

HUNGARY

ECEC Workforce Profile

Country report author

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1. ECEC governance

The system of ECEC in Hungary is bi-sectoral. ECEC for children younger than 3 years of age (*bölcsőde*) is regulated by the legislation relevant to children's rights, child welfare and child protection, and is therefore part of the child welfare system, whereas ECEC for children between 3 years and compulsory school age (*óvoda*) is part of the education system. However, both sectors come under the auspices of the Ministry of Human Resources (*Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma*), within which *bölcsőde* is the responsibility of the Minister of State for Family and Youth Affairs and *óvoda* is the responsibility of the State Minister for Schools. Provision and organisation of *bölcsőde* and *óvoda* are delegated to local authorities.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

The term *nevelés* has a central role in early childhood work in Hungary. It does not have an exact English equivalent, the closest translation being 'upbringing'. It is a holistic concept, including not just care and education (considered as very closely related, if not inseparable), but also health, behaviour, and social skills – everything needed in life. It has, therefore, much in common with the concept of 'social pedagogy' (as used, for example, in Denmark or Germany) or 'education in its broadest sense' (Kaga, Bennett, and Moss 2010, 104). When you provide care, you also teach children directly or indirectly and vice-versa. In other words, *nevelés* relates to the concept of 'pedagogy'.

The occupational title of core practitioners in ECEC centres for children under the age of 3 is *kisgyermeknevelő* ('Infant and Early Childhood Educator'). This name was first introduced in the relevant legislation in 2011 to replace the term *gondozónő* (Child Carer) and to acknowledge the work as pedagogical. The occupational title of core practitioners in ECEC centres for children between the ages of 3 and 6 is *óvodapedagógus* ('Pre-primary Pedagogue').

Both jobs and the content of the respective initial professional studies follow the pedagogical tradition, and both have the word 'pedagogue' (*kisgyermeknevelő* and *óvodapedagógus*) in the Hungarian names. It is important to note that the translation 'Pre-primary Pedagogue' does not indicate a school-type approach in kindergartens.

There are several types of qualification which are acceptable when wishing to work as a *kisgyermeknevelő*. Three of these in *Table 1* can be currently acquired during initial professional studies. However, five other, older qualifications are also still legally recognised (15/1998 NM *rendelet*). *Table 1* shows the details and also categorises the core practitioners (i.e. staff with group or centre responsibility) according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see *Box 1* at end of this section).

Table 1

Hungary: ECEC staff in centre-based settings

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 ¹ level
<p><i>Kisgyermeknevelő</i> Infant and Early Childhood Educator</p> <p>Previous and still valid title: Early Childhood Caregiver and Educator</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional (Nursery specialist)</p>	<p><i>Bölcsőde</i> Infant-toddler centre 0–3 years</p>	<p>Core practitioner with group responsibility</p> <p>Centre head</p>	1–3 years	<p>Childcare Certificate (<i>kisgyermekgondozó,-nevelő</i>) ECTS points: n/a² EQF: Level 5 ISCED 2013F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4</p> <p>or</p> <p>Childcare Diploma (<i>csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő asszisztens</i>) Since 2017 the occupational title ECEC Assistant is used. ECTS points: 120 EQF: Level 5 ISCED 2013F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 5</p> <p>or</p> <p>(optional qualification route since 2009) Bachelor's degree, 3 years university (<i>csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő</i>) ECTS points: 180 EQF: Level 6 ISCED 2013F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>or</p> <p>one of the older (up to 2002) Childcare Certificates listed in legislation ECTS points: n/a EQF: Level 3 ISCED 2013F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4 and 3</p>
<p><i>Óvodapedagógus</i> Pre-primary Pedagogue</p> <p><i>Profile:</i> Pre-primary Education Professional</p>	<p><i>Óvoda</i> Kindergarten 3–6 years</p>	<p>Core practitioner with group responsibility</p> <p>Centre head with group responsibility in small centres</p>	3–6 years	<p>Bachelor, 3 years university ECTS points: 180 EQF: Level 6 ISCED 2013F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Centre Heads: 5 years' work experience as pedagogue plus special exam</p>
<p><i>Dajka</i> Auxiliary Co-worker</p>	<p><i>Bölcsőde</i> Infant-toddler centre 0–3 years</p> <p><i>Óvoda</i> Kindergarten 3–6 years</p>	<p>Co-worker with no formal IPS or no specialist qualification</p>		<p>No requirements</p> <p>Available since 1990: Special training course leading to a vocational certificate for support staff in <i>óvoda</i>.</p>

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012, 2014.

² n/a = not applicable

- *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 School Professional* (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- *Social and Childhood Professional* (broad focus, including ECEC, 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

Staffing qualifications are different for core practitioners in ECEC centres for children under the age of 3 and in those for children between the ages of 3 and 6.

The minimum qualification requirement for **Early Childhood Caregivers and Educators** has been at the upper secondary vocational level since 2001. However, many older workers still have earlier, lower level qualifications, which are accepted as equivalents with a specified number of years' experience.

No qualification is required for **Auxiliary Co-workers** (Assistants) who do the cleaning, bring the food to the children's room, prepare the room for after-lunch nap, etc.

