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National research report on learning space and teachers' competence in Latvia

Daycares and preschools

Authors: Tija Zīriņa, Dagnija Vigule, Agrita Tauriņa, Dace Rutkovska

An Evaluation of Learning Environments of Educational Programs for Children Aged 0-7 in Latvia

Latvian Education System

Pre-school education system has oriented to general development of the child's personality in Latvia. The aim is to promote the comprehensive and harmonious development of the child. Organising a learning process in pre-school is important and necessary to respect the laws and needs of the development of each child. The content of pre-school education is determined by the education law, general education law, cabinet of ministers rules on state pre-school education guidelines, cabinet of ministers rules “Educational guidelines and evaluating methods for information, educational resources, materials, training and parenting procedures”. The education law provides that pre-school education program is suitable for children under seven years of age. Pre-school education for children from the age of five is mandatory in Latvia.

New pre-school guidelines will take effect in September 2019 to introduce a new general education content and approach to teaching children from 1.5 years of age in Latvia. The reform aims to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for a child in the 21st century through the learning process. Mandatory content of pre-school education includes values and virtues, skills and knowledge, awareness and basic skills in seven fields of learning. This is necessary for a successful start-up in pre-school and is learned through an integrated learning process throughout the day, with pleasure and according to the abilities of each child.[5]

Early Childhood Education and Care in Latvia

Beginning of the pre-school education in Latvia is linked to the ideas of the 17th century and teachers F.Fröbele, J.H.Pestalozzi about kindergarten, democratic school of work, elementary education and developing learning. The ideas of these educators on parenting were also popular later when the development of the kindergarten network continued after the creation of the independent state of Latvia (1918). The education law of 1919 determined that kindergartens are educational establishments that prepare children for school work. Pre-school children didn’t have specific training programs, they worked on the F.Fröbele or M.Montessori system updating practical ways of learning related to playing and social ideas. Education ministry or city board hired teachers with relevant education to work in pre-schools

Following the occupation of Latvia in the 1940, public pre-schools were organised instead of private pre-schools, which operated under the responsibility of the public education departments. From the 1960, combined pre-school institutions (a kindergarten for very small children) were created, with a single parenting system. Until 1990, the goals of the education system were set centrally in Moscow, in line with the ideological principles of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Pre-school work was governed by a standard parenting and training program. In classes similar to school lessons, the purpose of education was to prepare the new generation for public life and production work. During this period, up to 1990, intensive kindergarten building took place but pre-schools were crowded anyway.

Following the restoration of independence in 1990, changes were made to both the development of pre-school education institutions and the education guidelines. Pre-schools were affected by legislative changes. The possibility of taking parental leave up to the child's three-year-old and keeping the job, getting a small benefit, was the reason for the decision of many parents to raise children at home. The number of children in pre-schools, particularly in the youngest (1.5-3 years) pre-school age groups was sharply reduced.

From 1990, pre-school education became more diverse. In view of the historical situation in each institution of pre-school education, there are the youngest (1.5-3 years) pre-school age groups with age-appropriate room arrangements and a material base. The practical environment of pre-schools is developed in a smart way. The floor has solid surface that is easy to clean so that the child can participate in the mopping of spilled water or dripping paint. The group's rooms are transparent, and there are enough tables and chairs in the room so that all children can sit together with meals. Room for sleeping is detached. Each child has his or her own locker in a wardrobe marked with a child's name or a specific symbol. Inside the room there is a box in which children can put together things brought from home that they want to show to group members in the morning circle and use in the afternoon leisure games.

Environmental arrangements based on the interests, needs and natural curiosity of the child particularly updated after the entry of the project “Step by Step” in Latvia. It has been realized in Latvia since 1997. The authors of the project acknowledged as the most important to create a new educational model that would enable each child to be aware of themselves as an important personality. This direction was in line with the “Early school education programme” developed in 1998. The defined goal was to develop a child's activity by promoting a child's desire to discover, explore, familiarise herself and the world. Project implementers were based on a national education standard and guidelines that envisioned a new teaching and learning approach. During the 2000/2001 training year, 25 pre-schools were in operation in Latvia, with the philosophy of the “Step by Step” programme. According to the philosophy of the project, both physical and emotional environments were arranged, which complied with the basic principles of the Latvian ministry of education and the knowledge expressed in scientific studies of Latvian educators, psychologists regarding:

- interaction between adults and children [8],
- individual approach to the child [9],
- family and pre-school cooperation [6,7].

In 2012, the National educational content centre developed the pre-school education program. New rules on national pre-school education guidelines were adopted in 2012 [3] These rules provided that the teaching process in pre-school is based on the principle of humanitarianism, visibility and succession. Play was recognised as the main type of activity in pre-school. The guidelines highlight the role of the child's own-initiative activities and targeted playing activities in promoting the development of the child as a whole. In order to promote the self-development of a child and self-sufficiency on the basis of past experience, many preschool in Latvia maintain the “Step by Step” approach, even if pre-school does not implement this program. In a child-centred environment, children are given plenty of time for free choice and independent action. During this time, the teacher observe children to find out their individual traits, level of development and

interests. Teacher engages in their activities when needed, expanding children's knowledge, providing new challenges to their performance. Teacher also helps children learn skills to collaborate, agree and deal with conflicts [1]

Over the last decade in Latvia, the philosophy and methodology of the child-centred approach have gained great support. It is also supported by the new guidelines developed in 2018, which set out both the content of education and the principles for its implementation, for children from the age of 18 months.

