Professeur des écoles</i> (Primary and) Pre-primary Teacher <i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional	<i>Écoles maternelles</i> Pre-primary education settings 2-6 years <i>Écoles élémentaires</i> Primary schools 6-11 years	Core practitioner with group responsibility Centre head	2-11 years	2-year Master's degree (<i>MEEF</i>) at a university college (<i>ESPE</i>), including passing the <i>CRPE</i> examination (Entry requirement for <i>ESPE</i> = Bachelor's degree (3-year <i>licence</i> in any subject) or Parents with three children and high level athletes, relevant and accredited professional and personal skills) ECTS points: 120 (total including Bachelor requirement = 300) EQF level: 7 ISCED 2013-F: 0113 ISCED 2011: 7
<i>ATSEM - agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles</i> Municipal auxiliary staff	<i>Écoles maternelles</i> Pre-primary education settings 2-6 years working alongside the teacher or during	Co-worker with specialist qualification	2-6 years	2 years vocational secondary school (<i>lycées professionnels</i>) <i>CAP</i> /early childhood certificate plus an additional <i>ATSEM</i> training/examination

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF Level/ISCED level
	lunchtime and out-of-school hours			ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0119 ISCED 2011: 3

2.1.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Staff employed by the local authorities/municipalities complement the work of the *écoles maternelles* in out-of-school hours, i.e. before 8:30 and after 16:30, during the two-hour lunch break, on Wednesday afternoons and during the school holidays. On some days, schools close at 15:00, following a School Rhythm Reform laid down in the 2013 Orientation Law, but under debate following the new Macron government.

Leisure-time activities usually take place in the building and grounds of the *école maternelle*. The municipal staff in this sector comprise a leading playworker/leisure-time worker, playworkers assisted by *ATSEM* staff and, following the School Rhythm Reform, various external specialists (e.g. professionals for reading with young children, artists, sport educators). Little research has been carried out on the work in this sector. However, whereas at a macroscopic level the daily routines of school-time periods in *écoles maternelles* may appear to be relatively homogeneous (Brougère *et al.* 2008), these leisure-time periods are characterised by considerable disparities in quality from one city to another.

The qualification requirements for this sector are similar to those for work with pre-primary and primary school children. The most frequent award in this sector is the ‘Skills for the animator occupation’ certificate (*BAFA - brevet d’aptitude aux fonctions d’animateur*), and the requirement for lead animators is the ‘Skills for the function of directors of leisure-time centres’ certificate (*BAFD - brevet d’aptitude aux fonctions de directeur de centres de vacances et de loisirs*) (Ministry of City, Youth and Sports 2017).

These certificates are awarded by adult education centres recognised by the Ministry of City, Youth and Sports (*Ministre de la Ville, de la Jeunesse et des Sports*). They are not professional diplomas. Students often choose them because the qualification route is less expensive and the award easier to obtain. About 2,000 *BAFD* are awarded each year, and about 55,000 *BAFA*.

Working conditions are highly variable, depending on the particular city. Staff may work full-time or part-time, and have varied status and also varied (usually low) salaries.

Following the School Rhythm Reform, which introduced an increase in the number of out-of-school hours, official guidelines were provided to help municipalities with the organisation.

Table 3

France: ECEC staff in centre-based settings – out-of-school leisure time sector

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECT/EQF Level/ISCED level
<i>Animateur (BAFA)</i> Playworker/ Leisure Time Worker	<i>Accueil périscolaire</i> Out-of-school care provision 2-11 years <i>Centres de loisirs</i> Leisure-time centres 2-17 years	Core practitioner	2–12/17 years	<i>BAFA</i> Several weeks of training in three sessions at a training centre recognised by the Ministry of City, Youth and Sports, including work placements – within a maximum period of 30 months

Job title	Main ECEC work-place settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECT/EQF Level/ISCED level
				ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0922/1015 ISCED 2011: 3
<i>Animateur (BAFD)</i> Lead Playworker	<i>Accueil périscolaire</i> Out-of-school care provision 2-11 years <i>Centres de loisirs</i> Leisure-time centres 2-17 years	Lead member of staff in leisure time facilities	2-12/17 years	<i>BAFD</i> 3-4 years of work experience required and consolidating a final presentation – within a maximum of 4 years ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 4 ISCED 2013-F: 0922/1015 ISCED 2011: 4

Box 1

SEEPRO professional profile categories for core practitioners (adapted from Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010)

- *Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (specialist focus, 0– 6/7 years)
- *Pre-primary Education Professional* (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years)
- *Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional* (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- *Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (mainly broad focus, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- *Social Care/Health Care Professional* (sometimes early childhood focus, sometimes broad focus, including adults)

2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Qualifications

Following the Decree on care services for children under age 6 (Ministry of Work, Solidarity and Public Function 2010), the proportion of qualified staff in the childcare sector decreased from 60% to 50% (*CAP petite enfance* not included). This Decree provoked strong protests in the field (Ben Soussan 2010). In 2011, a collective childcare setting (*crèche collective*) employed on average 11 staff: eight to ten of them were civil servants or had a secure job; one to three worked on a part-time basis with a non-permanent contract. Most were low-qualified staff, and turnover was frequent (Albérola and Jaumier 2012). 90% of the infant/toddler settings employed at least one educator; 87% at least one assistant paediatric nurse, and 71% employed someone with the *CAP petite enfance* qualification. 50% of centre heads were qualified educators.

In the *écoles maternelles*, all teachers must be fully qualified, apart from those working part-time during the second year of their Master's study course (*MEEF*). The new generation of "*professeurs des écoles*" (with a Master's degree) replaced the previous "*institutrices*" (Ministry of National Education 2017b).

There are no national statistical data for the municipal auxiliary workers (*ATSEM*). However there are disparities, and thus inequalities between municipalities (Garnier 2008, 2016a). The

CAP petite enfance certificate is now a requirement for working as *ATSEM*, and older workers have the option of studying for this while working.

Centre heads in the leisure time sector are supposed to recruit qualified playworkers. Some playworkers have a full-time job, but most work part-time and in a precarious employment position. However, within the framework of the School Rhythm Reform and funding constraints in certain municipalities, a variety of additional external persons such as professionals from the cultural and sports sectors can be employed, and also unqualified persons.

Gender

In France, occupations which employ an equal number of men and women are few. Between 2009 and 2011, gender balance existed only in three sectors (law, administration, medicine). Moreover, 49.8% of the jobs occupied by women are concentrated in only 12 of the total 87 professional categories (Ministry of Women’s Rights 2016). However, in some regions, projects are carried out with the aim of changing attitudes towards an increasing balance: for example the project *Les métiers n’ont pas de sexe* (‘Jobs have no sex’), conducted in Alsace by the Information Centre on Women’s and Families’ Rights (Secrétariat d’État 2017) also includes projects located in the under-threes childcare sector (Dhorain and Stefan 2014).

Up until 1974, men were not permitted to work in *écoles maternelles*. While they remain a minority among teachers, they hold the majority of positions at higher hierarchy levels – such as the inspectorate (Ferrier 1997). In the *école maternelle* and *école élémentaire* together, there are 80% women in public schools and 98% in private schools. Gender stereotypes, fear of paedophile accusations and the relatively low status of this job may explain the lack of men (Fillod 2001; Jaboin 2010). Among the students preparing for the *CRPE*, 16% were men in 2007 (Paola 2007).

In the childcare sector, according to Jakoubovitch (2010) and Grenat and Nahon (2011), men represent only 1% of the *auxiliaires de puériculture*, 1.5% of the *puéricultures/puéricultrices* and 2.7% of the *éducateurs/éducatrices de jeunes enfants* (confirmed by Albérola and Olm 2011). Men themselves tend to avoid working directly with children and generally seek jobs with greater responsibilities (Grenat and Marquier 2009). Although in the education system as a whole, about 70% of the jobs are held by women, 70% of men occupy the administrative and management posts. There is also a tendency for women holding higher qualifications not to seek work directly with children (Cresson 1998).

