Newsletter

Issue 2 – June 2020

"Making childminders´ competencies visible"

Introduction

Childminding offers high quality and affordable early care and learning. The importance of Childminding was on 29.9.2019 expressed by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, when she launched the Draft Childminding Action Plan. She stated that *"Childminding is of huge importance to children, to parents, to our economy, and to our society. However, it has not received the support it deserves in our public funding or our system of regulation. This Draft Action Plan aims to address this. It recognises the valuable work that childminders do and aims to ensure they can access the supports they need. The Draft Action Plan sets out positive reform proposals to bring childminding into the mainstream of support, funding and regulation."*

The childminder is the central person in effectuating the aims in the Draft Action Plan. One of the aims of the plan is: Provide greater formal recognition for *childminders and support their professional development*.

> **ValChild = recognition of childminders´ competences**

Project (sub-)results

1. Survey: Evidence-based validation requirements and criteria

By Fiona Kelleher (ECI, IE)

Aim of the survey is the identification and elaboration of VNIL best practices, to identify the barriers to implementing assessment and recognition.

- The highest proportion of respondents believe that the low awareness of institutions and stakeholders regarding the possibility and the benefits of VNIL is a very significant barrier to assessment of prior learning. → increase dissemination and raising awareness campaigns towards institutions.

  - Another important barrier is the lack of awareness from the childminders of the validation of prior learning options. → social media, e-mail campaign.

- A high scoring identified barrier is the complexity of the validation process → ValChild needs to ensure that systems of VNIL for childminders are accessible, user friendly, flexible and easy to navigate.

- Two other barriers are related to money: a) the lack of funding and b) lack of financial motivation (wages of childminders are far below minimum wage for a person with equal educational level).

- Other barriers which need attention are: lack of support, lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation.

2. Research VPL practices

By Kees Schuur (Foundation EC-VPL, NL)

A second research focussed on the current approaches, procedures, instruments and actors in VPL for childminding and best practices in VNIL within EU countries. The diversity between the
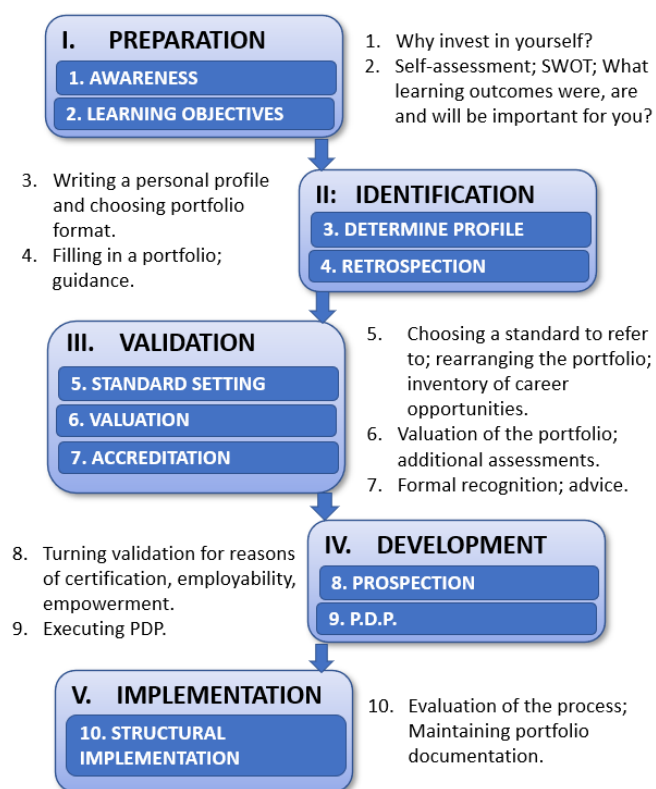
countries and the VPL-systems are considerable:

1. Required qualification level for childminding (varies between EQF-level 2 and (for some functions) EQF-level 6
2. Accepted standards for the qualification profiles of childminder (can be more than one standard in a country)
3. Value of the VPL-certificate "childminder"
4. Registration of childminders
5. VPL-procedure
6. VPL-instruments
7. Quality control

For each of the item an overview has been made, in which the common ground and the differences became clear. For example, for comparison the VPL-procedure the 5 phase-10 steps VPL-model (Duvekot, 2005) has been used to compare the procedures.

I. **PREPARATION**
1. AWARENESS
2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Why invest in yourself?
2. Self-assessment; SWOT; What learning outcomes were, are and will be important for you?

