



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CARE 2024 TRANSFORMING CHILDCARE ACROSS EUROPE

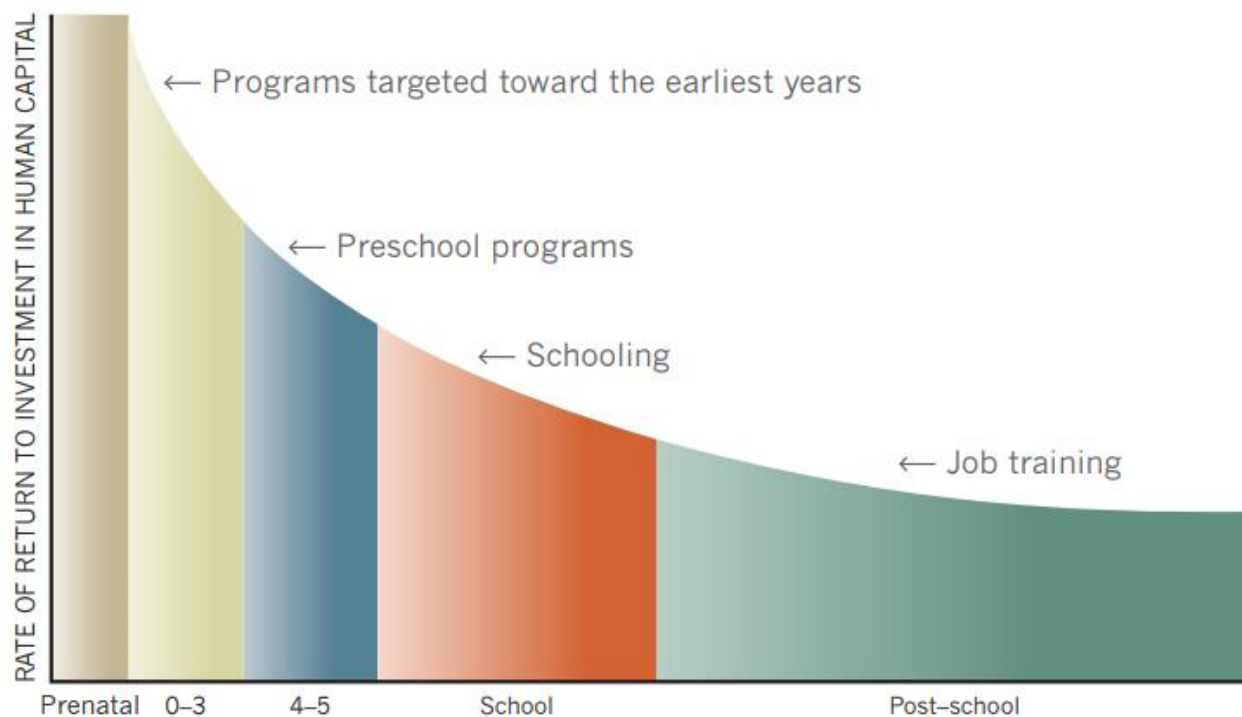
EU funds in enhancement of childcare and budgeting

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Heckman's equation

Returns to a Unit Dollar Invested



Heckman, James J. (2008). "Schools, Skills and Synapses," *Economic Inquiry*, 46(3): 289-324

- Investing in early childhood education and care can yield an annual return of up to 13%
- The earlier the investment is made, higher the returns
- On the other hand, according to OECD not combatting child poverty and its effects costs the EU Member States on average 3.4% of their GDP every year.

Commission Recommendation (2013) on Investing in children

- The 2013 Commission Recommendation on Investing in children: **breaking the cycle of disadvantage stresses the importance of early intervention and an integrated preventative approach**. It calls on EU countries to:
 - Improve children's access to adequate resources, including by supporting parents' access to the labour market and providing a combination of cash and in-kind benefits,
 - Provide children with access to affordable quality services, including early childhood education and care and healthcare, and
 - Support children's right to participate in play, recreation, sport and cultural activities and promote children's participation in decision-making that affects their lives.

Council Recommendation (2021) establishing a European Child Guarantee

- Member States should guarantee for **children in need**:
 - Free and effective access to: high quality early childhood education and care; education and school-based activities; at least one healthy meal each school day; healthcare
 - Effective access to: healthy nutrition; adequate housing



Council Recommendation (2021) establishing a European Child Guarantee / 2

- Examples of national policies:
 - **Finland:** the average number of children per care staff member is nine, which is lower than the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average (15 children per teaching staff member).
 - **Portugal:** is gradually expanding free childcare. From September 2024, all publicly organised childcare is free of charge. Additionally, responding to the shortage of places, from January 2023, free access was extended to the private sector making it possible for more than 11,000 children attend the private facilities free of charge (data as of December 2023). Further investments to address shortages and regional disparities are planned.



Meeting of the Child Guarantee Coordinators, June 2024

Council Recommendation (2022) on revised Barcelona targets

- 2022 revision, **targets for participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC) by 2030:**
 - 45% of children under 3 years old
 - 96% of children aged 3 to compulsory school age
- Derogation from 45% target for those Member States reached a 33% ECEC participation rate for 0-3 y.o.:
 - if participation rate <20% → increase by 90%
 - If participation rate between 20% and 33% → increase by 45% or to 45%
- §7(b): *It is recommended that Member States take the necessary steps to close the participation gap in ECEC between children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and the overall population of children*



Council Recommendation (2019) on high-quality early childhood education and care systems

- Improve access to high-quality early childhood education and care systems.
- Work towards ensuring that early childhood education and care services are accessible, affordable and inclusive.
- Support the professionalisation of early childhood education and care staff, including leaders.
- Enhance the development of early years' curricula in order to follow children's interests, wellbeing and potential, including those with special needs or in a vulnerable or disadvantaged situation.
- Promote transparent and coherent monitoring and evaluation of early childhood education and care services.
- Aim at ensuring adequate funding and a legal framework for the provision of early childhood education and care services.

European Social Fund Plus (2021-2027)/3

- Total budget for fighting child poverty = EUR 8.9 bn
(EUR 6.1 bn EU + EUR 2.8 bn of national contributions)
- Additional amounts in SK and SI
- Around EUR 2.5 bn will be invested in measures supporting early childhood and care
- Around EUR 1.7 bn will be invested in family and community-based care services
- Around EUR 1.4 bn will be invested in work-life balance

European Social Fund Plus (2021-2027)/2

Dječji vrtić Matulji - mjesto cjelovitog razvoja djeteta, Croatia

- 42 children provided with care, including children with disabilities and special educational needs
- Investments in a dedicated speech and language therapist, special facilities, and specialised equipment



ESF+ project Croatia

European Social Fund Plus (2021-2027)

Support for pre-primary education of children from marginalised Roma communities II, Slovakia

- Roma parental assistants hired to work with Roma parents and encourage regular kindergarten attendance by their children
- Special education for teachers
- Board social inclusion



ESF+ project Slovakia

Thank you



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