

# Promoting the Wellbeing of Toddlers' within Europe

## Guidelines for instructors

Each institution of higher education involved in the TODDLER-project has provided information relevant to their own country on the definition of wellbeing, the theoretical underpinning, relevant literature and research and legislation supporting the concept of wellbeing. A report and supporting PowerPoint has been compiled from the data collated.

The case studies provide a useful method for the early years' practitioner, teachers and students to employ as it will enable them to explore, compare and contrast the various interactions, processes and practices that the different partner countries use to support diverse and disadvantaged toddlers wellbeing. The case studies comprise of photographs, narrative and statistical data on the setting chosen by 8 European countries providing evidence of effective practice with narratives which have been compiled into story boards.

Different approaches used by each partner country to promote the wellbeing of toddlers are investigated in a child-centred way. Each partner has defined the concept of wellbeing and how this is interpreted in their educational approach, identifying the strategies for enhancing and supporting the wellbeing of toddlers. Teaching materials have been produced providing examples of good practice through photographs and case studies, enabling comparison of provision for wellbeing in relation to UNICEF's "Child poverty in perspective: an overview of child well being in rich countries" (UNICEF, 2007). Knowledge gained through these examples of good practice will enable early years' practitioners, teachers and students to reflect on the complexity of wellbeing across the EU and explore how they can develop their practice to meet the needs of the children in their care.

### 1. GOALS

- Participants are aware of their own country's definition of wellbeing and how this is demonstrated in practice and the similarities and differences with another country / countries.
- Participants are able to identify effective and good practice.
- Participants can handle the relevant literature including curriculum documents, national research and the recommended reading to critical analyse how these can be used to promote wellbeing.
- Participants formulate new interventions and actions for their own practice to enhance children's wellbeing.

## 2. ACTIVITIES

### Concept of Wellbeing

In group’s students to discuss:

- Discuss your understanding of the concept of wellbeing
- What does this mean to you?
- Why is it an important consideration when working with toddlers?

In groups, look at a chosen country’s definition of wellbeing:

- Examine your own country’s definition of wellbeing and how this is demonstrated in practice.
- Identify similarities between each country’s definition of wellbeing
- Create your own definition.

### Theoretical Background

- Compare and contrast one of the country’s theoretical background to your own, and present your findings to the whole class
- Using the literature review, consider the evidential basis of the current concept of wellbeing
- Reflect on the literature read and identify any tensions in promoting wellbeing whilst meeting the developmental milestones of toddlers

### Case studies

Looking at the case studies for each country, compare and contrast how the settings address:

- The demographics and how this impacts and influences practice
- Supports diverse and disadvantaged toddlers
- Involves parents
- Uses the environment to support wellbeing

Looking at the case studies for each country and reflecting on the Storyboards provided, compare and contrast how the setting addresses the following:

1. Transition and settling in process
2. Provision of activities to support wellbeing
3. Programme with/for parents to support their child’s wellbeing
4. Enabling environments such as a routine of the day, resources used or organisation of the room
5. Social activity such as singing, circle time or meal time

Reflect on your own practice in relation to the case studies and identify good practice and aspects for development.

### Observation

Carry out an observation in an early years’ setting and identify aspects that promote children’s wellbeing:

- Reflect on the effectiveness drawing on what you have learnt
- Discuss with your peers
- Make recommendations for enhancement of practice

### 3. TEACHING MATERIALS

The contents of the course module consist of:

- **PowerPoint presentation**
  - **Lecturer guidance notes**
  - **Report – The European Context of Wellbeing**
    - Definition / Interpretation / Understanding of Wellbeing
    - Theoretical background to Children’s Wellbeing
    - Context for each country
    - Reading materials – legislation and research
    - Each partner has provided:
      - 1 curriculum document
      - 1 (national) piece of research
      - 1 book relating to wellbeing
    - Literature Review of the above reading materials
  - **Case Studies on Wellbeing**
    - Type of Setting / Status
    - Description of Setting
    - Demographics
    - How is wellbeing identified, measured and monitored?
    - What strategies does the setting use to promote wellbeing (initiatives / activities / tools) and how do these support the children?
    - What assessment procedures are there for supporting children with Additional Needs?
- Storyboards:**
1. Transitions and Settling-in of toddlers into early years settings.
  2. Programme with or for Parents that helps them to support their toddler’s wellbeing.
  3. An activity, experience or opportunity for exploration that encourages the toddler’s wellbeing.
  4. How the environment supports and enables wellbeing through activities such as the daily routine, resources or organisation of the environment.

