

The development of the early childhood education and care in Croatia: paradigm change or path dependency?

This paper presents the development of the institutionalized ECEC system in Croatia in the context of the ideological, institutional and legal framework within which the system was maturing. Croatia is characterized by relatively early state regulation in this domain and pluralism of the proclaimed functions. However, in practise social function prevails over the educational one and preschool programmes are treated as services for children of employed parents. The system has remained goal-oriented and residual, as for the significance the society attributes to it, so too in the proportion of the preschool age population encompassed by the programmes.

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