The requirements for **Centre Heads** in settings for children under the age of 3 are:

- Master's degree specialised in early childhood pedagogy, *or*
- the same as for core practitioners:
 - (1) **Infant and Early Childhood Educator** Bachelor's degree, *or*
 - (2) one of the qualifications listed in legislation: *bölcsődei szakgondozó (OKJ)*, *csecsemő- és kisgyermekgondozó (OKJ)*, *csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő-gondozó (OKJ)*, *csecsemő- és gyermeknevelő-gondozó (OKJ)*, *kisgyermekgondozó, -nevelő (OKJ)*, *csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő asszisztens (FOSZK)*, *csecsemő- és gyermekgondozó (OKJ)*, *or*
 - (3) a higher education degree in some other study areas listed in legislation (e.g. health visiting, health management, pedagogy, social pedagogy) in addition to one of the qualifications as for regular contact staff as specified in the 15/1998 NM *rendelet* (Ministerial regulation).

Employers usually issue calls for the job requiring one of the higher level qualifications.

In 2014, there were 7,126 core practitioners employed in *bölcsőde* (0-3), 98.1% of them qualified.³ There were approximately 7% with a BA qualification as **Infant and Early Childhood Educator**, 23.2% with a post-secondary specialist vocational qualification, 47.1% with an upper secondary specialist vocational qualification and 20% with an older specialist vocational qualification obtained before the year 2002. Out of the total number of core practitioners, 12% had a higher education degree in other study areas, and 15% had an additional specialist qualification (ten-month course) in addition to the minimum qualification.⁴

Tertiary level education has been available for **Pre-primary Pedagogues** since 1958/59, and this became obligatory in 1993. Since 2008, this is a BA level course. Only the BA level qualification (and its earlier tertiary equivalent) is accepted for *óvodapedagógus* as the minimum qualification, i.e. 100% of Pre-primary Pedagogues in kindergarten settings have a specialist higher education degree.

Auxiliary Co-workers/Assistants (*dajka*) work alongside Pre-primary Pedagogues. They basically perform care work and cleaning. No special qualification is required for this job. In 1990,

³ Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2015

⁴ Own calculations based on Hungarian Central Statistical Office data 2015.

however, a special training course was set up for these workers who now can acquire a vocational certificate for support staff in *óvoda* (3-6).

Centre Heads in settings for children between the ages of 3 and 6 have to have:

- the *óvodapedagógus* qualification,
- a certificate of having passed a special exam for head of centres and
- five years of work experience as a Pre-primary Pedagogue.⁵

In 2014, there were 56,776 people employed in *óvoda* (3-6): 31,234 Pre-primary Pedagogues (55% of all workers); 215 contracted Pre-primary Pedagogues (0.3% of all workers); 21,018 educational support personnel (37% of all workers)⁶; and 4,309 other employees (7.5% of all workers)⁷.

Infant and Early Childhood Educators are exclusively female in *bölcsőde* (0-3), and there are only a handful of male Pre-primary Pedagogues in *óvoda* (3-6).

There are no systematically compiled data on the ethnic background of workers in *bölcsőde*. In 2014, approximately 9% of Pre-primary Pedagogues in *óvoda* had a minority ethnic background.

Table 2 shows the composition of the ECEC workforce in Hungary. There are no data available for auxiliary staff in *bölcsőde* and only general data, not separated according to staff categories, on 'educational support personnel' and 'other support personnel' (e.g. *dajka*) in *óvoda*.

Table 2

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

Staff categories	Year / Proportion of workforce
Bölcsőde (0–3 settings)	
Staff with specialist higher education degree	2014: approx. 7%*
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	2014: 23.2%*
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	2014: 47.1%*
Staff with pre-2002 types of specialist qualification	2014: approx. 20%*
Staff with no formal IPS	2014: 1.9%*
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	Mostly off-site
Male staff	2014: 0%*
Staff with minority ethnic background	No systematically compiled national data
Óvoda (3–6 settings)	
Staff with specialist higher education degree	2014/2015: approx. 100%**
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (post-secondary)	2014/2015: 0%**
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	2014/2015: 0%**
Staff with non-specialist qualification	2014/2015: 0%**
Staff with no formal IPS	2014/2015: 0%**
Specialist support staff (e.g. speech therapists)	Mostly off-site
Male staff	2014/2015: 1.7% **
Core workers with minority ethnic background	2014/2015: approx. 9% **

* Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2015; **Ministry of Human Resources 2016.

⁵ 2011 évi CXc. törvény a nemzeti köznevelésről (Act no. CXc on public education)

⁶ There is a list of 19 occupations in the legislation that come under the category of 'educational support personnel'. These include assistants (*dajka*), cleaners, librarians, special needs educator assistants, paediatricians, nurses working with the paediatricians but also, for instance, system administrators. These jobs are not necessarily full time and not all kindergartens employ such staff, except the assistants and cleaners.

⁷ Ministry of Human Resources 2016.

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

The qualifying routes for core practitioners in the two types of ECEC centres are separate.