Ethnicity

Statistics regarding the ethnicity of staff are not authorised in France. However, auxiliary staff in both the *écoles maternelles* (*ATSEM*) and the childcare sector (*auxiliaires de puériculture*, *CAP petite enfance*) often have a background of migration, particularly among the unqualified staff in *crèches*.

Table 4

France: Structural composition of ECEC workforce – childcare sector (0-3 years)

Staff categories	Year/proportion of workforce
Staff with a specialist three-year (or longer) early years higher education degree	2011* : <i>Puéricultrices/puériculteurs</i> : 4% <i>Éducatrices/éducateurs</i> (centre heads only): 16% Only 1 or 2 <i>éducatrices</i> work directly with children, depending on the size of the <i>crèche</i> . An increasing number are taking on the position of Centre Head.
Staff with a specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	Not applicable

Staff categories	Year/proportion of workforce
Staff with a specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	2011**: <i>Auxiliaires de puériculture</i> : 36% <i>CAP petite enfance</i> : unknown, depends on the location
Non-qualified or minimally qualified staff	Approx. 50% (estimated, and including <i>CAP petite enfance</i> workers) Variations among municipalities, public and private sectors
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists) who work on site on a regular basis	Paediatrician (one half day/week, compulsory) who examines the babies on entry and follows them up. Psychologist and/or Psychomotor therapist (one half day/week, non-compulsory, but frequently requested)
Male practitioners	2011: <i>Puériculteurs</i> : 1.5% <i>Éducateurs de jeunes enfants</i> : 2.7% <i>Auxiliaires de puériculture</i> : 1.0%
Staff with a BME (black and minority ethnic) background or a 'background of migration'	No national statistical data available. Estimated share of staff from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa relatively high**.

Sources: *Gresy and Georges 2012; **Ulmann et al. 2015.

Table 5

France: Structural composition of ECEC workforce – pre-primary education sector (2-6 years)

Staff categories	Year/proportion of workforce
Staff with a pre-primary and primary education higher education teaching degree	2014/15: 97%* with a Master's degree (<i>Professeurs des écoles</i>)
Staff with a specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary, post-secondary)	<i>ATSEM</i> (paid by municipalities): from one per class to none (big variations between cities); no national statistics available.
Unqualified staff	None
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists) who work on site on a regular basis	School paediatricians (1,200 nationwide) and school nurses (7,000 nationwide) work in several <i>écoles maternelles</i> and <i>écoles élémentaires</i> at the same time (health promotion, early detection of developmental difficulties, promoting inclusive work). They visit settings regularly. Further specialists (psychologists, speech therapists) are requested if necessary through the <i>RASED</i> ⁵ .
Male practitioners	In pre-primary settings and elementary schools* Public sector: 20% Private sector: 2% 2007: 16% of students preparing for the CRPE exam**
Staff with a BME (black and minority ethnic) background or a 'background of migration'	No national statistics available – staff with a background of migration tend to work in areas with a high minority language population.

Source: * Ministry of National Education 2017b. ** Paola 2007.

Table 6

France: Structural composition of ECEC workforce – leisure-time sector (2-6 years)

Staff categories	Year/proportion of workforce
Staff with a specialist three-year (or longer) early years higher education degree	None
Staff with a specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary, post-secondary)	No national statistics available
Unqualified staff	No national statistics available
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists) who work on site on a regular basis	None

⁵ *RASED (Réseaux d'aides spécialisées pour enfants en difficulté* = networks of teachers and school psychologists to support children in need. If necessary, the psychologist can inform the parents about external speech therapists, clinical psychologists, etc.

Staff categories	Year/proportion of workforce
Male practitioners	No national statistics available, but it is estimated that more male staff work in the leisure-time sector than in the childcare and pre-primary education sectors.
Staff with a BME (black and minority ethnic) background or a 'background of migration'	No national statistics available, but it is estimated that more staff with a BME/migration background work in the leisure-time sector than in the childcare and pre-primary education sector

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes

Diversity is the main characteristic of the different job categories in care and education sectors, both regarding the duration of IPS (from some months to a Master's degree) and the content (from a paramedical to an educational orientation).

3.1.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

The care sector comprises a majority of workers with low-level IPS. The medical past of this sector remains visible through the predominance of *auxiliaires de puériculture* (as well as the *puéricultrices* who are heads of *crèches*). Educators (*éducatrices*) are still in the minority, but in recent years it has become more common for them to direct an infant-toddler centre/*crèche*.

Table 7

France: Paediatric Nurse

Job title in French: <i>Puéricultrice/puériculteur</i> Profile: Health/Social Care Professional
<p>Entry requirements: University entrance requirement (<i>baccalauréat</i>); <i>Diplôme d'État d'infirmière</i> (state-registered nurse, 3 years) or <i>Diplôme d'État de sage-femme</i> (state-registered midwife, 4 years); qualifying examination</p> <p>Professional studies: 1 year at a specialised vocational college (<i>école de puériculture</i>)</p> <p>Award: National diploma/paediatric nursing (<i>Diplôme d'État de puériculture</i>)</p> <p>ECTS points: n/a</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0913/0922</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main (ECEC) workplaces: Infant-toddler centres (<i>crèches collectives, parentales, familiales</i>); registered family day care networks; mother and child protection centres (<i>PMI - Protection maternelle et infantile, 0- 15/16 years</i>); maternity and paediatric hospitals (0- 15/16 years)</p>

Table 8

France: Early Childhood Educator

Job title in French: <i>Éducatrice/Éducateur de jeunes enfants</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
<p>Entry requirements: University entrance requirement (<i>baccalauréat</i>) or equivalent + entrance examination or qualification as <i>auxiliaire de puériculture</i>, <i>CAP petite enfance</i> and 3 years' work experience plus entrance examination</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years at a specialist training centre (<i>école d'éducateurs de jeunes enfants</i>), which may be private or public and can be part of a more general School of Social Work.</p> <p>Award: National diploma/early childhood educator (<i>Diplôme d'État d'éducateur de jeunes enfants</i>)</p> <p>ECTS points: 180</p>

Job title in French: <i>Éducatrice/Éducateur de jeunes enfants</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional
EQF level: 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112/0922 ISCED 2011: 6 Main (ECEC) workplaces: Infant-toddler centres (<i>crèches collectives, parentales, familiales; haltes garderie</i>); Kindergartens (<i>jardins d'enfants, 2-4/6 years</i>); family day care networks (<i>RAM - relais assistantes maternelles</i>); mother and child protection centres (<i>PMI - Protection maternelle et infantile, 0-15/16 years</i>); bridge classes in pre-primary institutions (<i>classes passerelles, 2-3 years</i>)

Table 9

France: Auxiliary Paediatric Nurse

Job title in French: <i>Auxiliaire de puériculture</i> Profile: Health/Social Care Professional
Entry requirements: Minimum age 17 years; having completed the first 4 years of secondary school; successful completion of an entrance exam; followed by a 10-month professional training in a private or public specialist training centre (<i>école d'auxiliaires de puériculture</i>) Professional studies: 10 months at an <i>école d'auxiliaires de puériculture</i> Award: National certificate (<i>Diplôme d'État d'auxiliaire de puériculture</i>) ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0913/0922 ISCED 2011: 3 Main (ECEC) workplaces: Infant-toddler centres (<i>crèches collectives, parentales, familiales</i>), registered family day care networks; mother and child protection centres (<i>PMI - Protection maternelle et infantile, 0- 15/16 years</i>); maternity and paediatric hospitals (0- 15/16 years)

Table 10

France: Early Childhood Educational Co-worker

Job title in French: <i>CAP petite enfance/accompagnants éducatifs petite enfance</i>
Entry requirements: Minimum age 17 years, having completed the first 4 years of secondary school Professional studies: 2 years at a vocational secondary school (<i>lycée professionnel</i>) Award: Certificate in Early Childhood (<i>CAP petite enfance</i>) ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 3 Main ECEC workplaces: Infant-toddler centres (<i>crèches collectives/parentales</i>) 0-3 years

3.1.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles, 2-6 years*)

Since the inclusion of *écoles maternelles* into primary school education, Pre-primary Teachers no longer have a specialist qualification for working with children under 6 years of age. The curriculum for the Master's study programme applies both to pre-primary and primary education, whereby the orientation is strongly didactic and instructional. Pre-primary Education Assistants (*ATSEM*) have a much lower level of qualification (see *Table 12*).