3. Writing a personal profile and choosing portfolio format.
4. Filling in a portfolio; guidance.

II: **IDENTIFICATION**
3. DETERMINE PROFILE
4. RETROSPECTION

III. **VALIDATION**
5. STANDARD SETTING
6. VALUATION
7. ACCREDITATION

5. Choosing a standard to refer to; rearranging the portfolio; inventory of career opportunities.
6. Valuation of the portfolio; additional assessments.
7. Formal recognition; advice.

8. Turning validation for reasons of certification, employability, empowerment.
9. Executing PDP.

IV. **DEVELOPMENT**
8. PROSPECTION
9. P.D.P.

V. **IMPLEMENTATION**
10. STRUCTURAL IMPLEMENTATION

10. Evaluation of the process; Maintaining portfolio documentation.

This model is more detailed than the procedure described by Cedefop (Identification, documentation, assessment and certification), while esp. the preparation/awareness, the identification, the development and implementation are crucial phases in increasing the quality of childminding, increasing the effect of recognition and sustainability of their competence development.

Another example is the qualification standard for childminder, which differs per country. In the table below the core tasks of a childminder in three partner-countries are described. In the different qualification profiles, the core tasks are further divided in sub-task and in activities and in the competencies (knowledge, skills, attitude, capability) are described in detail.

In the next phase of the project the common

| Country	The Netherlands (VET-route)	The Netherlands (branch-route)	France	Ireland
Title of qualifycation	Assistant in care and wellbeing	Gastouder	Maternal Assistant	Early Childhood Care and Education
EQF level	2	3	3	3
Core activities	- Performs service activities - Specific tasks for an assistant Care and Well-being - Dutch language - Mathematics - Career and citizenship -	- Guiding children in their development - Raising and developing the child(ren) in childminding - Working on quality and expertise - Working on your own organisation	- Managing your multi-employer activity - Organization of the professional space - Effective Relationship and Communication - Accompanying a child over three years of age in daily life - Support for the development, autonomy and development of children over three years of age - Support for hygiene, nutrition and development of children under three years of age - Implementation of response adapted to the needs of the child in his or her environment	- Child Development - Early Care and Education Practice - Early Childhood Education and Play - Child Health and Well Being And further choices in: - Special Needs Assisting - Creative Arts for Early Childhood - Human Growth and Development - Social Studies - Legal Practice and Procedures - Approaches to Early Childhood Education - Childminding Practice - Infant and Toddler Years - School Age Childcare - Equality and Diversity in Childcare - Nutrition - Irish for Preschool Services - Occupational First Aid - Children with Additional Needs - Communications - Teamworking - Effectiveness - Customer Service

ground in the different profiles and the country specific competences will be described.

It is not expected that within the time- and cost frame of the project, one common professional profile for childminder will be used, while all standards are national standards of which some have been in place for longer time and others are just adopted at government level and by the sector.

Newsletter 3 will contain a more detailed description of the professional profiles of childminders.

Transnational meeting 3 (Paris, FR)

The third transnational project meeting of the VALCHILD project was hosted by IPERIA in Paris, France, on the 22nd-23rd October 2019.
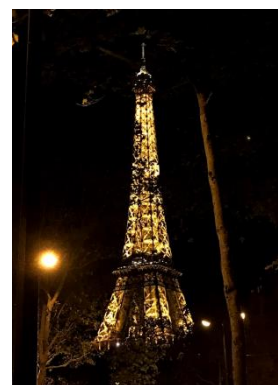
The reports from output 1 (survey and desk-research) form the basis for work to be done in output 2. On the agenda were the planning and activities in output 2. The 3 tasks in this Output are the development of:

1. ValChild assessment materials
2. Practical examination framework and processes
3. ValChild portfolio

An interesting discussion followed about the minimum requirements for the portfolio and the toolbox and how this could look-like, respecting the (recently) developed materials and procedure in the different countries.

On Wednesday morning EC-VPL and IPERIA demonstrated different VPL-tools and the partners worked with tools for producing evidence, the STAR(RTT)-method, Criteria Based Interview (CBI), types of portfolio including a competence biography, a personal Development Plan (PDP).
Also, small exercises like about communication (clear explaining and learning to listen and to understand) were held and discussed.

An important lesson for all was that working on a VPL-recognition can be joyfull, interesting, intriging, longing for further exploration, learning and self-steering of competences.

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

Next issue
Towards a more common VPL-process - respecting the differences:
- A competence profile for childminders
- VPL-procedure (VPL in 5 phases)
- Guidance and validation Instruments

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)