



Early Education
The British Association for Early Childhood Education



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Child-Centred Competences for Early Childhood, Education and Care: an introduction to the Erasmus+ project and resources

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Project Background

- A journey in exploring concepts of child-centredness...
 - A commonly used term, but is it always defined?
 - A commonly used term, but what does it actually look like in practice?
 - Child-centred diversity in quality early childhood education and care
 - Visit University of Plymouth and search 'child-centred'
 - A commonly used term, but how do you become child-centred?

A commonly used term, but is it always defined?

- The origins of child-centredness appear to be accepted as being grounded in the works of Froebel, Dewey, Rousseau, Montessori and Vygotsky (Chung and Walsh 2000; Lee and Tseng 2008; Wood 2007)
- The mix of theorists demonstrates the evolving history of the term and the blending of different concepts
 - Romantic - the child in the centre of their world, the natural curiosity of a child
 - Developmental – the child in the centre of their learning, where the learning environment is organised based on the child's needs and interests
 - Democratic – the child as the leader of their learning, where the child's perspective is visible

A commonly used term, but what does it look like in practice?

Review of the literature and structured focus group between partners

- [Principles of child-centredness.](#)
- [Observation sheet to capture child-centred practice](#)

Educators identify moments of change and respond in different ways by:

- Pruning
- Giving room to grow
- Nurturing/training



Croatia: Golf game.

- *Some of the children had been playing basketball. The teacher wants children to be able to pursue their own interests, but basketball in the classroom was getting dangerous.*
- *So he thought of a different game for children to play - Golf. The educator explains that golf isn't very well known in Croatia, but together they devised a game similar to golf, using paper balls and a ladle. The children enjoyed it; they take turns, understanding the rules and roles developed within their group.*
- *The game has been around for a month and the children still find new ways to develop it and keep it interesting.*

Knowing when and how

With many moments, significant and insignificant, how does the Early Years educator know which to select and how to respond?

- **Observing:** pedagogical watchfulness/sensitivity/tact (van Manen, 2008; Georgeson, 2018). --- romantic?
- **Knowing about** child development ---- developmental?
- **Understanding** of the child's trajectory in that particular social-cultural context --- rights and requirements?

A commonly used term, but how do you become child-centred?

- Recognition for higher education training
- Higher education has a history of combining theoretical and practical elements
- But students still identify challenges in becoming child-centred

What does it mean to be competent?

- [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

Child-centred competence

" **Competence** is the mobilisation or activation of several knowledges in a given situation and context".