Infant and Early Childhood Educators (*kisgyermeknevelő*)

Since 1991, the entry requirement for all initial professional studies for the Infant and Early Childhood Educators has been the completion of the secondary school leaving exam. Before 2009, several types of qualification were awarded at the upper secondary and post-secondary level for those working in *bölcsőde* (0-3).⁸⁹ In 2009, a BA-level qualification was introduced. In 2012, structural changes were made to the National Qualification Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*) in accordance with the government's intention to change the system of vocational training in order to meet the needs surfacing in the economy.¹⁰

The current system in 2017 includes three different pathways:

- higher education studies (BA level) for the award of *csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő* (Infant and Early Childhood Educator);
- an upper secondary vocational qualification for Infant and Early Childhood Caregivers and Educators (*kisgyermekgondozó, -nevelő*); and
- a former post-secondary vocational qualification offered at accredited secondary schools in collaboration with teacher training colleges – now transformed into studies resulting in the *csecsemő- és kisgyermeknevelő asszisztens*¹¹ (Infant and Early Childhood Educator Assistant) qualification, offered by teacher training colleges. However, there are plans to phase out this form of IPS in the near future.

Therefore, there will be only two levels of initial professional studies for infant and toddler professionals working in *bölcsőde* (0-3): one at the upper secondary vocational education/training level and one at the BA level. All qualifications awarded earlier are still valid when applying for a job.

Table 3

Hungary: Infant and Early Childhood Educator

Job title in Hungarian: <i>Csecsemő és kisgyermeknevelő</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional (nursery specialist)
Entry requirements: 12 years schooling with a secondary school leaving certificate, specific entrance criteria Professional studies: 3 years university – specialising in early childhood education and care Award: Bachelor's degree ECTS points: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2013: 0922 ISCED 2011: 6 Main ECEC workplace: <i>Bölcsőde</i> (ECEC centre for children younger than 3 years of age)

⁸ More details at: Eurydice 2016.

⁹ All state-recognised vocational qualifications awarded within or outside the school system are defined in the National Qualification Register (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék, OKJ*).

¹⁰ See details in the article published on the Eurofound website (Eurofound 2016)

¹¹ Please note the misleading name 'assistant'; persons obtaining this qualification are fully qualified core professionals.

Table 4

Hungary: Early Childhood Caregiver and Educator

Job title in Hungarian: <i>Kisgyermekgondozó, -nevelő</i> Profile: Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional (nursery specialist)
Entry requirements: 12 years schooling with a secondary school leaving certificate Professional studies: 2 years (1,300-1,560 hours) upper secondary vocational course Award: Certificate in Childcare and Education ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 5 ISCED 2013: 0922 ISCED 2011: 4 Main ECEC workplace: <i>Bölcsőde</i> (ECEC centre for children younger than 3 years of age), family day care home, children's residential home

Table 5

Hungary: Infant Early Childhood Educator Assistant*

Job title in Hungarian: <i>Csecsemő és kisgyermeknevelő asszisztens</i>
Entry requirements: 12 years schooling with a secondary school leaving certificate Professional studies: 2 years post-secondary studies at a higher education institute (teacher training college) Award: Diploma in Infant and Early Childhood studies ECTS points: 120 EQF level: 5 ISCED 2013: 0922 ISCED 2011: 5 Main ECEC workplace: <i>Bölcsőde</i> (ECEC centre for children younger than 3 years of age), family day care home, children's residential home

* This qualification route is likely to be phased out soon.

Pre-primary Pedagogues (*óvodapedagógus*)

By way of contrast, there is only one required qualifying route for core practitioners in *óvoda* (3-6) – resulting in a BA qualification.

There is no entrance exam either for the *kisgyermeknevelő* or the *óvodapedagógus* BA study programmes. The entrance criteria for both consist of the number of points accumulated based on the grades (evaluation) received during the secondary school leaving exam and the singing and physical abilities of prospective *kisgyermeknevelő* and the singing and speech abilities of prospective *óvodapedagógus*.

Table 6

Hungary: Pre-primary Pedagogue

Job title in Hungarian: <i>Óvodapedagógus</i> Profile: Pre-primary Education Professional
Entry requirements: 12 years schooling with a secondary school leaving certificate, specific entrance criteria (see above) Professional studies: 3 years university, specialising in pre-primary education Award: Bachelor's degree ECTS points: 180 EQF level: 6 ISCED 2013: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6 Main ECEC workplace: <i>Óvoda</i> (ECEC centre for children between the ages of 3 and 6), children's residential home

The qualifying route for Minority Ethnic Pre-primary Pedagogues is the same as for Pre-primary education professionals, with a specialisation in one of the minority languages used in Hungary. By the end of their professional studies, these pedagogues have been prepared to educate children (according to the Hungarian Kindergarten Core Programme) both in Hungarian and in the chosen minority language. They are also expected to demonstrate a good knowledge of the minority language, history and culture.

Table 7

Hungary: (Minority Ethnic*) Pre-primary Pedagogue

<p>Job title in Hungarian: <i>Nemzetiségi óvodapedagógus</i> Profile: Pre-primary Education Professional (minority ethnic)</p>
<p>Entry requirements: 12 years schooling with a secondary school leaving certificate, specific entrance criteria (see above)</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years university, specialising in pre-primary education</p> <p>Award: Bachelor's degree</p> <p>ECTS points: 180</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013: 0114</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: <i>Óvoda</i> (ECEC centre for children between the ages of 3 and 6), children's residential home</p>

* Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovene, Roma

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes for core practitioners

Infant and Early Childhood Educator (*Csecsemő és kisgyermeknevelő*)

In 2016, twelve universities and teacher training colleges offered BA courses in Infant and Early Childhood Pedagogy.