Pre- school Environment and Education Methods in Latvia

An inquisitive, creative and joyful child who lives healthy, is safe and active, works independently and learns with interest, is pleased with experience of herself/himself or others and the surrounding world, is the educational goal of pre-school. This can be achieved by setting up an environment that recognises the free and independent playing of a child throughout the day either in small groups and individually. Efforts are made to make the educational environment safe and stimulating for children's creativity, curiosity and interests, allowing children with various abilities and of different ages to successfully learn, perceive and understand the surrounding world, communicate and cooperate with each other and the adults.

- ✓ Teachers set up different activity centres – books, sensory development/practical life, role playing, building, art, nature, sand and water playing centres. The materials in centres are usually easy to reach for children because they are placed on open shelves, on desks and on the floor.
- ✓ Activity centres/learning areas are usually separated from each other by shelves, desks and carpets. Borders are clear and it helps avoid conflicts with other children about the distribution of property, materials and territory.
- ✓ Each month the activity centres are changed and supplemented with appropriate materials. It is done within the framework of a topic selected on the basis of the best interests and needs of the child.
- ✓ Children are best acquainted with those things that suit their personal interests and goals. The teacher is responsible for supporting and promoting the natural development of children in this training process by setting a clear learning target and achievable outcome, providing an evolving feedback for children to successfully learn, perceive and understand the surrounding world, communicate and cooperate with each other and the adults.
- ✓ The teacher selects such education and training methods, ways and forms which allow the implementation of the curriculum that is oriented towards the child and the development of his/her competences.

Pre-school education is based on the attitude that a child is to be educated as an active, self – dependent, self – confident and creative personality. At pre–school age, a game plays significant role and is an important part of the child's life. Therefor a game is one of the major educational forms in Latvia. It inherently arises from an inner impulse of child to act, test, explore. In such a way children satisfy their curiosity. They try something in order to discover what it is and how it works in his/her environment. When playing games, efforts are made to offer the children interesting and meaningful activities that later can be discused and tested. These activities can focus either on the whole group ("the morning circle", competitions, excursions, events, recreation time) or small groups of children (join creative work, experimenting, drawing, figuration ornaments, production, works presentations, role games, etc.). Or they may constitute individual activities of

one child (the child's independent activity or playing, communication with the child on an individual basis).

The assessment of the child's achievements

The assessment of the child's achievements is a constituent part of the education process. The assessment process has not been formalised, therefore in the preparation of its pre–school curriculum every institution considers, plans and comes to an agreement as to which information will be collected concerning the child's progress, the manner in which the information will be collected and used to improve the quality of education. Every educational institution is entitled to select a individual manner of the formation of education content. The content of curricular can be developed as follows:

- ✓ according to the competences areas (health protection, cognition, communication, artistic and social competence);
- ✓ according to the child's need when particular needs of the child concerned are identified (the child's special needs, need for safety, activity, play, communication, cognition, self – expression, recognition, etc.);
- ✓ according to the field of the child's activities (games, cognitive – exploratory, artistic, motor and other activities);
- ✓ according to the educational areas (social, emotional, physical, cognitive and speech development areas);
- ✓ taking account of the distinctive features of the physical environment (activity centres, nooks, spaces, natural and cultural activities, etc.).

A quality curriculum focuses on the comprehensive development of a child, and the educational content of the curriculum is characterised by a combination of several subjects. Implementing such a pre-primary education programme is the role of a pre-school teacher.

Method

Research Sample

0-3 Programs. A total of 12 classrooms from 12 different daycares that served children aged 1,5-3 were given the sample. One private pre-school education institution and 11 national pre-school education institutions from Riga and other regions of Latvia participated in the study.

3-7 Programs. A total of 14 classrooms from 14 different preschools that served children 3-7 werw given the sample. One private pre-school education institution and 13 national pre-school education institutions from Riga and other regions of Latvia participated in the study.

Research Instruments

Demographics Form. This form was developed by the researchers and used for all the programs observed for the study. It included such questions as the age group served, teacher's education level, and whether the program provide free meals.

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-3). ITERS-3 is a valid and reliable instrument that relies on information collected through on site three-hour-long observation of classrooms for children under 36 months. There are 33 items covering six subscales of the instrument including Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Books, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R). It is a valid and reliable instrument that relies on information collected through on site three-hour-long observation of preschool classrooms. There are 43 items covering seven subscales of the instrument including Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure and Parents and Staff.

Data Collection. Raters who would administer the scales were trained until inter-rater reliability was established. Once the test intra-rater reliability established, data collection process was started. Data was collected through observations of the same classrooms on two different days two-weeks apart in the Spring of 2019.