Table 11

France: Pre-primary Education Teacher

Job title in French: <i>Professeur des écoles</i>
Profile: Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional
Entry requirements: 3-year university degree course award in any subject area (<i>licence</i>)
Professional studies: 2-year course of studies, including a recruitment examination (CRPE), at a higher education college for teachers with university status (<i>ESPE - École supérieure du professorat et de l'éducation</i>)
Award: Master's degree <i>MEEF (Métiers de l'enseignement, de l'éducation et de la formation)</i> and Qualified Teacher Status diploma
ECTS points: 300 (including 180 for the BA level degree as entry requirement)
EQF level: 7
ISCED 2013-F: 0113
ISCED 2011: 7
Main ECEC workplace: Pre-primary education (<i>école maternelle</i> , 2 to 6 years); Elementary school (<i>école élémentaire</i> , 6 to 11 years)

Table 12

France: Pre-primary Education Co-Worker – ATSEM

Job title in French: <i>ATSEM - agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles</i>
Entry requirements: Minimum age 17 years, having completed the first 4 years of secondary school
Professional studies: 2 years vocational secondary school (<i>lycées professionnels</i>) or equivalent with CAP certificate and ATSEM examination
Award: Early childhood certificate (<i>CAP petite enfance</i>) and qualified ATSEM status
ECTS points: n/a
EQF level: 3
ISCED 2013-F: 0011
ISCED 2011: 3
Main ECEC workplace: Pre-primary education (<i>écoles maternelles, centres de loisirs</i> , 2 to 6 years)

3.1.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

In this sector, only limited professional preparation is required. Playworkers are mostly students.

Table 13

France: Playworker/leisure time sector

Job title in French: <i>Animateur/animateur</i>
Entry requirements: Minimum age 17 years (lead playworkers: 21 years).
Professional studies: Several weeks, including work placements, at a training centre recognised by the Ministry of City, Youth and Sports; (lead playworkers: 2 theoretical sessions and 2 work placements within a maximum of 4 years) and a general training session (9-10 days)
Award: Playworker certificate (<i>BAFA -brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur</i>); Lead playworker certificate (<i>BAFD - brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions de directeur de centres de vacances et de loisirs</i>)
ECTS points: n/a
EQF level: 3
ISCED 2013-F: 0922
ISCED 2011: 3
Main ECEC workplace: Out-of-school provision (3 to 11 years); leisure-time centres (2 to 11 years), holiday centres

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes

Diverse competencies are required for each profession, linked to the specificities of the diverse curricula (care or teaching/instruction or animation) in IPS programmes. The complementarity of these different occupations and professions is confirmed in Giampino's report (2016), which recommends maintaining the different job categories but increasing the quality of the lowest IPS levels and working towards a more coherent and holistic system with a common core.

3.2.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

Table 14

France: Competencies and curricular areas in the childcare sector

Job title	Competency specifications	Curricular areas
<i>Puéricultrices/ puériculteurs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know how to care for children and guarantee conditions for their health and safety in a variety of settings - To promote children's health through preventative approaches - To support parents and care professionals - To lead crèches with an multi-professional staff team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child from intra utero to 15 years (150 h) - Illness and medico-socio-educational prevention (150 h) - Social and familial environment (150 h) - Professional expertise, regulations, management (90 h) - Workplace-based training (hospital, <i>crèches</i>, <i>PMI</i>) (710 h) - Pedagogical reflection about workplace training (100 h) - Individual studies (150 h) <p>A mixture of course work, practical placement, analyses of placement experiences</p> <p>Total = 1,500 hours</p>
<i>Éducateurs/ éducatrices de jeunes enfants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know how to care for children in an holistic way - To act as an agent of the child's socialisation, requiring ethics, knowledge, techniques and articulation within the social and cultural context of the families - To assume a specific position as a specialist of early childhood in the area of the social work: to fight risks of exclusion, prevent difficulties, facilitate construction of social links and parental support - To assume an educational and social expertise function for early childhood as a participant in local policies: to formulate families' needs, develop partnerships <p>These actions require skills to work in a team, to elaborate, implement and evaluate educational and social plans, to develop partnerships with actors in the social and health sectors as well as with schools.</p> <p><i>Year 1:</i> Identity construction in progress (observe, understand, adapt)</p> <p><i>Year 2:</i> Appropriation and responsibility (analysis and planning of educational strategies)</p> <p><i>Year 3:</i> Affirmation and confirmation</p>	<p>The State prescribed a curriculum in 2005 (focused on the child), but each training centre interprets it in different ways. Some focus more on psychoanalytic approaches, some on parents and diversity, etc., whereas others also begin to include new issues, such as gender issues.</p> <p>The course is structured in four main curricular areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcoming and accompanying the young children and their families (400 h) - Educational activities with young children (600 h) - Professional expertise and ways of communicating (250 h) - Institutional and inter-institutional dynamics and partnerships <p>Total = 3,600 hours (3 years), comprising 1,500 hours of coursework and 2,100 hours of workplace based training</p>

Job title	Competency specifications	Curricular areas
	(professionalism as a complex construct)	
Auxiliaires de puéricultures	8 competencies corresponding to 8 modules (see next column). Their training is shared with <i>aides soignantes</i> (nursing assistants): half of the training is focused on the social care of young children and half on nursing duties.	<p>Module 1: Daily activities with a young child (175 h)</p> <p>Module 2: Clinical life of a young person (70 h)</p> <p>Module 3: Child nursing (140h)</p> <p>Module 4: Ergonomics (35 h)</p> <p>Module 5: Relationships and communication (70 h)</p> <p>Module 6: Room hygiene (hours not mentioned)</p> <p>Module 7: Transmission of information (35 h)</p> <p>Module 8: Organisation and management (35 h)</p> <p>Plus: 6 placements (140 h each) in maternity hospitals, paediatric hospitals, <i>crèches</i>, services with children with special needs and disabilities</p> <p>Total = approx. 1,400 hours/10 months</p>
CAP petite enfance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being able to ensure young children's wellbeing, care, body hygiene, nutrition, safety - Contributing to their education and socialisation - Being responsible for the cleaning of the premises 	<p>General education courses in a vocational secondary school (2 years) such as French, maths, etc. and also specialised courses (biotechnology, health and medico-social topics, nutrition, techniques of play work, cleaning, first aid, etc.</p> <p>plus 420 hours of workplace-based training in <i>crèches</i>, kindergartens/preschools, leisure centres</p>

