

ICEC Conference

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

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Abstract & CVs

Needs-based allocation of resources in ECEC – Examples from North Rhine-Westphalia

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The social background significantly shapes educational success. Early childhood education is considered to play a key role in compensating social inequalities. In order to improve children's educational opportunities as soon as possible, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia approaches a needs-based allocation of resources according to the principle "Treat unequal unequally". This shall be accomplished by means of state grants to improve educational opportunities and support the development of language skills in ECEC centres. Resources are allocated to ECEC centres with specific needs for assistance in a two-tier procedure: Firstly, the federal state government allocates resources based on certain criteria to individual youth welfare office districts. Secondly, the youth welfare offices then decide locally, which ECEC centres receive grants and what amount. How differently the local youth welfare offices organized the allocation of resources and which challenges they were facing has been examined within expert interviews of youth welfare office representatives out of 11 municipalities in NRW. Using the examples of two different youth welfare offices, the chosen allocation method will be exemplified in more detail. In addition to that, difficulties and challenges as portrayed by those youth welfare offices will be presented. In a conclusive discussion, we are talking about the question, to what extent state grants are contributing towards battling educational disparities and increase access opportunities.

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