Findings

Analyze of demographics Form

	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10	P11	P12	P13	P14
# adults	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	3
♂♀ teacher	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Teacher age	52	25	35	57	29	51	46	40	55	43	40	48	43	46
Experience	29	3	9	37	8	28	25	21	4	10	12	19	3	12
Diploma	4	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	3	4	3	3	3
Age of children	4-5	5-6	4-6	4-6	5-7	5-7	5-6	3-4	3-4	3-4	5-6	4-6	3-4	4-5
# children	23	21	24	24	24	24	23	18	20	20	23	22	14	22
Room size	115	115	93	93	93	116	115	93	119	95	116	115	57	115
Program type	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fee	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Free meal	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Parent education	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	5	3
f field trips	1	1	4	3	5	1	1	1	5	3	2	1	1	3

Table 1. *Preschool teacher demographic form.*

As part form environment analyse teacher demographic information was analysed both in preschools (Table 1) and day care (Table 2). In both tables can be seen similarities. As was

discusses previously in Latvia education systems day care groups are part of preschool education institutions and teachers that work in preschools in some cases work in day care groups. In most preschools there are 2 adults present for substantial part of the day. Only in 4 preschools and 3 day cares there are 3 adults present. All preschools teachers in observed preschools are female, which is true for all preschool teachers in Latvia.

Teacher's age is between 20 and 70 years old, there can't be seen any difference in age for preschool teachers and day care teachers, and experience of teachers. Both groups have yang and old teachers with different years of experience. There are little correlation between teachers age and years of experience, but for most teachers there are more years of experience when teacher is older.

Most of the teachers in preschool and day care has bachelor's degree, but there are also teachers with high school diploma. In Latvian education system teacher can work in preschool if learning is in process.

The age of children in day care groups are between 1,5 to 3 years and in preschools 3-7 years. Many preschool classrooms have gropes formed from children with similar age group.

In preschools there are from 14 to 24 children in one classrooms, most of preschools has 20 to 24 children in classroom, from table can be seen that number of children in classroom depends from size of room.

In most day care classrooms are 16 to 18 children and classroom size are generally smaller. In one private institution observed there were only 3 children in classroom.

	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	D 5	D 6	D 7	D 8	D 9	D 10	D 11	D 12
# adults	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
♂♀ teacher	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Teacher age	20	24	28	30	48	38	33	36	36	39	47	70
Experience	1	2	5	7	14	7	11	13	5	10	15	50
Diploma	1	1	4	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3
Age of children	1,5-2	1,5-2	2-3	1,5-3	1,5-3	2-3	2-3	1,5-3	2-3	1,5-3	1,5-3	1,5-3
# children	16	16	18	17	17	18	23	18	3	18	16	19
Room size	93	58	76	76	93	93	76	58	40	70	68	70
Program type	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fee	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
Free meal	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Parent education	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	3
f Field trips	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	5	3	3	1

Table 2. *Day care teacher demographic form*

All observed preschools have preschool education program and fee for meals. All but one private institution don't have fee for attendance. Parent education happens from once a month to once a year, and field trips taken depends form preschool, most preschools don't go to field trips, thous who go plans field trips from once a year to once a month. Most of day care classrooms don't go to field trips.

Daycares

ITERS-3. The scale consists of 33 Items that are organized into six subscales including Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language/Books, Activities, Interactions, and Program Structure. Total mean scale scores and average subscale scores for each daycare are given in *Table 9.*

Space and Furnishings	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Indoor Space	4	7	4	7	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	6
Furnishings for care play and learning	7	6	5	7	4	4	7	6	5	6	5	7
Room arrangement	6	5	7	4	4	5	5	4	5	6	4	7
Display for children	6	5	5	4	5	4	6	5	3	7	5	4
Subscale average	5,8	5,8	5,3	5,5	4,5	4,5	5,5	4,8	4,3	5,8	4,5	6

Table 3. Space and Furnishings subscale scores.

A. Space and Furnishings. This subscale consists of items that explore the qualities below:

1. **Indoor space**. This section evaluates the classroom space in terms of sufficiency, cleanliness, maintenance of the furniture and space, ventilation and lighting, and accessibility. Good and excellent indoor equipment was observed in all the younger preschool age groups involved in the study. Lightly cleanable and suitable material for the use of rooms is used in the fittings. Rooms are suitable for children of the youngest pre-school age, as their dimensions comply with Cabinet regulations, which states that children under three years of age need premises of 2,5 m2. It enables children to move safely and freely around the room. Regular cleaning, ventilation, minimum air temperature in rooms of children under three years of age was at least 20 °C. Floors have solid coverings that are easy to clean. Both natural and artificial lighting will be provided in to rooms. However, the spaces are difficult to access for people with disabilities.

2. **Equipment for care, playing and training**. This section examines the conditions of furniture, regardless of number, according to the size of children in infants and young children. Whether the furniture is in good condition, proper softness and easy to use. In Latvia, the physical environment of pre-school is developed on the basis of Cabinet regulations, which prescribe “hygiene requirements for State and local government institutions”, which implement the pre-school education programme [4]. These Regulations prescribe the dimensions, placement and materials of furniture from which they are prepared. Introducing pre-school groups revealed that the furniture was suitable for the characteristics of the child's body. Furniture complied with ergonomics requirements and principles. Each group of this age has a separate lounge, or a bedroom of a size of 1,8 m2. Each child has their own locker in a wardrobe marked with a child's name or a different symbol. Groups have a special box in which children can put together things brought from home that they use in leisure games.