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5. An activity that supports social wellbeing such as singing, circle time or meal time.

These materials are designed to be used flexibly. The materials for each country can be used separately or alongside others providing an opportunity for comparison of similarities and differences in practices and provision. One aspect can be explored at one time, i.e. definition, theoretical background, literature review and case studies. The Storyboards can be used to reflect on provision to promote wellbeing. All materials provided will enable students to explore, compare and contrast, critically analyse and reflect upon the partner countries’ and their own practice.

### Lecturer Guidance Notes and PowerPoint Presentation

Key to icon:

This icon indicates a group activity



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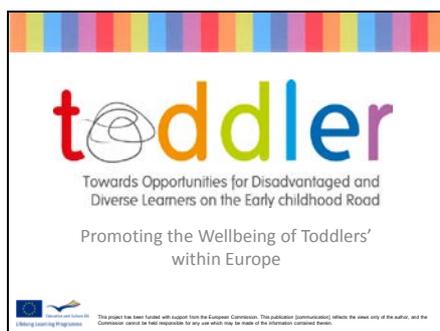
Permission for the use of the photographs has been obtained from the families of the children in these case studies.

Permission has been given to use the children’s photographs for the TODDLER Project training materials and website only. It is not permissible to use these photographs for any other purpose than the case studies.

**Examples of how to use the teaching materials is shown in the lecture guidance notes below:**

## TODDLER – Promoting the Wellbeing of Toddlers’ within Europe

Slide 1



High quality education and care from a very early age creates a good foundation for lifelong learning, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Equity in education is not yet realized for children from poor backgrounds, migrant families or parents with low education. The TODDLER project’s aim is to strengthen the education of reflective practitioners to give toddlers (18-36 months) a fair chance for lifelong learning. The project focuses on the development of provisions for toddlers and investigates different approaches to promote learning in a child centred way. It focuses on one of the EU Commission’s priority themes for 2009-2010 indentified in EURYDICE (2009), by supporting early years’ practitioners, teachers and students in their understanding of how to promote development of toddlers (aged 18 to 36 months) from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.

“The policy challenge, therefore, is to (re)build (current) systems of early childhood care and education that meet crucial design features as outlined above, that provide high quality care and education for all children, that are integrated, attractive and affordable to all families regardless social class or minority status, yet that is sensitive to differing educational needs and to compensate early educational disadvantages” (EURYDICE, 2009:39)

The aim of the TODDLER Project is to develop reflective practitioners who can promote and improve practice to provide effective early years care and

education for diverse and disadvantaged toddlers in reaching their full potential.

Slide 2



Guidance notes to lecturers  
These teaching materials are designed to be used in a flexible manner so that you can differentiate and adapt them to meet the needs and level of your student group.

Select the slides and materials which are relevant to your teaching session.

There are various ways of using the report and case studies to support this PowerPoint and the materials.

One way is to photocopy the materials for each country as a separate pack so each group of early years’ practitioner works with one country comparing and contrasting with their own country’s provision.

Alternative activities have been suggested throughout within the lecturer guidance notes.

The EURYDICE document provides useful underpinning knowledge to support the teaching materials and supporting material for lecturers to draw upon. Relevant links have been made with page numbers identified

throughout the PowerPoint.

EURYDICE (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. European Commission.

Slide 3

Activity  
Concept of Wellbeing



Within the group:

- Discuss your understanding of the concept of wellbeing
- What does this mean to you?
- Why is it an important consideration when working with toddlers?

Guidance notes to lecturers

- This activity is designed for the early years practitioners to explore their understanding of the concept (their thinking) of wellbeing.
- For those with less experience the ‘wordle’ on slide 16 could be used as a discussion point of key words to support the understanding of the concept of wellbeing.

Slide 4

 Definition of Wellbeing

**Belgium**  
**Flanders** – “When we want to know how each of the children is doing in a setting, we first have to explore the degree to which children feel at ease, act spontaneously, and show vitality and self-confidence. All this indicates that their emotional well-being is OK and that their physical needs, the need for tenderness and affection, the need for safety and clarity, the need for social recognition, the need to feel competent and the need for meaning and moral value in life are satisfied. Interventions that secure the well-being of children make them stronger and keep them in touch with their feelings and emotions.”

