

Newsletter

Issue **1** - November 2019



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“Making childminders’ competencies visible”

BACKGROUND

The demand for childcare is increasing, partly due to the increasing number of women participating in the labour process, the number of double incomes and the number of single parents. Many of them are looking for good, qualified, flexible and affordable childcare. In many European countries Informal childcare is rather predominant. And in several countries with national organised childminding, the number of registered childminders is decreasing (e.g. in The Netherlands 30% during the last 5 years). Reasons for this can differ per country and are for instance the increasing formalisation of the sector, the registration, the ageing of the childminders, low wages and, compared with day care centres, lower childcare subsidies.

Parents look for the best, optimal and affordable childminder for their children. Therefore, they need insight of the competences of the childminder.

ValChild supports the childminder in making their competences visible and having them validated and certified.

Duration of the project

1 October 2018 - 31 March 2021

GOAL

The VALCHILD project contributes in making the outcomes of the prior learning of Childminders visible and to keep up with the demands of the childminding requirements. The project contributes to the development of competences and the quality assurance of childminding.

All childminders have learned throughout their life. First as child receiving the care from adults and later as parent or often as caretaker, ranging from taking care of their siblings, babysitting or in other professions.

Outputs ValChild project:

O1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A report on evidence-based validation requirements and criteria for childminders - existing practices, tools, guidelines - survey on best practices - recommendations for validation of childminders
O2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ValChild assessment and validation toolbox - assessment materials - examination framework and processes - portfolio
O3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations and certification scheme - Mechanisms - Scheme - trainer handbook
O4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorsement and mutual recognition - pilot testing - Memory of Understanding
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops in Ireland, France and Portugal - National Info days in Greece and The Netherlands
D	Facebook, Newsletter, e-mail, brochure, flyer

Transnational meeting 1 (Dublin, IE)

The Kick-Off meeting took place in October 2018 at the offices of the Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). The participants made an introductory

Partners:

presentation of themselves and the organisation they represent, in relation to their role and expected contribution to the VALCHILD project.



This was a very important meeting as partners got to understand more in depth each other's contexts, background and VPL-systems. The presentation and enriching discussions showed clearly the different grounds and perspectives at national levels in the organisation of childminding, the minimum education level, vocational competence profiles, state of development of Validation of Prior Learning (VPL).

The detailed research plan was presented by ECI and focussed on:

- Field research on main barriers to implementing assessment
- Desk research on existing practices in VPL in partner countries
- Desk research on VPL best practices in EU countries (with most advanced VPL systems).



Transnational meeting 2 (Utrecht, NL)

The second transnational project meeting of the VALCHILD project was hosted by EC-VPL in Utrecht, Netherlands, on the 28th-29th May 2019.



The outcomes of the evidence collection on best VNIL practices and common barriers to implementing assessment for childminding shows the differences in the partner countries in the minimum qualification level for childminders, in competence profiles, in the VPL-procedures and in phase of development of VPL.

The desk research and survey showed:

- the low awareness of institutions about 'VNIL'
- the complexity of the validation process and the competence profile
- the lack of awareness from the general public (Validation)
- the lack of financial motivation for training institutions
- Insufficient staff specifically trained to guide / assess/validate
- No common professional standard for childminder

VPL is often a stand-alone instrument vs. sustainable individual management of competences.

- Large diversity between countries.
- Further elaboration of the common ground for VPL in childminding and the differences

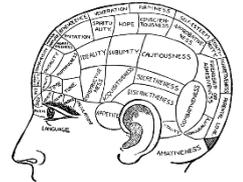
Interesting ... :

Making competence visible:

ValChild aims to make the competencies of childminders more visible and formally recognised.

Childminders (and parents) must be extreme competent, while:

- They stimulate, support and guide children (0-3 years) whose brains are like factories producing at least 1.000 neural connections per second (some researchers estimate even 1 million/sec).
- They give shape and depth to children's cognitive, emotional and social development and strengthen their capacity to learn, to solve problems and to relate to others.
- "Early stimulation and interaction with parents and caregivers jumpstart the journey of brain development - and a lifetime for learning." From: "Building Better Brains" UNICEF, 2014



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Next issues

Towards a more common VPL-process - respecting the differences:

- A competence profile for childminders
- VPL-procedure (VPL in 5 phases)
- Guidance and validation Instruments
- Training for guidance and assessment professionals
- Quality assurance
- Stakeholders
- Changing environment for childminding
- Memory of understanding

Partners

1. Early Childhood Ireland (ICE, Ireland)- project coordinator
2. Hellenic Society for the promotion of Research & Development (PROMEA, Greece)
3. Foundation European Centre for Valuation Prior Learning (EC-VPL, The Netherlands)
4. French Institute for the professionalization of family employment (IPERIA L'INSTITUT, France)
5. Escola Superior de Educadores Infância Maria Ulrich (ESEIMU, Portugal)