3. **Room arrangement.** This section evaluates how the room is organized in a way to enable adult supervision of children, accessibility, easy movement, and to set up interest centers. In observed pre-school groups, rooms are set up transparently. In view of the historical situation, the observed pre-school environment is built on the basis of the principles of a child-centred learning environment. The classroom is divided into teaching/activity areas so that the child can operate in small groups and individually, and that children's autonomy and self-regulation is encouraged. These areas are separated from each other by shelves, desks or carpets.

4. **Display for children.** This section evaluates if displayed materials are appropriate, at children's eye level, if they are regularly changed and promote conversations between children. Observed groups revealed that the materials, toys and evolving games match children's age. They are mostly placed on open shelves (see picture no 1).

Picture no 1. PII 10th shelves (photo author A.Randoha)

Images on the walls reveal the current theme of the month, week, children's interests. Children's works are displayed on the walls in many places. Drawings are placed at the height of children's eyes.

Overall, preschool received an average 4,3 or 6 points showing **almost good** and **almost excellent** quality. Children of the youngest pre-school age work daily in suitable rooms. The rooms are well lighted, ventilated, maintained with appropriate heat. Children have suitable furniture, they meet ergonomic requirements.

B. Personal Care Routine. This subscale consists of section that explore the qualities below:

1. **Meals/snacks.** In all pre-schools enrolled in the study, child feeding are provided with the basic principles of healthy nutrition. The interval of three to four hours is observed between meals. The menu is designed for one or two weeks. A separate menu is provided for children with health problems. Dishes and tableware comply with safety requirements. Health requirements are carefully respected. Children are inspired to reinforce their eating skills during meals.

2. **Diapering/toileting**. This section examines whether the sanitary procedures are followed, whether the diaper/toilet schedule is in line with the needs of each child, whether adult monitoring is ensured and basic health skills are being acquired in common. Observing situation, it was revealed that a labelled potty chair was provided for each child under the age of three. The individual needs of children are met, "potty training" is learned individually, diapers are changed.

3. **Health practices.** This section examines hygiene practices, their compliance with situations, the voluntary participation of a child and joint learning. The toilet contains toilet paper as well as soap or liquid soap for hand washing. Each child has his/her own towel to wipe hands. Disposable towels are also available. Adults support and promote child's desire to learn how to wash hands. There are hand washing and sweeping schemes next to the washbasins and towel hangers. Teachers are using nursery rhyme.

4. **Safety practices.** This section evaluates indoor and outdoor spaces from a safety perspective and the adult monitoring process. In accordance with Cabinet regulations in Latvia, preschool may only be located in a building designed or adapted in conformity, for which the assessment of the Health Inspectorate regarding compliance with hygiene requirements has been received. All pre-schools involved in the study are located in appropriate buildings. All pre-school playgrounds are organised according to the safety of children - well transparent. When children participate in activities in the playground, the teacher does not have to stop and support children all the time. For safety reasons, the teacher will be at a suitable distance to help the child if needed and enable the child to feel the limit of his/her ability at the same time.

Personal Care Routines	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Meals/snacks	7	7	4	5	5	6	7	6	5	7	6	5
Diapering/toileting	7	7	7	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	7
Health practices	6	6	7	5	3	4	6	6	5	7	4	5
Safety practices	6	7	6	4	5	6	5	4	4	4	4	7
Subscale average	6,5	6,8	6	4,8	4,3	5	5,5	5	4,5	5,8	4,5	6

Table 4. *Personal care routines subscale scores*

The study concluded that the physical environment is adequate and that the junior pre-school age group teachers care about children's safety and physical wellbeing. Subscale average is betwine 4,3 and 6,8.

C. Language and Books. This subscale explore the qualities below:

1. **Talks with children.** This section evaluates occurrence and nature of conversation between staff and children. The observation revealed that teachers from all pre-schools engage in and maintain conversations with children. There were an open, positive and loving relationship between the educator and the children. Children's questions were answered on time. The children were heard, encouraged to speak and to ask a questions. Answers to children's questions were sought jointly.

2. **Encouraging vocabulary development**. This section evaluates how teachers support new vocabulary acquisition. Observation reveals that teachers in talks with children contribute to the expansion of vocabulary in daily situations. By promoting the learning of new names, teachers name things that children use in their activities. Teachers comment on both - their and children's activities while learning the verb. Teachers deliberately and purposefully include the new words in their speech, both daily and playing lessons.

3. **Responding to children's communication**. This section is about how teachers respond to what children communicate, whether it is pleasant, educative, and responsive to what child needs. It was observed that educators were happy to talk to children and indirectly teach a child with their own attitudes. Teacher's behaviour, attitudes, language, style of action affects children's values. The child learns to understand values such as dignity, honesty, kindness, help.

3. **Promoting children's communication.** This section evaluates how teachers initiate conversations with children, ask questions and answer questions raised by children. In pre-school groups, it was observed that teachers working side-by-side with children provide a model for positive relationships, cooperation, conflict resolution. Talking to each child separately, helping him to solve the problem, for example, if the child cannot open the box, the educator encourages him/her to think more widely and to find the solutions to this particular situation. It was observed that teachers assessed the situations and helped only when it was necessary.

4. **Staff use of books with children.** This section is about how staff reads books to children and responds to children's behavior and reactions during book time. It became clear that teachers don't read books frequently enough in daily situations, in playing lessons, despite the fact that there are plenty of picture books in groups and children's age. Mostly books are readed before the day's sleep.