From: Laevers F. (2005) *Experiential Education – Deep Level Learning in Early Childhood and Primary Education*. University of Leuven

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

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Slide 5



### Definition of Wellbeing

**Belgium**  
**French** - The wellbeing is a pleasant result of meeting the needs of the body and calm. When we talk about wellness in children, the most common dimensions in the research and literature are :

Quality of life  
Physical and psychological health  
Self-confidence

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 6

In the specific literature in the French Community of Belgium, the Centre for Children, Youth and Youth Welfare has identified five indicators of well-being in children:

1. **Availability positive.** This is the opportunity to live a life as a child adapted to the stage of development in which the child is, due to the fact that no material or moral factor (fear or anxiety) will destroy the possibility that all subjective child to enjoy his rights under the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
2. **Well-being “received”.** Welfare receipt is the well-being that comes along without the child should be anything for the cause.
3. **The cultural well-being and social development.** It requires both a framework and approach of the child. This dimension relates to finding a place (a role, status) within a social group more or less structured.
4. **The psychological and moral well-being** concerns the fact of feeling good about oneself, to be comfortable (or pleased) with what we are and what we want to become
5. **The right to express his own vision and claim what is estimated to be eligible.** In other words, the right to have an impact not only on hardware but also the rules established, or even on the principles of legitimacy of the established rules.

Slide 7



### Definition of Wellbeing

**Denmark**  
Wellbeing is in a meta-perspective connected to an understanding of the welfare state and democracy and the idea of care. A study in dictionary of the Danish language defines ‘frivsel’ (wellbeing) as:

- that a living being (a tree or a child) thrive, get good and healthy growth, health and vitality
- About people or a society’s development, progress in happiness, wellbeing, prosperity, spiritual values etc., or whether the conditions in which people live well, living happily and in good conditions.

In the field for Toddlers wellbeing is closely connected to the idea of care. Wellbeing is essential for the Childs activity and attention to the world. It is related to development of social relations such as development of contact between children and social contact to parents and adults in the crèche and day-care. The professionals must be able to take care of and look after. Developing the Childs ability to take and give care as a part of the Childs understanding of giving and taking care is the core of the Danish pedagogic for Toddlers. The concept of care and wellbeing is closely connected to the concept of learning and teaching, which is a part of the concept of wellbeing. Wellbeing and care is often related to an individual understanding, and can therefore be a central matter for discussions.

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 8

 **Definitions of Wellbeing**

**England**  
Wellbeing is a state of being or condition of existence that characterises an individual realising their full potential through their own prosperity, welfare, life satisfaction, health, eudemonia (human flourishing) and happiness.

(Jan Styman and Helen Sutherland, 2012)

- Guidance notes to lecturers
- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
  - Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
  - Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 9

 **Definition of Wellbeing**

**Germany**  
The well-being of children and parents is intrinsically tied to the individual ego-strength, the self-esteem. Humans who are aware of their skills and who possess self-confidence do have greater achievement potential, a stronger degree of assertiveness, a greater sense of responsibility. They are presumed to be more attractive to others, and last but not least well-being has an impact on health.  
(Schubert 2004: 53) Schubert points out the third and fourth level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs whereupon children often do not experience affiliation, love and appreciation. But self-contentment is directly linked to the feeling of being accepted by his/her social environment. For the development of self-confidence the feeling of security is the decisive factor, i.e. the person must be satisfied with his/her own achievements but he or she must also experience acceptance by others.

Referenz:  
Schubert, A. (2004): Der Einfluss der Schule auf das k ndliche Wohlbefinden. Zusammenh nge zwischen separierenden vs. integrativen Schulformen und Teilbereichen des subjektiven Wohlbefindens. Hamburg: Dr. Kovac.

- Guidance notes to lecturers
- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
  - Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
  - Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 10

 **Definition of Wellbeing**

**Norway**  
Wellbeing is a positive physical, mental and social state. It is enhanced by conditions that include positive personal relationships with adults and peers, an environment that promotes challenging indoor and outdoor play activities, and an inclusive community that allows the individual child to experience joy and happiness, to unfold his/her potential and to express his/her view on the ongoing activities.

- Guidance notes to lecturers
- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
  - Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
  - Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 11



### Definitions of Wellbeing

**Portugal**

Wellbeing is when the children - the learners in general - in a given context feel well, at ease, act spontaneously, show confidence, energy and basic needs (in the sense given by Maslow) are satisfied.

Laevers, F. (2005). *Sics (Ziko). Well-Being and Involvement in Care a Process-Oriented Self-Evaluation Instrument for Care Settings*. Research Centre for Experiential Education Leuven University: K & G.