3.2.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

Table 15

France: Competencies and curricular areas in the pre-primary education sector

Job title	Competency specifications	Curricular areas
Professeurs des écoles	<p>For teaching in both <i>écoles maternelles</i> and primary schools</p> <p>The competencies are defined in official documents (Ministry of National Education 2013a).</p> <p>Common competence specifications for all teachers throughout the education system are (being able to...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - share republican values (liberty, equality, fraternity, secularity, rejection of all discriminations) and to act according to the main principles of the French education system and rules of the school; - know each child and his/her learning processes; - take into account children's diversity; - accompany children in their learning; - act as a responsible educator according to ethical principles; - master the French language; - use another language; 	<p>In general, the focus of the two-year preparation is on didactics, with only limited time allocated to early childhood education, relationships with parents, etc.</p> <p>Master MEEF:</p> <p>Year 1 (489 hours) (60 ECTS points) The main focal points during the first year are the examination (<i>CRPE</i>) and familiarisation with the work of a teacher (courses on didactics and practices):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subjects/learning areas and didactics in the primary school (291 h) - Work context (88 h) - Foreign language (20 h) - Placement (observed and accompanied teaching procedures) (30 h) <p>plus 4 weeks placement in a school (observation and accompanied practices)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to research procedures (optional) (60 h) <p>Year 2 (270 hours) (60 ECTS points) If they have passed the <i>CRPE</i>, students receive a</p>

Job title	Competency specifications	Curricular areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use elements of the digital culture; - contribute to the activities of the educational community; - cooperate with pupils' parents; - cooperate with the school's partners; - involve oneself in an individual and collective process of professional development; <p>plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - master the various subject contents and their didactics; - assess pupils' learning processes and outcomes. 	<p>salary of 1,700€/month in order to be able to continue their studies and work part-time in a school.</p> <p>Subjects/learning areas and didactics in the primary school (80 h)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign language (15 h) - Articulation of knowledge for working in <i>école maternelle</i> and <i>élémentaire</i> (45 h) - Placement (responsibility for a group of children) (70 h) <p>plus working part-time (50%) in a school with responsibility for a group of children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to research procedures, master's thesis (60 h) <p>During the two years, students have to choose between a number of options for in-depth study such as the inclusion of children with disabilities, literature for children, etc. which comprise 120 hours, including the Master thesis. A dissertation concludes the <i>MEEF</i>.</p> <p>A mixture of lecturers teach in <i>ESPE</i>. These include experienced teachers, heads, teacher educators, inspectors, university professors. The overall approach includes course work, placements with accompaniment and supervision, research, coaching.</p> <p>The <i>MEEF</i> also includes common courses for teachers (pre-primary, primary, secondary) and educational counsellors (secondary schools): secularism and Republican values, professionalism, combating discrimination, child psychology, public laws, inclusive schools, sociology of the audience, management of diversity, orientation, difficulties at school, cognitive styles, management of conflicts and violence, combating gender stereotypes, etc.</p>
ATSEM - agent-territorial – spécialisé des écoles maternelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying children needs (from 2 years of age upwards) - supporting children's autonomy - applying rules of safety and hygiene - preparing pedagogical support following the teacher's instructions - participating in class activities under the guidance of the teachers - ensuring that cleaning rules are followed 	<p><i>CAP petite enfance</i>:</p> <p>Both general education courses in a vocational secondary school (2 years) such as French, maths, etc. and specialised courses such as biotechnology, health and medico-social topics, nutrition, techniques of animation, cleaning, first aid, etc.</p> <p>plus</p> <p>420 hours of workplace-based training in <i>crèches</i>, kindergartens/preschools, leisure centres.</p>

3.2.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Table 16

France: Competencies and curricular areas in the leisure-time sector

Job title	Competency specifications	Curricular areas
Animateur Play-worker/ Leisure time worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring physical and moral safety - Participating in the implementation of the pedagogical plan organised by the lead <i>animateur</i> - Establishing trusting relationships with the children - Developing welcoming relationships among children, families and staff 	<p>Course with 3 sessions (during school holidays):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic training (8-9 days) - Work based learning (14 days) - Reflexion session (minimum 6 days)
Lead	- Developing the skills needed to lead a	Depends on the specific programme of the

Play-worker	centre and to prepare a pedagogical plan - Learning to assume responsibility for a centre (staff motivation, organisational and management tasks)	training institution. <i>Examples:</i> administrative and financial management; recruitment; preparing pedagogical plans; preparing reports based on statistics and on qualitative data; motivation of staff; leading staff meetings; animators' training, establishing partnerships, etc.)
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3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Despite a prevailing discourse of lifelong learning, possibilities for horizontal or vertical movement are limited, particularly between the three sectors, which are seen as separate universes (Galtier 2013). Possibilities of system permeability for the lowest qualified staff are particularly limited. In the childcare sector, any procedures aimed to support movement within the sectors depend mostly on the municipality's training policy and demand high individual motivation and perseverance. Private sector staff have even fewer opportunities.

However, in terms of IPS, several possibilities are provided for facilitating access.

Giampino's report (2016) recommended a certain common core in the IPS of the diverse professionals working in the care sector.

3.3.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

Non-qualified workers can follow a *CAP petite enfance* course by using either the professional in-service training provided by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research for the network of public-sector institutions (*GRETA - groupement d'établissements publics d'enseignement* or a kind of distance learning course provided by the national centre for distance education (*CNED - centre national d'enseignement à distance*), or through an assessment of prior learning experiences (*VAE - validation des acquis de l'expérience*). On completion of the *CAP petite enfance* the student is eligible to register for the qualification routes as Assistant Child Nurse (*école d'auxiliaires de puériculture*) or Pre-primary Assistant in *écoles maternelles* (*ATSEM*).

Some training centres offer alternative qualification routes for salaried students (educators) or students in apprenticeship (*auxiliaires de puériculture*) which are reasonably priced and open up possibilities for career advancement, for instance from *auxiliaire de puériculture* to *éducatrice de jeunes enfants* in a sector where possibilities for vertical job mobility are limited. For instance, a training centre in Lyon (*ESSSE*) has developed partnerships with the *Collège Coopératif Rhône-Alpes* (specialised in the inclusion of workers with limited initial education) and takes in 85 regular students per year and an additional 30 salaried students wishing to become *éducateurs de jeunes enfants* (Thollon Behar and Mony 2016).

The curriculum for the IPS of *éducateurs de jeunes enfants* includes some areas which are comparable to other social work, which facilitates a change between occupations.

Moreover, educators and paediatric nurses with several years of experience as centre heads can apply to become municipal coordinators of *crèches* or municipal early childhood coordinators. Upon successful completion of a public exam at local level, they also can assume responsibility for a municipality's early childhood services.

3.3.2 Pre-primary education sector (écoles maternelles, 2-6 years)

The university-affiliated colleges for teaching and education (*ESPE*), where the initial professional studies of teachers take place, are also open to parents with three children and high level athletes. This was introduced as a measure of recognition, and also of enhancing the attractiveness of the profession in a context of staff shortages.

Some ESPE may offer students the chance during the first year of the Master MEEF course of study to alternate between *ESPE* and workplace, receiving a salary for 13 weeks and spending 268/270 hours in the ESPE. Students who already hold a Master's degree in a different discipline and have successfully passed the *CRPE* exam only need to spend half of the above-mentioned time working in a school and attend only 170 hours of courses.

Depending on their experience and evaluation by inspectors, pre-primary and primary school teachers (*professeurs des écoles*) can choose where they want to teach and also switch to adult education within a network of public institutions (*GRETA - groupement d'établissements publics d'enseignement*).

With additional qualifications teachers can become a centre head, a teacher educator, a pedagogical counsellor, a special needs teacher, a school psychologist, an inspector of national education, or teacher at a secondary school.

Few possibilities for career advancement are offered for auxiliary staff (*ATSEM*).

3.3.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Working as a playworker/ animator is often a student job. Some, after having obtained a first degree, enrol at an *ESPE* to study for the teaching profession. For career advancement in the sector, additional qualifications in the field of youth and sport are necessary (e.g. *BPJTEP : Brevet professionnel de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et du sport*, or *DEJEPS : Diplôme d'État de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et du sport*).