5. **Encouraging children's use of books.** This section checks appropriateness, circulation, availability and accessibility of books and whether staff provides positive attention when children engage in independent reading. The observed preschool groups had a sufficient number of books. They correspond with children's age. Books are arranged on accessible, open shelves. It was observed that an educator supports a child's desire to look through the book and talk to an adult about what appeared in the book.

Language and Books	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Talking with children	5	6	7	3	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	7
Encourage vocabulary development	5	6	6	3	5	5	3	4	3	3	3	6
Responding to children's communication	5	7	5	4	5	5	4	3	3	5	3	6
Encourage children to communicate	5	6	7	4	5	6	4	3	3	5	3	7
Staff use of books with children	7	3	4	1	1	1	4	4	4	5	4	7
Encourage children's use of books	6	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	5	3	4	5
Subscale average	5,3	5,3	5,7	3,2	4	4,2	3,8	3,7	3,7	4,3	3,5	6,3

Table 5. *Lenguage and books subscale scores*

In general, the development of children's language was promoted in pre-school. Teachers talk to children, read books. Working with children, educators ask children about the object, color, size,

and shape of objects in pictures. Educators give children a chance to get to know real things by using all the senses.

D. Activities. This subscale consists of section that explore the qualities below:

1. **Fine motor.** This section checks availability of manipulatives, and learning opportunities provided during the use of fine motor materiāls. All observed groups contain materials, games that contribute to the development of fine motor. Children of this age have short-term concentration and poor self-regulation, so they cannot be expected to be able to carry out purely didactic tasks on a long-term basis while maintaining interest and motivation. If different activities with objects and materials are available in the group room, the child may reinforce the learned knowledge by acting independently, studying and discovering something new . The groups included both industrial toys and self-prepared by teachers (see Picture 2).

Picture 2. Teacher-made toy (photo author G. Simsone)

2. **Art.** This section is about availability and accessibility of art materials, supervision and support provided during their use. As observed all pre-chools before arts activities, children put on special art gowns to avoid smearing their clothes and being able to operate freely. Arts activities aren't organized every day, but twice a week. In 11 pre schools, the arts centre is coveted so that the flooring is solid and easy to clean so that the child can participate in the cleaning of spilled water or dripping paint. In these groups, art materials are freely available and usable for children. Children can work with them, get acquainted with materials, textures.
3. **Music and movement.** This section checks availability and accessibility of music materials, use of music and music/movement activities. The range of musical instruments is wide enough and is available to every child in the lesson. Outside the music lesson, both singing (during the morning circle) and listening to music are taking place in the group. Educators support a child's desire to dance in accompanied by music that suits children's age. Music tracks are available in groups.
4. **Blocks.** This section evaluates availability, accessibility, and storage of blocks and block center, and how staff cultivates learning at block play. There is sufficient construction material for the age of children in the observed groups. At this center are blocks of varying size, Lego, Duplo blocks, colored boxes, a toy car.
5. **Dramatic play.** All groups have a role playing centre. They contain materials corresponding to the centre (furniture, outfits, household objects). During the study, children were observed playing out everyday situations, such as boiling tea, putting dolls to sleep. Children played with scarves and hats. In all groups, toys were used to tell stories and fairy tales.

6. **Nature/science.** This section checks availability of opportunities to observe nature indoors and outdoors, to play with sand and water, to have conversations about natural/ scientific phenomena, and presence of a science center in classroom. A dime of nature and science is settled in all groups. It is regularly supplemented with seasonal materials (acorns, chestnuts, stones, straws). Children were offered the opportunity to compare chestnuts and acorns, to fill beans, and to use other natural materials according to the season and the topic of the day for activities that highlight the diversity of the colors and shape of the objects and the difference in size. The involvement of children in plant care was observed in seven groups. Six groups have a specially arranged sandcentre. There, children have a chance to work with sand, bleat them from the bowl in the bowl. Variety of sized spoons, spades, funnels was available. A broom with a spade was offered to the children playing in the sand centre. Every child had an opportunity to learn how to pick up fallen sand and how to tidy sand centre for the next player. Sandtables were available in six groups.

7. **Math/numbers.** This section checks availability and accessibility of math materials, use of math language by staff in their interactions with children, and provision of opportunities to learn math. Specifically prepared or selected materials are used in the mathematics centre, playing exercises with mathematical dominants, enabling children to see the characteristics of objects more clearly. These sets of objects can be used successfully for comparison and grouping. Exercises with didactic materials and toys, small objects to be grouped according to a particular feature (size or color) are successfully used in both math and personal work with children.

8. **Appropriate use of technology.** This section evaluates nature and appropriateness of tech materials and their use. Each observed group room contains a CD player, but not the latest technologies. The projector is available in a pre-school and can be used freely by educators to work with children. In general, the skills of teachers to work with the latest technologies and use them in the learning process can be assessed as good.

9. **Promoting acceptance of diversity.** The observation reveals that educators treat differences with respect and understanding, but the material (books, posters, toys) that would reflect diversity is not in sufficient quantities**.**

10. **Gross motor.** This section evaluates access to, quality, and use of indoor and outdoor gross motor play area. Outdoor environment areas are arranged appropriately and safe for children.