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 12



### Definitions of Wellbeing

**Romania**

Children wellbeing refers to their needs and problems, refers to the society and its influence on children, to families, governments, agencies/organizations and professionals. Wellbeing refers to what we do for children and how to make them better. Children’s wellbeing is dependent on the interaction between them and their environment. Children’s Wellbeing is centered on family wellbeing because the family is the dominant part of the child’s environment. The family is the major instrument for providing child wellbeing. The family is one that meets the needs of social care, education and child health. The family is negotiating with the whole environment to ensure that the child’s needs are met. The whole society is involved when families prove to be unable to provide child wellbeing.

(Alin Stănescu, 2012)PhD

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

Slide 13



### Definitions of Wellbeing

**Spain**

Creating the necessary conditions so that children’s wellbeing can be guaranteed is the axis around which the main aims of Infant Education 0-3 (Early childhood education) revolve. Wellbeing is the physical and emotional state that lets the child fully develop his/her autonomy according to his/her possibilities, individually or in relation with others, in a specific context and through different languages, considering each and every need they have, every instinct and ability.

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Discuss each country’s definition with the students, or select own country and another
- Compare and contrast on the context and perspectives held in relation to the definition of wellbeing.
- Consider the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country’s definition.

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Slide 14

Activity  
Definitions of Wellbeing



Examine your own country’s definition of wellbeing and reflect on how this is demonstrated in practice

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Reflect on how this is demonstrated in practice
- Consider how this is influenced by the political, economical and cultural context

Slide 15

Activity  
Definitions of Wellbeing



In groups:

Identify the similarities between each country’s definition of wellbeing

Create your own definition

Guidance notes to lecturers

- Identify the similarities between each country’s definition of wellbeing
- What does this tell us about each country’s perspectives on wellbeing?
- Early Years practitioners can then create their own definition to share with peers

Slide 16

‘Wordle’ of all the key words used to describe Wellbeing



Guidance notes to lecturers

- These key words have been compiled from all the words used to describe wellbeing by all the partner countries.
- These key words can also be unpicked to further support knowledge and understanding of what they mean and how they underpin wellbeing.
- An alternative activity would be for students to design their own ‘wordle’ poster on wellbeing ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net))

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Slide 17

Activity  
Theoretical background to toddlers’ wellbeing 

In groups:

Compare and contrast one of the country’s theoretical background to your own

Present your findings to the whole group

Guidance notes to lecturers

•This material can be used as background supportive literature or as part of the session

In small groups the students can:

- Compare and contrast own country with another using the materials in the report
- Present their findings to the whole group
- Discuss the outcomes

Slide 18

Literature Review 

This Section of the Report includes a summary of materials for each country relating to:

- Curriculum Documents
- National Research
- Recommended reading relating to wellbeing

Guidance notes to lecturers

This material can be used as background supportive literature or as part of the session as a focus for discussion

This slide introduces the Literature Review

Slide 19

Activity  
Critical Thinking 

Using the Literature Review:

- Consider the evidential basis of the current concept of wellbeing
- Are there tensions in promoting wellbeing whilst meeting the developmental milestones of toddlers?

Guidance notes to lecturers

This material can be used as background supportive literature or as part of the session as a focus for discussion

Using the materials in the report:

- Early Years practitioners in groups or individually answer the questions posed
- Evidential basis – consider the current key research highlighted in the report to critically analyse the evidential basis of the current concept of wellbeing (one country or all countries)
- Early Years practitioners to identify any tensions which arise when trying to promote toddlers learning and

development and also promote wellbeing

Slide 20

**Key Factors of Diversity and Disadvantage** 

What do you consider to be the key factors which constitute toddlers being referred to as diverse and disadvantaged?

What is your country’s definition of Children at risk?

Guidance notes to lecturers

Using the EURYDICE document:

- Identify the risk factors that contribute to a child being referred to as diverse and disadvantaged on page 18 -19, 37 – 38 and 139
- Discuss own country’s definition of children at risk on page 156 – 162
- Design a ‘wordle’ poster to reflect the key factors identified

EURYDICE (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. European Commission.

### Slide 21

**Defining Children at Risk**

EURYDICE uses the OECD category to define children at risk as:

“C/Disadvantages’ for ‘pupils with special educational needs’, namely ‘children with disadvantages stemming mainly from socio-economic, cultural and/or language factors’..... This excludes measures for children with special educational needs due to organic disabilities and/or illness requiring extended hospitalisation..... Disadvantage arising in living in rural and remote areas is included in this broad definition.” (2009:7)



Guidance notes to lecturers

- This definition can be used to support students’ understanding of diverse and disadvantage
- Reference can be made to EURYDICE page 7, 18 -19, 37 – 38, 139, 156 -162

### Slide 22

**Activity**  
**Case Studies**

Looking at the Case Studies for each country compare and contrast how the setting addresses:

- The demographics and how this impacts and influences practice
- Supports diverse and disadvantaged toddlers
- Involves parents
- Uses the environment to support wellbeing



Guidance notes to lecturers

Using the Case Studies:

- Early Years practitioners to compare and contrast in groups or individually

The EURYDICE document highlights that “what seems essential for all approaches is a positive socio-emotional climate, with emotionally safe and stable relationships, with sensitive –responsive, non-intrusive teachers.” (2009:32)

Within the EURYDICE document the review of the literature demonstrates that “the most effective intervention programmes ‘involve intensive, early starting, child-focused, centre-based education together with strong parent involvement, parent education, programmed educational home activities and measures of family support” (2009:140)

Slide 23

**Case Studies** 

Looking at the Case Studies for each country compare and contrast how the setting addresses each aspect below, reflecting on the story boards provided:

1. Transition and settling-in process;
2. Provision of activities to support wellbeing;
3. Programme with/for parents to support their child's wellbeing;
4. Enabling environment such a routine of day, resources used or organisation of the room;
5. Social activity such as singing, circle time or meal time.

Guidance notes to lecturers

Using the Case Studies:

- Early Years practitioners to reflect on the story boards for one or all countries

Slide 24

**Case Studies** 

- Reflect on your own practice in relation to the case studies
- Identify good practice and any areas for development

Guidance notes to lecturers

Using State of the Art document and the EURYDICE document to support student comparisons of practice

Things to consider when comparing and contrasting:

- Cultural differences and how these could translate to own country's practice
- Variations of provision for toddlers – government funded initiatives, voluntary funded and privately funded
- Eurydice document - EURYDICE (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. European Commission

Slide 25

**Observation** 

Carry out an observation in an early years setting and identify aspects that promote children’s wellbeing.

Reflect on the effectiveness of this practice drawing on what you have learnt.

Discuss with your peer

Guidance notes to lecturers  
Set the observation for the early years practitioners:

- Observe practice, and linking to relevant theory and the Case Studies, identify and discuss aspects of how wellbeing is being promoted
- Set up a discussion board on the Virtual Learning Environment so that they can then discuss their reflections together

Slide 26

**Extension Activities** 

- Consider aspects of group wellbeing and how this can be embraced within early years settings
- Consider the importance of ‘belonging’ in relation to supporting the wellbeing of toddlers
- How is the key person approach used to support a toddler’s wellbeing?

Guidance notes to lecturers  
To further continue this activity the group can explore the concept of group wellbeing and how this can be embraced to support the individual toddler  
The group can explore the concept of ‘belonging’ and how the key person approach supports this

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

1. Poster presentation on wellbeing comparing and contrasting one other country’s definition of wellbeing with your own country, making links to relevant theory;
2. An essay exploring the concept of wellbeing and how different countries embrace this with links to theory and practice;
3. Critical analysis of an article on wellbeing (chosen from the literature identified in the Literature Review) and how this links to own practice;
4. Observe practice, and linking to relevant theory and the Case Studies, identify and discuss aspects of how wellbeing is being promoted;
5. Write an account of your reflection upon your own practice in relation to wellbeing and make recommendations for enhancing practice.

#### 6. STUDENT MATERIALS

##### Report – The European Context of Wellbeing:

- **Definitions** of wellbeing across the partner countries for comparison
- **Theoretical Background** with relevant legislation is included to provide underpinning knowledge
- **Literature and Literature Review** to demonstrate the various research on wellbeing across the partner countries for comparison and discussion

##### Case Studies on Wellbeing:

- **Case Studies with Storyboards** to support students’ reflection on practice in early years to promote wellbeing

## 7. References

EURYDICE (2009) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. European Commission.

Great Britain. Department for Education (2010) *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: How legislation underpins implementation in England*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/healthandwellbeing/b0074766/uncrc/> (Accessed: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012)

Leseman P. (2009) *The impact of High Quality ECEC on the development of young children: review of the literature*. In: *EACEA Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*. Brussels: EU Commission

OECD (2001) *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. [Online] Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/9/1897313.pdf> (Accessed: 2<sup>rd</sup> April 2012).

Sylva K., Melhuish E., Sammons P., Siraj-Blatchford I. & Taggart B. (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from preschool to the end of Key Stage 1*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/schools/ecpe/eppe/eppe/eppepdfs/TP10%20Research%20Brief.pdf> (Accessed: 2<sup>rd</sup> April 2012).

UNICEF (2007) *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*. Florence: The United Nations Children's Fund.