Competence specifications are grouped into four categories: (1) Knowledge, (2) Ability, (3) Attitude, (4) Autonomy and responsibility. Some examples:

- (1) **Knowledge** is expected to cover the development, characteristics, care, education, and feeding of young children; the options and methods of forming good habits; the importance and effects of play, arts and singing; the legal framework of working with young children; administrative tasks; ethics, specifics of caring for children in ECEC services; the effects of family upbringing and the importance of early attachment; electronic information systems.
- (2) **Abilities** include applying a holistic view towards educating and caring for the children; to apply early childhood pedagogical methods; to recognise the processes of normal development and to interpret family contexts; to form good relationships with the children, their families and other professionals; to create conditions suitable for the education and care of young children; to organise the daily routine; to handle information and document children's development; to communicate well.
- (3) **Attitudes** include the recognition of professional competencies and their limitations; use reflections; having empathy.
- (4) In terms of **autonomy and responsibility**: to make decisions, to demonstrate responsibility; to cooperate with other professionals; to observe ethics; to be able to make compromises; to be able to work in teams.

Curricular areas: The overall emphases of the study programme are set out in *Table 8* below. The ratio of theory to practice is 83% to 17%.

Table 8

Hungary: Curricular areas – IPS Infant and Early Childhood Educator

Curricular areas	ECTS points
Social sciences and information technology	15-20
Pedagogy, psychology	45-55
Health sciences	20-25
Methodology of early childhood education and care, supporting development and care	25-30
Practicum: at least 6 weeks (240 hours) in the final year, spent in a <i>bölcsőde</i> (0-3)	30
Optional subject	15-18
Thesis	10
Total ECTS points	180

ECEC Assistant (*Csecsemő és kisgyermeknevelő asszisztens*)

Competence specifications are grouped into two categories: (1) Knowledge, (2) Ability.

Some examples:

- (1) **Knowledge** is expected to cover the pedagogical, psychological and lifestyle development of children between the ages of 0-5; the options and methods of supporting development; health and care issues; forms and methods of working with families; professional skills development; inclusive, integrated and alternative education and care.
- (2) **Abilities** include applying the above knowledge to the education and care for children; to recognise the needs of children and to provide professionally adequate solutions/answers; to apply knowledge in documentation, in organising the day for the children's groups and in communication; to recognise professional competencies and their limitations.

Curricular areas: The main curricular areas are set out below in Table 9. The ratio of theory to practice is 55% to 45%. The competency module is to be provided by all higher education vocational training programmes, the pedagogy module by all pedagogical programmes and the vocational module by the specific IPS¹².

Table 9

Hungary: Curricular areas – IPS ECEC Assistant

Curricular areas	ECTS points
Competency module	12
Pedagogy module	21
Vocational (infant and early childhood education) module	57
Practicum: at least 560 hours spent in a <i>bölcsőde</i> (0-3) in the 4 th semester	30
Total ECTS points	120

Early Childhood Caregiver and Educator (*Kisgyermekgondozó, -nevelő*)

This form of vocational education is based on a national curriculum framework¹³, which contains modules of vocational requirements.

Competence requirements: There is no description of competencies in official documents. The ratio of theory to practice is 60% to 40%.

¹² 230/2012. (VIII. 28.) Korm. rendelet [Government Regulation 230/2012 (VIII. 28.)

¹³ All nationally recognised vocational education studies (listed in the National Register OKJ=*Országos Képzési Jegyzék*) are regulated by legislation and are required to follow the national curriculum framework for each specific vocation.

Curricular areas (modules):

- Employment, safety
- Social studies, pedagogy, psychology
- First aid
- Childcare
- Tasks related to early childhood education and care
- Family day care, part-time care

Pre-primary Pedagogue (óvodapedagógus)

Minority Ethnic Pre-primary Pedagogue (nemzetiségi óvodapedagógus)

In 2016, 15 universities and teacher training colleges offered this study programme.

Competence requirements are grouped into four categories: (1) Knowledge, (2) Ability, (3) Attitude, (4) Autonomy and responsibility. Some examples:

- (1) **Knowledge** is expected to cover the links between societal changes, public education and pre-primary education; the documents, legislations and regulations related to their work; theory and practice of development and education of 3-6 years old children; the specifics of working with special needs and disadvantaged children and their families; the methods of organising activities; theoretical and practical issues of mental and physical health; and the theory and methods of assessment, evaluation and quality improvement.
- (2) **Abilities** will be to provide the necessary conditions for the personal development of children; to recognise and critically analyse problems and solve conflicts; to work together with families, other professionals and services; to learn new competencies, and to communicate in a foreign language.
- (3) Some of the professional **attitudes** and behaviours include a child centred approach and ability to play; good communication skills; social responsibility; respect for human values; ability to cooperate in a team; environmentally conscious behaviour.
- (4) In terms of **autonomy and responsibility**: to carry out pedagogical activities; to assess their professional options and tasks; to make pedagogical decisions.

Curricular areas: These are set out in *Table 10* below. The ratio of theory to practice is 80% to 20%.