theoretical and procedural knowledge

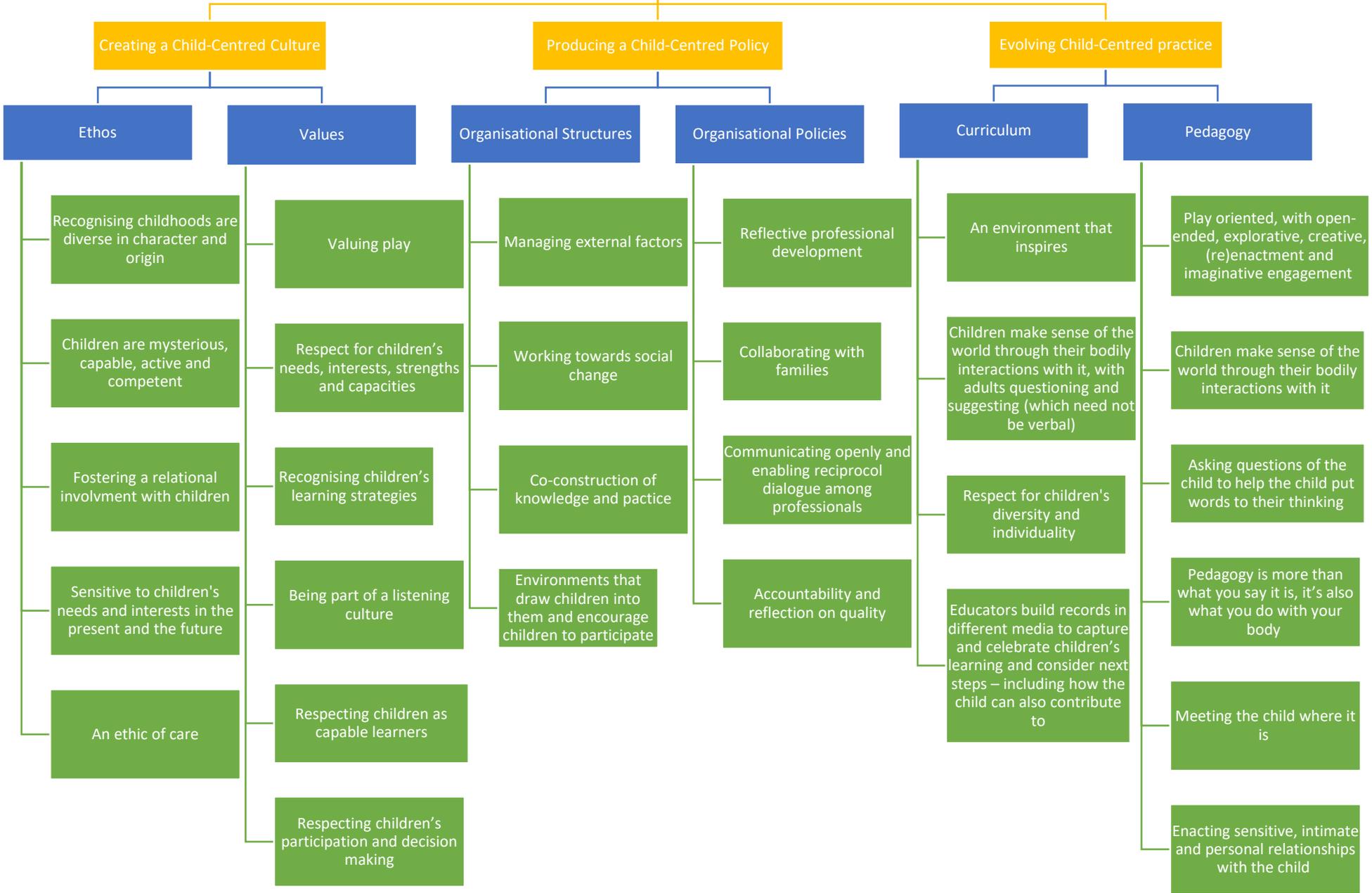
procedural, experiential, social and cognitive skills

(Guy Le Boterf, 2000)

The framework

- Ethos and Values
- Organisational Structures and Policies
- Curriculum and Pedagogy

Child-Centred Professional Knowledge



Example - Recognising childhoods are diverse in character and origin

Overview

- While childhood can be regarded as a global concept, experiences of, and with, childhood will vary between different contexts, communities, families and children. It is therefore important to think of childhoods (in the plural) to acknowledge the different experiences and contexts that children will have and come from (Gabriel, 2017). Recognising the diversity of childhoods is more than recognising the cultural or socio-economic diversity of children's lives, extending to encompass an appreciation of the unique and individual experiences they will have. Children's individual experiences will shape the knowledge and strengths that they bring to their social interactions, including the learning environment.
- Recognising the diversity of childhoods emphasises the relationship between the child and their cultural context. As such, children and childhood are not-universal or standardised. While the use of child-centred implies a single child, educators will actually *be meeting the needs, interests, strengths and capacities, learning strategies, uniqueness, participation and decision making, diversity and individuality, and family and culture of more than a 'child'.*

• (Bogatić *et al.*, 2018)

Resource

- This is an external resource from Ireland.
- In this resource readers are encouraged to think about equality and diversity in support of children's uniqueness and as valued citizens.
 - <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/curriculum-foundations/element-2-principles-of-aistear-and-siolta/activity-a-describing-your-view-of-children.pdf>
- *The resources is intended to prompt a consideration of your image of children and to reflect on how it influences the way that you interact with children.*

Example - Respect for children's participation and decision making

- Children are good ethnographers – they are good researchers of their own interests and experiences
- Children should be offered appropriate tools to enable them to participate.
- Children should be involved in authentic documentation of their interests, strengths and next steps for development
- Encouraging children to participate in decision-making improves practice by ensuring that it is relevant to children's needs and interests

Resource

- In this video Katherine discusses her project and the presentation she wants to share explaining her project. Katherine worked with young children with William's syndrome to document their experiences in their school. She describes how she found a way to share their findings. With this resource, we contemplate how adults need to be careful that they do not just collect children's views and then do nothing.
- Watch the second half of the presentation on using photobooks to report a piece of Mosaic research with children as co-researchers. What does it tell you about children's experiences, what they like about school? How might you share children's views about things they don't like? And what might you do about this?

Next steps...

- Piloting
 - Please get in touch if you would like to be involved in piloting the resources during May and June
- Live from September