

ICEC Conference

Reducing access barriers in Early Childhood Education and Care: International perspectives on local governance

22nd – 23rd October 2019

Hotel Aquino, Berlin

Abstract & CV

Integrated working in the ECEC context: Local examples from different countries

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Integrated working between early childhood services (such as preventive family support services, ECEC services, preschools, ...) has become a hot topic, in research, policy and practice. Integrated working between services is often perceived as the answer to the actual needs of professionals (such as sharing expertise), and especially to the needs of children and families (such as higher accessibility, holistic perspective). Integrated working is the way to go, because: “A (problem) of a child or a family is never isolated, it is always holistic. So services should work holistic as well.” (Katrien Verhegge, TFIEY). However, integrated working is a hard to define concept and the added values do not occur automatically. There are several preconditions, which are crucial:

- Shared vision and goals based on the needs of families
- Management and team professionalism
- Policy and funding
- Family and community involvement

In this workshop, we also focus on several inspiring practices of integrated working in different countries, such as the family centres in Scandinavian countries, children centres in the UK, de wijkteams in the Netherlands, and de Huizen van het Kind in Flanders (Belgium).

Dr Hester Hulpia is a senior researcher at VBJK, Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, based in Ghent, Belgium. In Flanders, she was part of different national and international projects on the topic of quality. She is an expert on integrated working in services for young children, both in Flanders (e.g. publication on ‘Huizen van het Kind’) and international (e.g. the INTESYS project, an Erasmus+ project on Together supporting vulnerable children through Integrated early childhood services).