

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

Redesign of childcare allocation procedures – Comparing approaches and experiences

Tobias Riehm, Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Mannheim

In many German cities, the allocation of available places in ECEC centres is a tedious process that goes hand in hand with significant issues of both planning certainty for parents as well as administration effort concerning ECEC staff. Especially the severe shortage of child care places leads to competitive behavior regarding the available amount of child care places and shows that an efficient allocation process is needed. Besides the prompt allocation of places, two more aspects are crucial, that are currently not guaranteed in most cities: On the one hand allocation should be fair, meaning that the criteria defined by municipalities and child care centres need to be taken into account. For example, if there is a point system, children with many points should be given a higher priority. On the other hand, allocation processes should be designed in a way, where parents do not have to make strategic considerations. This is concerning decisions whether to take a certain place or to wait for a better offer as well as considerations about voicing your centre preference.

After intense interactions between municipalities, ECEC-centres and parents, the ZEW Mannheim developed a theoretically proven and practically tested method, which is tailored to the specific conditions of the allocation process. This method guarantees a quick, transparent and fair way of allocating ECEC places and at the same time ensures similar freedom to the centre's directors with a decentralized system. The method has already been piloted successfully in a region in NRW this year, and will be implemented in many cities and municipalities of different size in the course of the upcoming months.

Tobias Riehm graduated from business mathematics (B.Sc.) and economics (M.Sc.) at the University of Mannheim. Since October 2016, he is working as a research associate at the ZEW research-group „market design“. His research interests include all areas of market design with focus on applied auction theory and matching, especially in relation to the allocation of places in the field of ECEC.