Activities												
	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Fine motor	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	3
Art	6	5	7	4	5	5	4	6	6	4	5	5
Music and movement	4	3	5	2	2	3	5	7	5	5	7	3
Blocks	7	4	5	1	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	6
Dramatic play	5	6	5	4	5	4	2	2	6	3	6	6
Nature/science	6	5	7	4	5	5	3	3	3	4	3	7
Math/ number	5	5	5	1	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	5
Appropriate use of tech.	5	1	5	1	2	1	4	6	3	5	3	5

Promoting acceptance of diversity	2	2	4	2	1	2	3	3	3	6	5	5
Gross motor	7	5	6	6	5	6	3	4	3	4	5	6
Subscale average	5,2	4,1	5,4	2,9	3,7	3,9	3,3	4,4	3,8	4,3	4,5	5,1

Table 6. *Activities subscale scores*

Study finds that groups, group activity centres are provided with a material base. Both industrial and educational toys can be found in groups. Natural materials are being used successfully. The use of natural materials and the active exploration of nature during walks and outdoor activities provide ample opportunities for the promotion of sensory development. With colors, smells, flavors, with different surface textures, the natural environment is an inexhaustible source of cognition.

D. Interaction. This subscale consists of items that explore the qualities below:

1. **Supervision of gross motor play.** This section evaluates provision of challenging, vigorous, and pleasant gross motor play under adult supervision. Promoting the physical activity of children pre-schools organize sport lessons. Sport teacher works twice a week with children. In these lessons, children work with age-appropriate sports equipment. Three times a week, in addition to a walk, classes are organized outside. Their aim is to promote children's natural desire to move. Outside, in fresh air, children were seen feeling and behaving more naturally and cheerfully.
2. **Supervision of play and learning (non-gross motor).** This section checks if constant and individualized supervision of children is provided, and how staff intervenes when needed. Children of this age learn a lot more intuitively, but at this age the child should be taught to learn, helped to figure out how he did it or other findings, how he or she identified it or any other characteristic. The skills of educators to promote children's desire to learn can be judged as good, excellent, as it was observed that the educator shows children a variety of subjects how they are studied. It was observed that teachers offered children a variety of materials and lessons at different degrees of difficulty, gradually increasing the level of difficulty corresponding to the child's ability to avoid becoming bored and stimulating the growth of his or her abilities Children are often enough to receive individual support, contributing to the development of their skills
3. **Peer interaction**. This section evaluates how staff encourage children interact with each other and facilitate and guide children during the process, models social skills, and acknowledge positive social interactions. Observing the groups revealed that half of teachers talked to children about their activities, feelings and provided continued support for children's activities and peer-to-peer cooperation. For some of the observed groups, this skill should be improved.
4. **Staff-child interaction.** This section evaluates whether staff provide emotional support to children when they need, positively respond to children’s communication efforts, and interact with all children in their care. In all observed groups, educators create a positive atmosphere in the group room, set boundaries and help the child to follow them. Children, together with the educator, learn to operate in compliance with safety and order rules while they receive

the support of the educator, don't worry about errors. It was observed that when they received such support, children were not afraid to try new things.

5. **Providing physical warmth/touch.** This section checks if teachers are a source of constant caring and warm physical contact matching individual preferences and needs of children. Educators were found to be forging a positive relationship with a child, consistently showing children that their views and activities are valuable.

6. **Guiding children's behavior.** This section checks if staff uses positive behavior management strategies including focusing on positive behavior, teaching empathy and social skills to solve conflicts, and setting appropriate expectations. Children learn in the social world where more experienced partners help them to see laws and solutions. The study finds that educators show children a positive example in all areas, both behavioral, language and material usage.

Interaction												
	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Supervision of gross motor play	7	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
Supervision (non-gross motor)	6	7	6	3	6	7	3	5	6	4	4	7
Peer interaction	5	5	4	4	5	5	3	3	2	2	3	7
Staff- child interaction	4	6	7	6	5	6	3	3	4	3	3	7
Providing physical warmth/touch	5	6	7	6	4	7	4	5	3	3	3	6
Guiding children's behavior	5	7	6	6	4	5	7	5	5	5	5	7
Subscale average	5,3	6	5,9	4,3	4,7	5,7	4,2	4,2	4	3,5	3,7	6,5

Table 7. *Interaction subscale scores*

In general, the study revealed that educators care about the emotional atmosphere, ensure the well-being of children. Teachers learn to trust children because by allowing children to work freely, they will ask for help if necessary. Whatever kind of help the teacher would offer, it is just an offer, the child can accept or withdraw from the offer.

E. Program Structure. This subscale consists of items that explore the qualities below:

1. **Schedule and transitions.** This section checks whether schedule and transitions are flexible enough to meet individual needs of children, activities are prepared ahead of time in a way to leave no room for waiting periods with nothing to do, and transitions are smooth. It was observed that when planning lessons and activities, the teacher was trying to strike a balance between following a carefully designed, prepared plan and taking a flexible approach to various unplanned changes. In four pre-schools, this teaching skills to plan based on the child's interest can be improved. Changing daily plans according to the child's current interests. Children are not rushed. They are not forced to continue their activities, for which interest has been lost.