With additional qualifications, playworkers can become a lead animator, a municipal childhood/youth co-ordinator, the director of a municipal childhood/youth service office, or act as a project co-ordinator in certain organisations.

4. Workplace-based learning in the initial professional studies (IPS) of core practitioners

All initial professional study courses in early childhood care, education and social work include workplace-based learning experiences.

4.1 Childcare sector (0-3)

Paediatric Nurses: During the one-year course at a specialised vocational college (*école de puériculture*), about 30 of which are recognised by the Ministry of Health, clinical workplace learning (in hospitals, *crèches*, etc.) accounts for 700/710 hours. 100 hours of reflection on the work placement experience are included in the 660 hours dedicated to theoretical and practical courses; 140 hours are spent in the IPS institution and are specifically related to their workplace experiences (Thollon-Behar and Mony 2011).

Early Childhood Educators: About 40 specialist IPS centres (*écoles d'éducateurs de jeunes enfants*) offer 2,100 hours of workplace-based training for early childhood educators in addition to 1,500 hours of regular courses as well as pedagogical support and reflection of the practicum (Thollon-Behar and Mony 2011).

Assistant Paediatric Nurses: Practical placements take place during the ten months of qualifying at a specialist IPS centre (*école d'auxiliaires de puériculture*). The practicum is divided into six periods of 140 hours each, of which 130 hours are spent in hospitals, Red Cross institutes, public centres like *GRETA (groupement d'établissements publics d'enseignement)* and centres for apprenticeship learning. The specific organisation depends on the individual school and the staff involved in IPS (Thollon-Behar and Mony 2011).

Research has highlighted the rather technical approach of these IPS programmes (e.g. Ulmann *et al.* 2015). However, the links between course work and field work and the pedagogical accompaniment through tutors and mentors appear to be more successful if students study alongside their job or are engaged in a “dual system” of alternating between vocational education and training. Moreover, research conducted by Thollon-Behar and Mony (2011, 2016) has illustrated reciprocal benefits both at the workplace and in the study course. They emphasise the special attention devoted to analyses of daily practices as a method of constructing the relation between theory and practice, while arguing that three decades of experience with this approach show that the four dimensions of the ‘competent system’ described in the CoRe research report (Urban *et al.* 2011) are addressed: individual level, institutional and team level, inter-institutional level and political level.

Auxiliary staff: During their two years at a vocational secondary school (*lycée professionnel*), auxiliary staff in crèches spend 420 hours of workplace-based training in *crèches*, kindergartens/preschools or leisure centres.

4.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

Pre-primary Education Teachers: During the two-year Master’s course of study (*MEEF*), regular students divide their time (489 hours) between courses in a university-affiliated *ESPE* and working in schools. During the first year they spend 30 hours per week over four weeks in pre-primary and elementary schools. During the placement periods, students observe the teachers’ practices and participate in supervised teaching. As previously stated, during the second year they work half-time (paid) in an *école maternelle* or an *école élémentaire* that the school district (*académie*) chooses for them and have to complete 268/270 hours of training in an *ESPE* or university. This might prove problematic for some students, since not all topics students choose for their Master’s thesis can be followed up in every school district.

During their work in schools, students are supported by teachers, teacher educators and a tutor, who work according to specific guidelines. A coach from the affiliated university supports the students in the research necessary for the Master’s thesis.

Auxiliary staff in *écoles maternelles* (ATSEM): As with the auxiliary staff in crèches, the *CAP petite enfance* needed to become an auxiliary worker in a pre-primary setting (*ATSEM*) requires spending 420 hours of workplace-based training in *crèches*, pre-primary settings or leisure centres during their two years in a vocational secondary school (*lycée professionnel*).

4.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector

To complete the *BAFA (brevet d’aptitude aux fonctions d’animateur)* qualification for playworkers/animators, 14 days of workplace-based learning are required. Prospective lead playworkers spend 14 days in a work placement in a pre-primary setting, followed by a six-day follow-up session and a second work placement of 14 days, followed by two theoretical sessions.

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

There is no specific national framework regarding the continuing professional development of staff working in ECEC. According to the French labour code, CDP is an individual right of all employees, although it is not compulsory. In the latest version (2016) the labour code states that all full-time employees are entitled to 24 hours per year during the first five years of work-

ing, followed by 12 hours per year during the next three years. Provided the employer agrees, the CPD activities can take place during working hours.

Access to CDP is provided through diverse kinds of contracts, for instance through apprenticeship contracts or through the validation of prior learning experience, in early childhood centres or through distance learning.

For municipal staff, CPD is usually provided by a national training centre for local authority employees and varies in terms of duration and location (some in the training centres, some in ECEC facilities). Training generally addresses a particular category of practitioner who can choose among a range of themes (observation; parental support; cultural activities, etc.). Training propositions from other training centres or associations or single consultants are also sent to the local authorities. Within this CPD market the quality is variable. Course leaders may be psychologists, childcare or social work professionals.

More research is needed on the quality of such CPD provision and how municipalities proceed in their choices. However, a general lack of budgets for substituting staff during the CPD activities of core practitioners and assistants can be noted, alongside low motivation for CPD among childcare staff, the distance from ECEC settings to relevant CPD institutions, as is the case in the Loire region (Rautureau *et al.* 2013), and the lack of CPD opportunities for those working in the private *crèches* (Valentim 2015).

Since the creation of *IUFM* then *ESPE*, CPD opportunities have become limited for teachers, and are provided within the IPS institution only.

5.1 Childcare (0-3 years) and leisure time (2-12/17) sectors

The public sector offers more opportunities for CPD than the private sector. One example is the national centre *CNFPT (Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale)*. This organisation has significant financial and human resources. However, CPD policies vary considerably from municipality to municipality. Some have a coherent professional development plan, whereas other leave access up to the individual initiative of the professionals.

The roles of the municipal early childhood coordinators and the centre heads are pivotal. Settings with rich programmes also provide a rich informal learning context for the low qualified workers and contribute towards motivating staff to progress in their career in terms of within-sector possibilities (Galtier 2013).

5.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

After having worked for one year, all public sector teachers can claim the entitlement for CPD as laid down in the labour code by submitting a professional plan to the school district (*académie*), which has to agree with the proposal. After working for three years it is possible to take 'professional leave' for 12 months, with job security and 85% of the current salary (a total of 36 months of leave are possible throughout a teacher's career). The employee has to prepare monthly reports and agree to continue his or her work in the public sector for three times as long as the duration of the compensation (Ministry of National Education 2012).

Each *académie* adapts the national training plan (*PNF – Plan national de formation*) to its specific needs. For the year 2015/16, the *écoles maternelles* were placed at the top of the list of priorities (Ministry of National Education 2015).

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

6.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

Numerous reforms of the initial professional studies of the various professions within the childcare sector are currently under way or under debate. In the case of the *puéricultrices*, the discussion is about adding another year to the length of studies (which will mean five years in total). In the case of the *éducatrices*, the focus is on closer links between the IPS institutions and universities. In the case of the *auxiliaires de puériculture* and *CAP petite enfance*, both the content and the organisation of IPS are under revision.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Family Affairs, Childhood and Women's Rights, Giampino (2016) prepared a comprehensive report on child development within the childcare sector (0-3) from the perspective of a psychologist/psychoanalyst and made a series of recommendations: about the learning environment in infant/toddler centres, about the professional education/training of the staff working in the sector and about relationships with families. The report emphasises the necessity for a national framework which defines key objectives, values and principles in order to develop a common culture in the childcare sector and a common professional identity. Among other things, the report highlights the importance of providing a stimulating learning environment with a broad range of activities, of enhancing professional reflexivity through CPD, of linking research and practice more closely, of including children with special needs, of developing a transcultural/intercultural and welcoming approach towards children with a migrant background, of paying attention to gender issues both among children and staff (Bienaimé et al. 2014) and of moving on from a 'culture of safety' to a 'culture of measured risk-taking'.