Table 10

Hungary: Curricular areas – (Minority Ethnic) Pre-school Pedagogue

Curricular areas	ECTS points
Pedagogy, psychology, social sciences and information technology	32-45
Methodology of early childhood education and care in <i>óvoda</i> (related to play, native language, literature, mathematics, surrounding environment, music and singing, visual arts and physical education)	54-72
Additional special subjects (such as inclusion, family pedagogy, multi- and intercultural education and special needs) or ethnic minority subjects (such as ethnic language, ethnic minority culture and bilingualism)	32-40
Practicum: at least 8 weeks (at least 6 weeks of these in an ethnic minority setting for Minority Ethnic Pre-primary Pedagogue students)	26-34
Thesis	10
Total ECTS points	180

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

There are no alternative forms of qualification accrument for either of the occupations. The BA level qualification is the highest level of initial professional studies both for Infant and Early Childhood Educators and Pre-primary Pedagogues. Core practitioners with a BA can study further for an MA in educational sciences.

Formal opportunities for moving up qualification frameworks are different for *bölcsőde* (0-3) and *óvoda* (3-6) core practitioners, and opportunities for moving across qualifications are limited for both. Only the specialised qualifications are accepted for work in each kind of setting. For example, Infant and Early Childhood Educators wishing to work as a Pre-primary Pedagogue have to complete the full study programme for Pre-primary Pedagogy. Some subjects which were part of the initial qualifying route (up to 75% of the curriculum content is similar) may be acknowledged. However, this does not mean that the student can finish the course in a shorter length of time.

4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners

Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners working in both infant-toddler centres and kindergartens takes the form of a practicum¹⁴. The general requirements for higher education programmes are stated in legislation¹⁵, as for all nationally recognised vocational education studies¹⁶ and are required to follow the national curriculum framework for each specific vocational occupation. Government Regulation 230/2012 states the requirement to draw up a contract for the cooperation between IPS institutions and ECEC centres for students' field-based studies, including the rights and obligations of higher education institutions and of the hosting ECEC centre.

The technical descriptions of the higher education study programmes for Infant and Early Childhood Educators and for Pre-primary Pedagogues and the qualification requirements and expected outcomes of the Infant and Early Childhood Caregiver and Education (VET) describe in detail the specific requirements in terms of content, length of time, number of credits, and so on. All include a longer, contiguous time period to be spent at an ECEC centre, usually during the last semester of the course of study.

Table 11

Hungary: Duration of practica during IPS in higher and vocational education institutions

Qualification	Length of time spent in the training place	ECTS points
Infant and Early Childhood Educator (Bachelor)	At least 6 weeks (240 hours) in the final year	30
Infant and Early Childhood Educator Assistant (Childcare Diploma)	At least 560 hours spent in a <i>bölcsőde</i> (0-3) in the 4th semester	30
Early Childhood Caregiver and Educator (Childcare Certificate)	315 hours altogether	n/a
Pre-primary Pedagogue (Bachelor)	8 weeks	26-34

¹⁴ Field practice: practice during which a group of students acquires and practices professional skills in a natural environment or in real working conditions under the supervision of an instructor.

¹⁵ Government Regulation 230/2012 (VIII. 28.) on certain aspects of higher education and vocational training within the framework of higher education (230/2012. (VIII. 28.) Korm. rendelet a felsőoktatási szakképzésről és a felsőoktatási képzéshez kapcsolódó szakmai gyakorlat egyes kérdéseiről)

¹⁶ 2011. évi CLXXXVII. törvény a szakképzésről (Act CLXXXVII on VET)

There are no criteria for the selection of ECEC centres where the students can spend their practicum. Usually, nearby centres or centres known to the university staff are the ones contracted. During the 1990s, one CPD course was designed for people mentoring/supporting the students in the ECEC centres for children under the age of 3. However, it was not adopted into legislation and has been discontinued since. Regardless, the ECEC centres are expected to nominate staff to help and supervise students while doing the observations and/or the work assigned to them. Individual student's work is evaluated at the end of the practicum period. Some remuneration for the mentoring staff in the ECEC centres is provided by the higher education institution.

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

CPD is defined by legislation both for Infant and Early Childhood Educators and Pre-primary Pedagogues. Non-qualified co-workers are not required to attend CPD.

Qualified core practitioners both in the social and education sector can obtain a specialist professional diploma if they have worked at least five years in a relevant job, by passing a specialist exam related to their specific profession. The requirements both for the specialist exams and the CPD programmes are specified by the *Nemzeti Rehabilitációs és Szociális Hivatal*¹⁷ (National Office for Rehabilitation and Social Affairs). Passing the exams can result in a salary increase, depending on the employer's decision.

Infant and Early Childhood Educator (*kisgyermeknevelő*)

The Social Act of 1993¹⁸ lays down the obligation of core practitioners in social and child welfare services (including *kisgyermeknevelő*) to attend CPD programmes in order to maintain their job and to stay on the National Register of Care Workers. In case of not fulfilling the obligation, the core practitioner's employment can be terminated. The 9/2000 Ministerial Decree¹⁹ describes the regulatory framework and details the requirements, including the number of credit points to be collected, the type of formal CPD programmes that can be accepted for accreditation and for prospective CPD providers, the process of applying to have different programmes accredited.

One CPD period is six years, during which core practitioners with a higher education, post-secondary, or upper secondary qualification have to accumulate 80 credit points, whereas those with a lower level (older) qualification have to accumulate 60 credit points to stay on the National Register. If someone fails to achieve this, she/he can be taken off the register and could lose her/his job as a consequence. There are no specific requirements for heads of ECEC provision in terms of CPD.

