



Towards Opportunities for Disadvantaged and
Diverse Learners on the Early childhood Road

Report

Promoting the Wellbeing of Toddlers within Europe

Compiled by: Helen Sutherland and Jan Styman
Kingston University, England

Contribution from: Annelies Depuydt and Veerle Martens
University College Arteveldehogeschool, Belgium

Julie David
Haute Ecole Libre Mosane and ENCBW, Belgium

Ove Steiner Rasmussen
University College South Denmark, Denmark

Helen Sutherland and Jan Styman
Kingston University, England

Alexandra Hackel, Timo Meister and Euline Cutrim Schmid
University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany

Monika Rothle and Elisabeth Ianke Morkeseth
University of Stavanger, Norway

Maria João Cardona
Instituto Politécnico de Santarém, Portugal

Mona Vintila
West University of Timisoara, Romania

Carme Flores, Angels Geis and Cristina Corcoll
Universitat Ramon Lull, Spain

Introduction to the Report

The TODDLER Project focuses on one of the EU Commission's priority themes for 2009-2010 identified 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.

This report has been compiled using experiences and expertise from each partner country exploring the different contexts and perspectives of wellbeing that influences practice. These materials have been left verbatim, as far as possible, to maintain the context and originality of each country.

Each partner has been asked to provide a definition of wellbeing and to identify their country's underpinning legislation and research on wellbeing. This information has been compiled into a report/handbook which can be used as teaching materials in conjunction with the PowerPoint.

Contents include:

- Definitions of wellbeing
- Theoretical backgrounds
- Literature Reviews
 - Curriculum documents
 - Piece of National Research
 - Recommended Reading

These materials are photocopiable for teaching purposes.



Germany

Definitions of wellbeing

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. (cf. 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.

Reference:

Schubert A. (2004): *Der Einfluss der Schule auf das kindliche Wohlbefinden. Zusammenhänge zwischen separierenden vs. integrativen Schulformen und Teilbereichen des subjektiven Wohlbefindens.* Hamburg: Dr. Kovač.



Germany

Theoretical background to children's wellbeing

In spite of the outcomes of international studies such as PISA, which found a strong correlation between poor social background and success in education, there has not been a lot of research on children's well-being. This is particularly true for children under the age of three. In the 16 German federal states, the conditions under which children grow up is affected very much by decisions made by each individual state or by local authorities (Hans & Kohl 2010:34). Thus there is no common basis concerning the support of well-being in German day care centres. The problem of a common ground for well-being is also regarded as problematic because demands based on different standards of living in different parts of Germany must be met. In other words, a day care centre in an urban setting (e.g. Berlin) must consider different aspects and factors concerning the wellbeing of a child than day care centres in very rural settings (Hans & Kohl 2010:36).

In Germany, the 16 different states have developed 16 different curricula for the education and support of children in kindergartens and day care centres. In the context of well-being, the curriculum developed for children aged 0 – 6 years in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, for example, emphasizes the following areas of support:

The experience of acceptance (acknowledgement) and well-being:

- Health
- Security
- Self-efficacy

Theoretical elaborations on well-being in day care centres often concern the support of physical and emotional health. Textor (no date) mentions nine aspects which have to be considered in the context of health education:

1. Basic knowledge of body and mind (psyche)
2. Maintaining a healthy body
3. Healthy food and drinks
4. Support of mental health
5. Sex education
6. Substance abuse prevention
7. Personal hygiene
8. Accident avoidance
9. Knowledge of how to deal with medical conditions and special needs

References:

Hans, B. & Kohl, S. (2010): Zur Lage der Kinder in Deutschland 2010: Kinder stärken für eine ungewisse Zukunft. Deutsches Komitee für UNICEF, Köln.

Textor, M. R.: Gesundheitserziehung. In: Textor, M. R. (Hrsg).
Kindergartenpädagogik. Online-Handbuch.
<http://www.kindergartenpaedagogik.de/945.html>

Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend, Sport Baden-Württemberg (2006): Orientierungsplan für Bildung und Erziehung für die baden-württembergischen Kindergärten. Weinheim, Basel.



Germany

Literature Review

Curriculum Documents

Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend, Sport Baden-Württemberg (2006): *Orientierungsplan für Bildung und Erziehung für die baden-württembergischen Kindergärten*. Weinheim, Basel.

The curriculum of Baden-Württemberg provides the legal framework for all early years' provision within the state of Baden-Württemberg. It has been obligatory since 2009. It was designed to support and guide settings which help children to develop in an age-appropriate way.

The curriculum focuses on six areas of learning and development:

1. Body
2. Senses
3. Language
4. Cognitive Skills
5. Empathy
6. Values, Religion

In the context of well-being it basically refers to the experience of acceptance (acknowledgement) and well-being. Three areas are particularly emphasized:

- Health
- Security
- Self-efficacy

National Research

Hans, B. & Kohl, S. (2010): *Zur Lage der Kinder in Deutschland 2010: Kinder stärken für eine ungewisse Zukunft*. Deutsches Komitee für UNICEF, Köln.

This piece of research investigated the well-being of children in Germany in the context of an international comparative study. It was based on current empirical data. The study was carried out for UNICEF and it aimed at determining whether the well-being of children has improved and which measures have proven to be the most effective ones in promoting the children's rights. In order to gain a holistic picture of the children's situation the study took into consideration material, social and subjective factors.

The findings were obtained by comparing results of the current study to those of a former UNICEF study from 2007: "Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries". In this study the situation of children from 21 industrialized countries were compared on the basis of six dimensions: material well-being, health and security, education, relationship to parents and peers, behavioral risks and subjective (emotional) well-being.

Recommended Reading

Petermann, F. & Wiedbusch, S. (2008): *Emotionale Kompetenz bei Kindern*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.

Children characterized by a high emotional competence are able to express and regulate their feelings, recognize and understand feelings of others and show empathy. From a developmental psychological perspective the book describes how these fundamental competencies are developed within the first six years of life. In addition, it refers to social behaviour, school success and the well-being of children. A detailed description is given for age-specific methods in diagnosing emotional skills of toddlers, preschool children and school children.