Regarding the initial professional studies of staff across the sector, the report highlights the need for a common framework to provide a sense of belonging, without disregarding the specificities of the different occupational groups. It also recommends increased options for professional mobility. Access to IPS programmes, particularly in the case of the *auxiliaires de puériculture* needs improving through more public information about working with young children; through courses alternating between workplace and training institutions; through drives to recruit more men; and through improving opportunities for unemployed persons to enter work in the early childhood care sector. Continuing professional development should include a variety of approaches, such as seminars, on-site learning and private study. The report also suggests a modularisation of the IPS of *CAP petite enfance* and *auxiliaires de puériculture*. The *auxiliaires de puériculture* should remain the basic profession for working with the under-threes, but with more emphasis on education, socialisation and child development. A new job title is proposed for the *CAP petite enfance* which defines their assistant role: *assistant d'accueil de la petite enfance*. The training of centre heads should focus on participative leadership, teamwork, collaboration with external partners, comprehensive knowledge of child development, administrative management and financial management. More coordination between the different ministries in charge of the diverse diplomas is proposed.

Overall, although formulated from a distinctive child development perspective, the report highlights significant disparities and shortcomings in the staffing of the sector and makes policy recommendations to improve these. However, it remains within the confines of the childcare sector and does not address the significant gap between the childcare and education sectors, nor the issue of 2-year olds attending *écoles maternelles* (large classes, teachers not prepared for work with this age-group). Concerning the latter, in her foreword to the report, the last Minister of Family Affairs, Childhood and Women's Rights highlights the establishment of 200 bridge-classes (*classes passerelles*) in which pre-primary teachers, *ATSEM* and early childhood educators work together as a team (see also Estienne 2012).

6.2 Pre-primary education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 3-6 years)

Within the broader framework of educational reform in France, *écoles maternelles* come under the reform proposals laid down in the Orientation Law (2013-595). These include the establishment of university-affiliated teacher education colleges (*ESPE - Écoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Éducation*) to replace the previous university institutes responsible for the IPS of pre-primary teachers (*IUFM - Instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres*). In 2013, an *ESPE* was set up in every school district. 54,000 new posts were established, two thirds of them for 'creating an effective teacher education system' (replacement of retired teachers, creating posts for salaried students), 1,000 for teacher educators in *ESPE* and 7,000 for the initiative 'more teachers than classes', special needs teachers and school psychologists.

The main goals of the reform were: closer links to universities; more focus on the practicalities of teaching; sandwich courses during the second year of the two-year Master's studies; increased attention for children with special needs; curricular integration of digital technologies; enhanced focus on citizenship values.

Each *ESPE* is affiliated to one of the universities situated in the school district (*académie*). However, several universities may contribute to the *ESPE*'s research programme, sometimes causing co-ordination problems; also the requirements for participation in research projects may vary from one *ESPE* to another. Unfortunately the *CRPE* exams at the end of the first year of the Master's studies focus only on subject disciplines and not on other important aspects of early childhood education. Another issue is the lack of continuity between the first and second year of the Master's studies, particularly if the students have taken the *CRPE* in another school district. The offer of optional themes varies from one *ESPE* to another, thus students may have to change the preferred subject of their master's thesis.

3,000 new posts have been dedicated to the support of 2-year olds in the *écoles maternelles*. According to the ministerial decree, in 2012, the attendance rate of 2-year olds should be increased particularly in disadvantaged areas. The municipalities are expected to provide appropriate materials, space and staff both for groups of under 2-year olds (*tout petite section*) and for older children (*petite section*). However, in 2013-2014, the number of 2-year olds in the *écoles maternelles* increased by only 10% (Abdouni 2014). New ways of providing for children with special needs are to be discussed at the local level, including new co-operation strategies with special childcare centres in the vicinity.

A similarly important issue is the involvement of parents and creating relationships with schools and childcare settings in order to guarantee a smooth transition between them. Exchanges with families, local authorities, centre heads, staff and social services support such strategies.

Following the law, a superior Council of Curriculum, led by the director of the French Institute of Education (IFE), was established to create new curricula both for *écoles maternelles* and primary schools. The *école maternelle*, as the "first cycle of learning" should prepare children for the foundations of learning in primary schools. It is proposed that teachers of *GS (grande section, 5-year olds)* exchange with teachers of the first class in primary school.

The new preschool curriculum has reintroduced the term 'play' and other concepts which had been successively disappearing from the previous curricula over the past years. This recent law includes also the Reform of School Rhythm, comparing the daily routine with that in other countries. It is proposed that children should attend the *école maternelle* on nine half days, including Wednesday mornings. On two days, school finishes at 15:00 instead of 16:30. There have been protests from parents who have to reorganise their daily lives, from teachers whose free Wednesday will disappear, and from municipalities because of the increasing costs for out-of-school activities. Under the new Macron Presidency, municipalities are free to decide whether they wish to implement the Reform of School Rhythm or not. However, a number of municipalities will continue with it because of the interesting partnerships and innovations

which have developed, offering rich sport, artistic or cultural options to the children (both in Paris and in small villages).

6.3 Leisure time sector

There are no significant reforms in this sector despite some minor changes relating to the various qualification certificates. However, school reforms (and particularly the School Rhythm reform) are having an impact, creating new demands for out-of-school activities.

7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues

Training early childhood professionals between health and education: what place for emotions?

Source: Ulmann A.-L., D. Rodriguez, and M. Guyon. 2015 (see *References* for further details).

This study was conducted by researchers working in the national centre of arts and occupations (CNAM - *Centre National des Arts et Métiers*) which focuses on studies of professional activities and learning at work. It is one of the three studies selected by the CNAF⁶ following its most recent national call for research.

Aims: Based on an ethnographic study (observations and interviews were carried out over a period of 18 months), within a theoretical framework of the sociology of work, A.-L. Ulmann and collaborators explored the links between the work with young children and the IPS of two staff categories rated at the same EQF level but with different qualifications: *auxiliaire de puériculture*, the majority of staff in *crèches*, and *CAP petite enfance*.

Procedure: The authors examined in detail the IPS offered in three training centres and six workplaces (three *crèches* and three *écoles maternelles*). This dual perspective aimed to illustrate ongoing work seen both from the training side (to characterise the learning settings that prepare for work with young children) and the actual work with these children (to give the trainees an understanding of ECEC practices during site visits and practica).

Findings: Major findings show a disqualification of the *CAP Petite enfance* award. Persons with this qualification are frequently categorised as “non-qualified staff” and are therefore, in some municipalities such as Paris, not accepted for employment in *crèches*. Despite the evolution towards a recognition of *crèches* as educational settings, IPS continues to shape the professional practices of the *auxiliaire de puériculture*, since this is still heavily influenced by the medical profession in terms of procedures (e.g. hand washing) and vocabulary (e.g. “protocols”, “transmissions”). The attempts by staff in the IPS institutions to raise the status of these core but subordinate professionals may pose some difficulties in the real-life work situation, where professional activities tend to be reduced to an approach emphasising the application and prescription of technician medical practices. The authors link this approach with the trends to limit and control emotions in relationships with young children, which have been well documented by one of them (Ulmann 2012). The authors also noticed that some dimensions linked to the body (sex, nudity), omnipresent in the workplace setting, are not sufficiently covered during IPS. They conclude that all this constitutes considerable obstacles in the construction of a professionalism based on “making sense” and underline the role of work-teams for

⁶ CNAF (*Caisse Nationale d’Allocations Familiales* = National Family Allowance Funds), is the national organisation in charge of the development of funding in the childcare (early years) sector alongside the local authorities and the parents’ contributions. It regularly launches calls for research and subsidises subsequent projects.

enhancing the reflexivity of these professionals. More generally the study questions the training of trainers.