All formal CPD programmes are accredited with a different number of credit points which are not linked to the ECTS-system and are not taken into account when participating in other higher education courses.

- a. *Courses of at least 30 hours* addressing different professional themes and ending with some form of report (30-50 credit points);

¹⁷ As a result of reshuffling by the Government, the National Office for Rehabilitation and Social Affairs has been closed down as from 1 September 2016 and its duties distributed to other government institutes.

¹⁸ 1993. évi törvény a szociális igazgatásról és szociális ellátásról

¹⁹ 9/2000 (VIII.4.) SzCsM rendelet a személyes gondoskodást végző személyek továbbképzéséről és a szociális szakvizsgáról

- b. *Group work of at least 25 hours* related to professional personal development and skills development, including case studies and supervision (25-35 credit points);
- c. *Meetings or conferences having at least five presentations* in social policy, child protection, child welfare, or social work (5-10 credit points);
- d. *Study trip* lasting at least three days *to learn about a certain topic or to gain experience* (10-20 credit points);
- e. *Professional workshops* with at least six meetings in a year addressing different themes each time (10-20 credit points).

In order to have all credit points recognised in a 6-year CPD period, the *kisgyermeknevelő* has to attend at least one 30-hour course directly related to work with children under the age of 3.

Core practitioners in *bölcsőde* (0-3) have 45-46 days of paid leave days a year (20-21 working days regular annual leave and 25 working days additional leave for pedagogues). 10-15 days of these can be used for professional development. The Centre Head has to design a yearly CPD plan that takes into account all staff with still unmet duties in order to make sure that everyone who needs to fulfil their CPD obligation has the opportunity to do so. The plan includes a schedule for attending programmes, the substitution of staff while they are away from work and a financial plan for support. Employers have to ensure remunerated time for the CPD and to pay the participation fee.

Any organisation or legal person can apply for CPD programmes to be accredited. The National Office for Rehabilitation and Social Affairs accredits and allocates credit points to all CPD programmes for staff working in social, child welfare and child protection services once a year, and maintains the National Register of Care Workers. The duty of CPD providers to document the programmes is also detailed in the Ministerial Decree 9/2000. Monitoring of accredited programmes is done by the National Office.

The qualification requirements for Centre Heads are listed in the legislation.²⁰ There are no additional requirements in terms of CPD.

Pre-primary Pedagogue (*óvodapedagógus*)

The Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education (*2011. évi CXC. törvény a nemzeti köznevelésről*), which has replaced the former Education Act of 1993, lays down the obligation of all pedagogues (including kindergarten core practitioners) to attend CPD programmes. The Government Decree on Teacher Further Training (277/1997 (XII.22.) *Kormányrendelet*) details the conditions related to participation in and funding of CPD programmes, the rights and duties of both staff and centre leaders and the process of accrediting CPD programmes. Participating in CPD programmes is also a legislative right, not just a duty for pedagogues.

Kindergarten core practitioners have to attend 120 teaching hours (45 minutes/teaching hour) of pedagogue CPD courses within every seven years. Those who finish the courses successfully are mostly given a financial reward by their employer, although this is not binding. Those who do not meet this obligation or cannot finish the courses successfully can lose their job. Heads of *óvoda* (3-6) have to attend CPD courses that contribute to their knowledge advancement and skills as a manager of the centre.

As is the case with staff in infant-toddler centres, core practitioners in kindergartens have 45-46 days of leave days a year (20-21 working days regular leave and 25 working days additional leave for pedagogues). The head of the centre has to design a five-year CPD plan that takes into account all staff with still unmet duties in order to make sure that everyone who needs to fulfil their CPD obligation has the opportunity to do so. The plan includes a schedule for at-

²⁰ 15/1998 (IV. 30.) NM rendelet a személyes gondoskodást nyújtó gyermekjóléti, gyermekvédelmi intézmények, valamint személyek szakmai feladatairól és működésük feltételeiről.

tending programmes, the substitution of staff while they are away from work and a financial plan for support.

Being a public education duty, pedagogue CPD programmes are free of charge. The costs for the participants are covered by contributions from the state (central budget), the provider and the employer. If the CPD programme is not offered within the state educational duty, the contribution by the state cannot be more than 80 per cent unless the course is necessary for obtaining the next level (qualification) within the Promotion System of Teachers²¹.

Employers have to ensure remunerated time for CPD activities and to pay the participation fee.

Pedagogue CPD courses have to be approved by the Minister responsible for education. Applications for running such programmes are to be submitted to the Education Office (*Oktatási Hivatal*). The decisions of the Minister are based on the recommendations of the Pedagogue CPD Accreditation Council.

Prospective providers can submit programmes for accreditation all the year round. The Education Office keeps a register of approved programmes, makes it available on its website and is responsible for inspecting them. The duty of providers to document the programmes is also detailed in the decree.

Any organisations registered as providers of adult education can apply for accreditation with pedagogue CPD programmes within the higher education accreditation system.