2. **Free play.** This section evaluates if children are given ample time and materials for free play with adults being the facilitator and promoter. In the observed younger age groups, the free play has been given a sufficiently important place. The attitudes of teachers can be described as good and excellent. Teachers are welcome and sensitive to children's games. They show interest, delight in the work of a child and give encouragement to the functioning of children. It implicitly supports children's internal motivation and pride in their activities. It was observed that children were encouraged to choose their own way of action.

3. **Group play activities.** This section evaluates whether group play activities are voluntary, engaging, carried out in smaller groups, adjusted to needs of children, and go along with alternative activities for those not participating. Large group activities are planned with a differentiated and individual approach. Topics relate to the interests of children, the rhythms of everyday life and educational institutions. When planning the practice, educators included a moment of surprise or used images of fairy tales familiar to children to energize children, encourage engagement, make a task of playing, emotionally saturated and self-wanted activity.

Program Structure	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Schedule and transitions	6	7	5	4	6	7	7	5	6	6	5	7
Free play	5	7	7	5	5	6	6	5	6	4	5	7
Group play activities	5	5	7	3	2	3	5	5	4	5	3	7
Subscale average	5,3	6,3	6,3	4	4,3	5,3	6	5	5,3	5	4,3	7

Table 8. *Program structure subscale scores*

In general, the learning environment in the observed groups is considered to be good.

Overall, the results can be seen in the 12 pre-school groups, with an average number of ITERS-3 points of 4,1 to 6,2. This leads to the conclusion that pre-schools can be judged as very good and excellent.

Average Subscale Scores	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12
Space and Furnishings	5,8	5,8	5,3	5,5	4,5	4,5	5,5	4,8	4,3	5,8	4,5	6
Personal Care Routines	6,5	6,8	6	4,6	4,3	5	5,5	5	4,5	5,8	4,5	6
Language and Books	5,3	5,3	5,7	3,2	4	4,2	3,8	3,7	3,7	4,3	3,5	6,3
Activities	5,2	4,1	5,4	2,9	3,7	3,9	3,3	4,4	3,8	4,3	4,5	5,1
ction	5,3	6	5,8	4,3	4,7	5,7	4,2	4,2	4	3,5	3,7	6,5
Program Structure	5,3	6,3	6,3	4	4,3	5,3	6	5	5,3	5	4,3	7
Total Mean Score	5,6	5,7	5,6	4,1	4,3	4,8	4,7	4,5	4,7	4,8	4,2	6,2

Table 9. *Average subscale scores*

Peschools

ECERS-R. The scale consists of 43 Items that are organized into six subscales including Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parent and Staff. Total mean scale scores and average subscale scores for each preschool are given in *Table 17.*

Space and Furnishings	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Indoor space	6	6	7	7	7	7	4	5	5	5	5	4	7	5
Furniture for routine care & learning	7	6	6	7	6	7	4	2	4	2	4	5	6	6
Furnishing for relaxation and comfort	5	5	7	7	4	7	2	2	2	2	2	5	4	4
Room arrangement for play	5	6	6	6	4	6	4	3	4	5	3	5	4	5
Space for privacy	6	6	5	5	5	4	1	3	1	1	1	5	4	7
Child-related display	4	4	4	5	4	5	3	2	2	3	2	7	5	6
Space for gross motor play	6	6	5	5	4	4	2	3	3	3	2	7	4	5
Gross motor equipment	4	4	7	7	7	7	4	5	4	5	5	7	7	6
Subscale average	5.4	5.4	5.9	6.1	5.1	5.9	3	3.1	3.1	3.3	3	5.6	5.1	5.5

A. Space and Furnishings.

1. Indoor space measures indoor premises' suitability for learning. 5 out of 14 preschools in Latvia are measured as excellent, 2 out of 14 was almost excellent and 5 had

Table 10.*Space and furnishing subscale scores*

good score. That means that preschools have ample indoor space, that allows children and adults to move around freely, good, controllable ventilation, space is reasonably clean, in good repair and has natural light. Indoor space wasn't ranked for accessibility to children with disabilities, because no classrooms with children with disabilities was observed.

2. **Furniture for routine care and learning** in 8 of 14 observed preschools are excellent or almost excellent. In classrooms furniture are child sized, furniture for routine care is easy to use, in some classroom's children can play with sand tables, furniture is sturdy and safe. 2 preschools got less then minimal ranked furniture for routine care and learning, not all furniture was sturdy and in good repair and there was not enough furniture for routine care and learning.
3. **Furnishing for relaxation and comfort** in observed preschools needs to be improved – only 3 from 14 preschools got excellent results and 3 from 14 preschools got good results. In classrooms there need to be more places with soft furnishing or cozy area and if there are cozy aerial it needs to accessible for substantial part of day. 5 of 14 preschools got below minimal requirements for furnishing for relaxation and comfort. There wasn't enough soft furnishing – carpets or cushions and no soft toys accessible.

4. **Room arrangement for play** in Latvia is good. As we can see in table above, 4 from 14 has got almost excellent score, 3 preschools good score and 3 almost good score. Excellent room arrangement for play means that there are at least 5 different interest centers, centers are not interrupted by other activities and children have opportunity to do activities in quiet area, there are enough space for more than one activity to take place in center. Improvements are still needed for additional materials to add or change centers, canters need to be labeled to promote development of reading skill, there need to be more interest centers.