A training approach for *éducatrices de jeunes enfants* in full-time employment and *auxiliaires de puériculture* in apprenticeship

Source: Thollon Behar M.P. and M. Mony. 2016 (see *References* for further details).

Background: The above publication draws on M.P. Thollon Behar's and M. Mony's French case study contribution to the CoRe Project (commissioned by the European Commission), which focused on professional competences required for work in ECEC settings and demonstrated the importance of a systemic approach to professionalisation across all levels of early childhood.

Aims: The aims were to analyse innovative pathways of IPS provided for two categories of staff in the childcare sector (*éducatrices de jeunes enfants* and *auxiliaires de puériculture*): a qualification route while in employment (*formation en cours d'emploi*) and a qualification route in apprenticeship (*apprentissage*).

Procedure: The two experienced researchers used interviews and questionnaires to gain data from students attending a training centre in Lyon as well as from trainers and centre heads of crèches. After providing a historical review of each form of IPS, the study focused mainly on the students' motivation.

Findings: Results show that these approaches to IPS facilitate an effective link between theory and practice. Moreover, both *éducatrices de jeunes enfants* and *auxiliaires de puériculture* were equally successful in the completion of their diplomas despite their different work experiences. Both appreciated the support provided by workshops and exchanges with trainers and mentors and report the construction of a professional identity. Despite some difficulties and limits (the amount of work; the reduced perspective of one 'model' of practice for the educators; the quality of the work experience provision), benefits could be noted in terms of more reflexivity; the acquisition of new knowledge and methods of reflection and documentation, providing that the employer is supportive and the staff well accompanied by competent mentors. From a trainer perspective, closer links to everyday practice were highlighted, alongside the establishment of new partnerships.

Overall, the findings indicate that even practitioners who are qualified at a rather low level can profit from a high quality IPS experience if they are given the opportunity to develop their reflective skills.

Which settings, cultures and professionals for the 2-year olds?

Sources: Brougère, G. 2016; Garnier P. 2016b; Garnier P., G. Brougère, S. Rayna, and R. Rupin. 2016. (see *References*)

Background: G. Brougère's study is part of a larger research project conducted by P. Garnier and other researchers of *EXPERICE*, University Paris 13 Sorbonne Paris Cité and funded by *CNAF*.

Aims: The study aimed to investigate the views of parents, professionals and children on processes of socialisation and quality of daily life experiences of 2-year olds in four settings.

Procedure: Using a multi-theoretical framework, a dialogical perspective and video-elicited feedback, this research study focused on 2-year olds in various settings: (1) *écoles maternelles* (TPS - *Toute Petite Section*) which are regulated by the education sector; (2) traditional *crèches* (*section des grands* - the oldest group) which are regulated by the childcare sector; (3) age-specific but not widespread settings such as a *jardin maternel*; or (4) bridge groups in *écoles maternelles* (*classes passerelle*). Data were obtained through continuous observations of eight children during a day in each of the four settings (videos plus field notes); through individual, video-stimulated interviews with parents focused on their own child; through interviews with

all parents of the 32 children observed; through focus groups with staff in charge of the children, stimulated by edited videos including the eight children of their own setting, followed by edited videos of other settings.

The professional values of the staff, both those expressed in the focus groups and those observed in each of the four settings, were key research themes.

Findings: G. Brougère's study illustrated different setting-specific values. These corresponded with different images of a 2-year-old child, with different concepts of learning, and with different ideas about appropriate learning activities for children of this age. Contrasting emphases in daily practices could be noted, such as child-initiated play versus teacher-directed activities, or a focus on adult-child interactions versus peer interactions, which reflected the different emphases in the staff's initial professional studies.

Results also showed that 'intermediate' settings such as the bridge classes can develop a kind of 'third way' between the two contrasting professional cultures to be found in the divided system of ECEC in France, thus providing a more appropriate alternative to the more traditional settings. While sharing the culture of the *crèches*, the *jardin maternel* tends to start preparing children for the *école maternelle*, whereas the *classe passerelle* promotes an integrative approach through the daily cooperation, within a school context, of a teacher and an educator. This exchange initiates fruitful professional learning and transformation processes. The study thus concludes by arguing for these informal learning processes which can lead to enhanced and integrative understandings.

8. General workforce issues

8.1 Remuneration

The ECEC childcare workforce in France is not only a feminised but also a low paid workforce (Daune-Richard 1998). This lack of financial attractiveness, plus low social recognition and the high physical and emotional demands of the job, explain the difficulties of recruitment. Staff in the childcare sector – unlike the teachers in the education sector - do not enjoy long holidays and have only a few opportunities for career advancement (Odena 2009; Ulmann *et al.* 2011, 2015).

8.1.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

Puéricultrices can earn between 1,540 and 2,560€ per month. If they are centre heads (after five years as assistant head), they can earn between 1,700€ and 3,200€⁷. Some *crèches* provide living accommodation within the building, which is a big bonus in the large cities and Paris, where flats are expensive.

Educatrices de jeunes enfants earn between 1,300 and 2,400€ per month; centre heads between 1,500€ and 3,100€⁸.

The other staff working with children have a lower salary throughout their working life, which partly explains the significant staff turnover in *crèches*. *Auxiliaires de puériculture* earn between 1,050€ and 1,700€⁹ and "CAP petite enfance" around 1,500€ per month¹⁰.

⁷ Les métiers: http://www.lesmetiers.net/orientation/p1_193982/puericultrice

⁸ Les métiers: http://www.lesmetiers.net/orientation/p1_194127/educateur-de-jeunes-enfants.

⁹ Les métiers: http://www.lesmetiers.net/orientation/p1_194133/auxiliaire-de-puericulture

¹⁰ Les métiers: <http://emploi-public.publidia.fr/actualites/salaires-metiers-sante#.V50ej64qgzY>

8.1.2 Education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

Despite the economic crisis, the salaries of teachers increased somewhat in 2016. Teachers in *écoles maternelles* and in primary schools receive the same payment. They start at 2,000€ per month; after 20 years, they earn 2,625€, after 30 years 3,431€. They receive a bonus of 1,500€ when they enter the profession. To augment their salary, they can work additional hours with the *ATSEM* and animators during the two hours of the children's lunch break, if they so choose. Centre heads earn a bonus that depends on the size of the school and may possibly benefit from the provision of accommodation. Schools recognised as *écoles d'application* (vocational colleges) may include teacher trainers (*maîtres formateurs*) who receive a small amount of money for this additional work (1,250€ per year)¹¹.

ATSEM's salaries are lower: they start with a monthly sum of 1,472.43€ and finish with a maximum of 2,116€¹².

8.1.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Animateurs and centre heads in the leisure-time sector have low salaries. Disparities can be observed depending on the city and on the type of contract (short-term or permanent, part-time or full-time). Whereas remuneration varies, it may not be less than 2.2 times of the minimum hourly wage (currently 10€ in France). Centre heads receive a little more money for their leadership tasks.

Generally considered as a student occupation, this sector is only just beginning its professionalisation journey.

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

In France, 35 hours is considered a full-time working week. Part-time employment is not common, but some mothers with young children work an 80% working week, staying at home on Wednesdays, when *écoles maternelles* used to close (although just recently Wednesday morning attendance has been introduced). This employment pattern also applies to teachers who are also mothers and to most mothers who are professionals in the childcare sector.

8.2.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

According to the French labour law, the workforce in this sector has five weeks' holiday per year, the dates of which they can mostly choose.