Main providers of CPD

Most of the CPD programme providers – both for *kisgyermeknevelő* and *óvodapedagógus* – are public. The roles and responsibilities described by the legislation apply to public and private providers alike. They have to follow the same procedures and have to comply with the same national standards specified in the 9/2000 Ministerial Decree and the 277/1997 Government Decree. Their choice of teachers/trainers employed and programme content influence their chances of accreditation and the number of credit points the programme is awarded.

Research on CPD

There have been no large-scale research studies on the CPD activities of ECEC personnel over the past five years. Some EU funded projects mapped currently available CPD courses and needs but these were just one element of other, broader themes, and most often resulted in new CPD courses.

Challenges regarding CPD

In practice, there are several problems that limit rights for and choices of CPD programmes. Paying fees is one of these. CPD programmes for *kisgyermeknevelő* charge registration fees which are usually higher than the available financial subsidies, since the programmes are offered at market prices. Employers can provide additional funding but employees still have to cover part of the costs.

Finding replacements for practitioners attending CPD programmes is another problem both for *bölcsőde* (0-3) and *óvoda* (3-6). Other practitioners from the same centre usually substitute, but it can be difficult for the Centre Head to keep the balance between guaranteeing available leave days for staff members and absences due to CPD activities, especially for smaller centres with only a few staff.

The certificates of CPD programmes are only partially and selectively accepted across the two sectors (e.g. pedagogues working in children's homes or in a childcare centre can fulfil part of their professional development duties in pedagogue CPD programmes).

²¹ Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education (*2011. évi CXC. törvény a nemzeti köznevelésről*)

There is no systematically collated data on the content of CPD programmes. The specific topics are not prioritised, they arise as the result of the accreditation process. Prospective CPD providers aim to submit topics of interest since there is a (market) competition for attracting participants.

In addition to compulsory CPD, most core professionals participate in non-formal professional development activities in the centre, such as regular consultations, organised visits to other centres, etc. The content and form of these activities depend on the perceived needs of children, parents and the staff themselves.

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

There have been several educational reforms introduced by the government since 2011. Some of these affect the core staff both in *óvoda* (3-6) and *bölcsőde* (0-3).

Reform of vocational education and training (VET)

Major changes were introduced in 2013, modifying the structure of VET schools, the content and the qualification requirements of VET, as well as the organisation and implementation of practical trainings. All these changes have aimed at better serving the demands and needs of the labour market/economy and increasing the attractiveness of VET. In 2013, responsibility for VET schools changed from the local government level to central maintenance by the state (Eurofound 2016).

Career advancement model for pedagogues (Promotion System of Teachers)

The career advancement model for pedagogues²² (or Promotion System of Teachers) has been developed to link career advancement with evaluation. Before the introduction of the model in 2013, wages of pedagogues were determined solely according to qualification and years of work experience. Quality of work was not taken into consideration. The new system aims to redress this earlier situation.

Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education and the Government Decree 326/2013 legislates the new model and the different terms and conditions for promotion throughout the career. The conditions to reach the different grades are based on the qualification required to fulfil the position, qualifying examinations and qualifications granted within the framework of qualification procedures. The main elements determining the results of the qualification procedures are the portfolio prepared by the teacher and the observation of his/her practice/teaching. In case the trainee, or the teacher in grade Teacher I (see below) has been assessed through a qualifying examination as 'unsatisfactory', his/her public employee status or employment ceases. The guaranteed remuneration of the different grades and within that the payment categories are defined in Annex 7 of the Act in percentage to the remuneration basis.

The categories are:

a) Trainee

After finishing IPS, the graduates can be employed only as trainees in a pedagogical/teaching position for two years. At the end of that period, they have to take a qualifying exam. If successful, they are promoted to Teacher I level.

b) Teacher I

Pedagogues (teachers) with at least six years of work experience can take the next step in the qualification procedure. After nine years of experience it becomes compulsory. In the course

²² The Act names „teachers“ but pedagogues working in *óvoda* and *bölcsőde* are also covered by the model.

of the qualification procedure and the exam a committee evaluates the pedagogue's activities and the teacher's portfolio according to 'pedagogue competency' indicators, which are defined in the 326/2013 Government Decree.

c) Teacher II

After working as a Teacher I for six years, pedagogues can take the next step in the qualification procedure. In order to reach the Master Teacher level, pedagogues have to have a preparation plan, an application and they have to present and defend their application.

d) Master Teacher

In order to reach the Teacher-Researcher level, the pedagogues have to prepare an application, present it and defend it.

e) Teacher-Researcher

Pedagogues who have reached Teacher II or Master Teacher level, have 14 years work experience, have obtained a scientific (doctoral) degree and publish regularly, can participate in the qualifying procedure to obtain the Teacher-Researcher level. The procedure requires the preparation of a Teacher-Researcher application, its presentation and defence, and the evaluation of the portfolio.

Extending the Promotion System of Teachers to *kisgyermeknevelő* with a higher education degree

Since 1 January 2016, all Infant and Early Childhood and Educators with a higher degree have been included in the Promotion System of Teachers, affecting about 14% of the core practitioners in *bölcsőde* (0-3). Entering the system means that higher wages can be achieved.

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

There have been several projects funded with the use of EU funding both in the education sector and in the social welfare sector. Most of them aimed to provide a basis for and develop the professional aspects and/or training materials required by the reforms of the education system and the social services. Most of them included at least one research element but not specifically aimed at ECEC staffing issues.

