

# Parent Engagement in ECEC Program Provision and Policy

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# BOinK

National  
association  
for parents using  
early childhood  
education and care



# What does BOinK do?

- Supporting scientific research (projects, i.e. ECEC Platform)
- Initiating improvement in quality
- Services:
  - Helpdesk
  - Website
  - Brochures
  - Training
  - Magazines (quarterly)
  - Digital news letters (monthly)

# VVE Platform: ECEC Platform

- Project to improve the quality of ECEC and **improve parent engagement** (in particular low SES parents), through advocacy.
- In the Netherlands ECEC-programs are offered as a **separate** service for children of low SES parents, goal of the Platform is to make ECEC an **integrated** part of early childhood services available for all children.
- Administrative platform (among others): aldermen from several of the large municipalities, chairman of the education union, chairman of the child care employers association.
- Scientific board: Prof. dr. R.G. Fukkink, Prof. dr. P.P.M. Leseman, Prof. dr. J. Mesman and Prof. dr. M.J.R. Crul.

# Advocacy: Improving quality

- On behalf of parents, BOinK negotiates with parties in ECEC to improve the quality of early childhood facilities.
- The quality aspects of the Dutch ECEC legislation are based on the results of these negotiations.
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment vs. Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

# Child Care Law

- The Child Care Law (since 2005).....
- .....doesn't order specific quality requirements, only general requirements
- .....orders “proper” child care

# The role of parents in the Dutch child care organisations

- The Child Care law requires that every child care center has a parent committee.
- The 'right to advise' of parent committees:
  - Advisory role of parent committee on policy changes in child care centres.
  - Checking & Guarding the quality.

# The right to advise: subjects

- Policy regarding quality
- Nutrition, safety, health and hygiene
- Opening hours
- **Play and development**
- Complaints
- Child care rates



# ECEC policy in the Netherlands

- Administrative agreement (2011):  
Agreement between government and the 37 biggest municipalities in the Netherlands to improve the quality, reach and provision of ECEC (2012-2015).
  - Improving language skills child care workers
  - Focus on development, not on the program
  - Higher educated child care workers
  - **Improving parent engagement**
  - Expansion of capacity in pre-schools
  - Monitoring results of municipal ECEC-policy
  - Expansion of number of summer schools (primary school level)

# ECEC policy in the Netherlands (2)

- In the Netherlands municipalities are free to form their own ECEC-policy (keeping in mind some guidelines provided by the government).
- Because of this, there are some big differences between municipalities.
  - Differences in facilities for children: pre-school, playgroups, daycare.
  - Differences in activities and facilities for parents: parent engagement programs, ECEC-meetings, language courses.

# Local policy: Amsterdam

- Demographics:
  - **6350 children** between 2,5 and 4 years old that meet the requirements for a subsidized placement in ECEC (according to local ECEC policy)
  - In reality **4416 children** (70 %) are actually in ECEC facilities.
- Parent engagement in Amsterdam:
  - Parents' room or *ouderkamer* (in collaboration with local welfare professionals)
  - Meetings for parents to discuss the current themes, words, songs etc. of the program at the childcare center.
  - Story bag-project or *Verteltasproject*
  - Occasional activities (i.e. educational trips)
  - Individual meetings: parents can ask questions about ECEC, their child's development and so on.

# Local policy: Utrecht

- Demographics:
  - **1429 children** between 2,5 and 4 years old that meet the requirements for a subsidized placement in ECEC (according to local ECEC policy)
  - In reality **1078 children** (70%) are actually in ECEC facilities.
- Parent engagement in Utrecht:
  - Incidental activities (i.e. debate for parents and professionals in child care)
  - Subsidies for ECEC
- *Spelenderwijs*: largest ECEC provider in Utrecht
  - Importance of so called 'mixed groups'

# Local policy: more examples

- Rotterdam: language courses for low SES parents.
- The Hague:
  - subsidies for parent engagement projects.
  - subsidies for parent education projects.
- Leeuwarden: working together with schools, using social media.
- Breda: special team within the municipality for improving parent engagement and the reach of ECEC-programs.

# Child care center: Parents

- *VVE Thuis*: ECEC at Home
  - Home visits in addition to center based programs.
  - Provision of *VVE Thuis* depends on the municipality and childcare organizations.
- Parent engagement through early childhood education programs.
  - ‘Homework’ for parents and children based on themes of the center based program.
  - Available in several languages (depending on program).
  - Meetings for parents to discuss the current themes, words, songs etc. of the program at the child care center.