The centres are opened the whole year round. In August (when the majority of parents are on holiday), some centres can be closed - the remaining children are grouped together and attend another centre (for instance in Paris and large cities).

The auxiliary staff working with the children ensure the opening and closing hours of the centres, i.e. from 7:00 or 7:30 to 18:00 or 18:30, while the *éducatrices* (there are generally two in a *crèche*) usually work from 9:00 to 16:00. The hours of presence of the centre heads in *crèches* vary according to the educational plan of the setting and the amount of work conducted outside the centre (meetings, community partnerships, etc.).

8.2.2 Education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

A regular teaching day is generally from 8:30 to 11:30 and from 13:30 to 16:30. Until the reform of the school rhythm there was no attendance on Wednesdays; now two days finish at 15:00 and the teachers work with children on Wednesday mornings.

¹¹ Ministry of National Education: <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid101179/la-remuneration-des-enseignants.html>

¹² Ministry of Public Function: <http://fonction-publique.bankexam.fr/fiches/5-atsem-le-metier-d-atsem-le-concours-et-les-dates>

Teachers in France have long school holidays: two weeks at the end of October; two weeks for Christmas; two weeks in February/March; two weeks in April/May and two months in the summer (July/August.) 12% work part time.

Auxiliary staff (*ATSEM*) work seven hours a day, five days a week. They have five weeks' annual holiday.

8.2.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Some of the *animateurs*, mainly students, work part-time. However, due to the School Rhythm reform, full-time work is increasing among *animateurs* and centre heads.

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

8.3.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

The induction of newly qualified staff is organised according to each *crèche* plan or local authority plan - some have an organised induction phase, sometimes called *protocole d'accueil*. The importance given to field-based learning during initial IPS programmes (Galtier 2013) facilitates the integration of newly qualified workers and their professionalisation.

Staff support can be linked to the presence of a psychologist once a week. This dates back to the 1960s and the work of Lézine who argued for the presence of such professionals to increase the quality in *crèches* – through play activities for the children and support for both staff and parents (who were not officially authorised to enter the rooms until 1975 by the Ministry of Health) (Baudelot and Bréauté 1979). Nowadays clinical psychologists are employed, mostly to support staff (by means of observing children, individual meetings and team meetings) in the case of difficulties in their work with children, parents and colleagues. Some are involved in developing the centre-specific educational plan. In some *crèches*, psychomotor specialists may be employed who support staff in organising the play settings and developing educational plans.

In France, the early childhood coordinator (*coordinatrice de la petite enfance*), a post created in 1981, cannot be compared to the *pedagogista* in Italy, who works in both the childcare and education sectors, thus contributing to a culture of early childhood (Baudelot and Rayna 2000; Baudelot *et al.* 2003). French coordinators work only within the childcare sector, are paid by the municipality, are mostly previous centre heads of *crèches*, and do not have a specific qualification for the co-ordinating role. They can support the realisation of the educational plans of *crèches*, particularly when local artists and parents are involved (Rayna 2016), and help to create and co-ordinate networks of *crèches*.

Puéricultrices and early childhood educators are supported by their own professional associations, which organise local and national conferences.

8.3.2 Education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

Courses alternating between workplace and training institution during the second year of the Master's study facilitate the integration of newly qualified teachers. *ATSEM* contribute to their integration in *écoles maternelles*, particularly if they have been salaried students in a primary school and consequently have little experience of work in an *école maternelle*.

Teachers tend to receive more support from pedagogical counsellors than from school inspectors, since the latter do not have a specialised qualification for teaching young children in the *école maternelle*. They also can find support from a professional association of preschool teachers, created in 1921 and maintained despite the integration of the *école maternelle* into primary school. Individual teachers can also join organisations of teachers focusing on specific pedagogical approaches, such as the French Group of New Education (*GFEN – Groupe Français d'éducation nouvelle*).

8.3.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Workplace-based learning, as an important part of their IPS, facilitates the integration of newly employed animators. However, there are few support measures for these workers, although some municipalities may provide them.

8.4 Non-contact time

8.4.1 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

Staff in *crèches* can use three days per year for planning and reflective activities during which time the centre is closed. Some *crèches* have weekly team meetings, generally during the children's nap time. They use these meetings for planning, analysing practices, or discussing various problems with the psychologist. However, there are considerable differences from city to city and between settings. Overall, paid non-contact time is rare, particularly in the private sector (Valentim 2016). Meetings with parents usually take place within working hours, both the more formal meetings (both collective and individual) and more informal meetings through a *café des parents* or shared activities with the children (Rayna 2016). In *crèches*, staff are allowed a short morning or afternoon break (additional to their lunch break) to compensate for the strenuous demands of the work (Meuret-Camfort 2014).

8.4.2 Education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

According to the ministerial circular on "Teachers' obligations" (Ministry of National Education 2013), teachers work with the children 24 hours per week. 108 hours per year are dedicated to other activities: Individual tuition (60 hours), teamwork and meetings with parents (24 hours), pedagogical play work (18 hours), participation in school council meetings (6 hours). At the same time, this distribution varies from one setting to another.

Staff in the education sector work according to school hours. During the lunch break they may join the municipal workers and be in charge of out-of-school hours, for which they receive additional payment from the municipalities. However, this is not a popular option. In the middle of the morning and the afternoon, some are in charge of the rest periods, others have a break or use this time for preparing materials or activities for the children.

8.4.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

No information available.

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

There are significant staff shortages in both the childcare and education sectors. Some recruitment strategies do exist but they are not sufficient.

8.5.1 Education sector (*écoles maternelles*, 2-6 years)

The birth rate in France started to rise from 2000 onwards. During Sarkozy's presidency only every second retired civil servant was replaced. This had consequences for the staffing in the *écoles maternelles* and led to a significant decrease in the participation of 2-year olds and an increase in group size, since numerous teachers on sick leave could not be replaced. Under Hollande's presidency, these money-saving measures were abandoned and all retiring teachers in pre-primary and primary school were again replaced. Consequently, the attendance rate of 2-year olds has been increasing again and is currently just under 12%, but the 1990s level (around 33%) has not yet been reached.

Several strategies have been initiated in order to cope with staff shortages and to make the job more attractive. Among them was a modest increase in salary, and the payment of students during the second year of their Master's studies (MEEF).

8.5.2 Childcare sector (0-3 years)

As previously mentioned, staff shortages are high in the childcare sector, as well as turn-over. For this reason, reforms are in progress and apprenticeship or learning-on-the-job strategies have been introduced in order to broaden the field of recruitment.

8.5.3 Pre-primary leisure time sector (2-6 years)

Shortages exist in some municipalities following the need for an increasing number of full-time animators as a result of the School Rhythm reform.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

The division in France between care and education remains a significant problem, as well as issues of the diversity of professional staff, of a hierarchical workforce, and of insufficient co-ordination, particularly in the childcare sector where numerous professional workers are from the lowest categories (Odena 2012). Social and cultural tensions are observed within *crèches*. Whereas the group of *auxiliaires de puériculture* shares a common professional culture, the educators (*éducatrices*), despite their greater empowerment, feel isolated and “have to impose a socio-educational point of view in a context still strongly marked by medical power” (Verba 2006, 175). Until now there have been few efforts to address these issues. Management requirements both in the private and public sector put further strains on the daily work in the centres.

In terms of the initial professional studies, teachers in the *écoles maternelles* need more knowledge of early childhood and appropriate practices for working with young children, their parents, professionals of the care sectors and coping with diversity (Garnier 2016) towards more equality (Joigneaux 2009). In terms of the childcare staff, there is a need to transcend the paramedical paradigm. Other issues are the training of the trainers and a lack of international perspectives. Although in some cases (e.g. in the IPS of early childhood educators) internships sometimes take place in other countries, they do not appear to have a significant lasting impact on the field in terms of innovative practices and changes.

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