8. General workforce issues

8.1 Remuneration

Pre-primary Pedagogues earn less than Primary School Teachers and the salaries of Infant and Early Childhood Educators are lower still.

94% of *kisgyermeknevelő* and 90% of *óvodapedagógus* worked in a public ECEC centre in 2015 and they received salaries according to unified wage scales. The wages of *kisgyermeknevelő* are based on the wage table of public employees regulated jointly in the Act XXXIII of 1992 on public employees,²³ and the Government Decree 257/2000.²⁴ The table determines the mini-

²³ 1992. évi XXXIII. törvény a közalkalmazottak jogállásáról

²⁴ 257/2000. (XII. 26.) Korm. rendelet a közalkalmazottak jogállásáról szóló 1992. évi XXXIII. törvénynek a szociális, valamint a gyermekjóléti és gyermekvédelmi ágazatban történő végrehajtásáról.

mum wages based on the qualification and number of years worked. The Government Decree states the additional wage supplements.

The wages of *óvodapedagógus* are determined by a so-called pedagogue wage table, which takes into consideration the number of years worked and the level (qualification) within the Promotion System of Teachers. This table is the basis for all teachers/pedagogues in the entire education system.

The wages of core practitioners in *bölcsőde* (0-3) are low, partly because they are part of the social sector, where the wages are the lowest in Hungary, and partly because many of them do not have higher level qualifications. Core practitioners in *óvoda* (3-6), and pedagogues in general have higher wages, partly because they all have BA level qualifications and partly because of the government's reform of the evaluation of pedagogues and teachers working in public education (Promotion System of Teachers). However, the level of wages has just reached the level of the average wage in Hungary (247,800 HUF or 794€ in 2015).

The wages of *kisgyermeknevelő* are hardly enough to live on without additional support (such as the partner's income, etc.). Employers can pay higher salaries than specified in the wage tables but hardly ever do in spite of the fact that there is no ceiling. The reason is that additional amounts have to be covered by the employer, not the state contribution.

In both types of ECEC centres there is additional payment for posts of responsibility, which is also regulated in legislation.

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

Workers in *bölcsőde* (0-3) and *óvoda* (3-6) are almost exclusively employed full-time. The official weekly working time amounts to 40 hours. There are no national data regarding staff in *bölcsőde*, but the author's own estimate is that 99% of them work full-time. In 2014/15 the Ministry of Human Resources indicated that 99% of the staff in *óvoda* also worked full-time and only 1% part-time.

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

Newly qualified core practitioners are legally obliged to spend a certain period of time as a trainee (*gyakornok*) when they begin to work in their job. Act XXXIII of 1992 on public employees states the requirement for applying the trainee programme in the case of newly qualified staff and Government Decrees describe the varying details for the different sectors. A *kisgyermeknevelő* and also a *óvodapedagógus* who is new in the job has to work as a trainee for a period of two years. The Government Decree 257/2000 lists the requirements for the ECEC centre to develop the guidelines, to appoint a mentor and to set out the tasks and duties of both the mentor and the trainee. At the end of the trainee programme period, the trainee is evaluated. Failure results in job loss. In the absence of a central government contribution for the mentoring, the ECEC centre has to provide the mentoring remuneration from its own budget.

Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education introduced the Promotion System of Teachers, which applies to Pre-primary Pedagogues also. Its first level is the trainee programme, which lasts for two years. Government Decree 326/2013 lists the relevant detailed requirements, covering the need for mentoring, the tasks and duties of both the mentor and the trainee. The trainee is to be evaluated regularly every six months and at the end of the trainee period. If the trainee's certification/qualification exam is successful, she can be ranked into the Teacher I category.

8.4 Non-contact time

Legislation states that the contact time for core practitioners in *bölcsőde* (0-3) is seven hours per day²⁵. One hour per day can be used for anything else, such as preparation work, staff

meetings, administration, etc. Contact time for core practitioners in *óvoda* (3-6) is 32 hours a week²⁵, the rest can be used for preparation work, or anything else related to their work.

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

Since the introduction of the Bachelor level qualification for *kisgyermeknevelő* and the Promotion System of Teachers including *óvodapedagógus*, better pay and career advancement opportunities are available and therefore there is no severe shortage of staff in either *bölcsőde* (0-3) or *óvoda* (3-6) nationally. Shortages may be experienced in settlements where the population is aging and decreasing.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

The workforce challenges Hungary is facing are mainly related to the level of wages and the requirements of the Promotion System of Teachers. Staff working in ECEC centres have always had lower wages compared with those of teachers working in schools. Staff working in *bölcsőde* (0-3) have even lower wages than those working in *óvoda* (3-6). ECEC staff have been unhappy with the recent reforms, especially with the central management of institutions and the low wages. The resulting demonstrations initiated some changes carried out by the government in terms of management structure and financing. However, the wages of core staff in *bölcsőde* are still lower than those of their counterparts in *óvoda*. Some wage supplements were introduced for them recently, but the average level of salaries was still only about 53% of the national average in 2013.

The introduction of the Promotion System of Teachers brought about a 40-50% raise in salaries for core practitioners in the education system. However, the requirement to prepare a portfolio documenting their work (activities and achievements) is a new concept for many and involves a lot of work. It is more readily accepted by newly qualified staff, but creates quite serious challenges and sometimes problems for those who have been working for decades.

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