5. **Space for privacy** is inadequate in 4 of 14 observed preschools which mean that children are not allowed to play alone, protected from other children. In 7 of observed preschools the space for privacy is good or better, with space set aside where children can play alone with friends and not be disturbed by other children, space for privacy is accessible for substantial part of the day.

6. **Child- related display** as seen from the table still needs to be improved by adding display related to current activities, displaying more children's work for learning and revising activities in classrooms, displayed children's work needs to be more individualized. During research in classrooms was displayed some of children's work and three- dimensional child-created display made from play drought and other materials, the displays are appropriate for children's age.

7. **Space for gross motor play** is good. In Latvia there are places for gross motor play inside and outside, space is big enough that different activities do not interfere with one another, gross motor space is safe. Most preschool does not have easy access to gross motor play arias for children in group, because the play areas are in different level then the classroom and children need to use stares, not all preschools have protection from elements available in outdoor gross motor spaces, none of observed preschools had convenient features in outdoor gross motor play spaces such as close location to toilet and drinking water.

8. **Gross motor equipment** in most of observed Latvian preschools are excellent. 7 from 14 preschools got 7 points. There are enough gross motor equipment and children don't need to wait long periods of time to use it, equipment stimulates a variety of skills, both stationary and portable gross motor equipment are in use, the equipment is appropriate for the age of the children. In some preschools there are not enough gross motor equipment - there are

only some balls, not enough climbing equipment and slides, sometimes only one bike - and children need to wait to play.

B. Personal care routines.

1. **Greeting and departing** in observed preschools divides in two categories. 6 preschools are excellent with greeting and departing, 3 preschools are doing good. In these preschools, parents can bring children to classroom, teachers say hello to every child and some of the teachers helped child to find activity to do. Departure is pleasant, children can take time to say goodbye, finish their work, children have something to do until departure time. Staff talks warmly to parents and informs about events and activities happening during the daytime. In 5 of observed preschools not all children were greeted warmly, departure was well organized, but children didn't got chances to hug and say goodbye to everyone.

2. **Meals and snacks** in Latvian preschools are mostly excellent or almost excellent. Most of the staff sits and eats with children, there are pleasant atmosphere and children are encouraged to eat independently, dietary restrictions are followed, children have chance to help during the meals.

3. **Nap and rest** were observed in all preschools. In most preschools nap and rest reaches minimal requirements. In all preschool's children slept in beds, but they were placed closely together and no solid barrier was put on between beds. Nap and rest time were not flexible, children didn't had opportunity to rest during non-nep ours and early risers needed to stay in beds. Most of the children were sleeping during observations and there was enough supervision of children during the rest. Sleeping area was clean and had clean bedding.

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4. **Toileting and diapering** most of observed preschools are excellent or almost excellent. Toilets are child sized, self help skills are promoted – children wash hands and dry them in personalized towels. There are enough towels, soaps and warm water. Toilets are easily accessible.

Personal care routines	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Greeting/departing	5	5	7	7	7	5	3	3	3	3	3	7	7	7
Meals/snacks	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	7	7	7	5	4	5	4
Nap/rest	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Toileting/diapering	6	7	7	7	7	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	7	6
Health practices	6	7	7	7	7	7	2	2	2	2	2	6	7	5
Safety practices	6	5	7	7	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	7	7	7
Subscale averages	5.3	5.7	6.3	6.3	6.2	5.8	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.3	5.3	6.2	5.5

Table 11. *Personal care routines subscale scores*

5. **Health practices** in most of observed preschools are excellent or good. Children are taught how to wash hands properly, dress themselves and keep clothes in order, flush toilets, health related books and pictures used. Individualized sanitary product used, staff are good models for health, children appearance are kept, care givers notice if children are dirty and help children to clean themselves. In some preschools minimal health practice standards weren't met because adequate handwashing didn't take place after wiping nose or when soiled, staff didn't take enough action to cut down on the spread of germs.

6. **Safety practices** in 7 of observed preschool was excellent and in 2 good or almost excellent. Playing areas are arranged to avoid safety problems, the play grounds are separate, outdoor equipment meets safety standards. Staff actively acts to prevent safety problems by removing dangerous or misplaced objects and teaches children to do the same, explain safety rules to children. In some preschools the teachers didn't pay enough attention to the safety hazards and didn't explain safety rules to children. This is the reason why 5 out of 14 preschools got only minimal mark.

Language-Reasoning	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Books and pictures	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	2	2	2	4	6	5	6
Encouraging to communicate	5	5	6	6	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	6	6	7
Language to develop reasoning skills	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	6	3	7
Informal use of language	4	4	4	4	6	5	3	4	3	4	4	7	4	6
Subscale averages	4.3	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.5	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.8	3	6.3	4.5	6.5

Table 12. *Language and Reasoning subscale scores*

C. Language – reasoning

1. **Books and pictures** in half of preschools observed are good or better in order to improve the quality of children's learning process. There were books related to current activities, wide selection of books was available, books were organized in reding center. There were additional language materials. Teachers was reading to children. Some of observed preschools need to improve the accessibility of books to children, reading to children and using other language materials in everyday activities.

2. **Encouraging children to communicate** in observed preschools was mostly good or better. The staff actively listens to children and ask questions appropriately to children's age, in

different interest centers are accessible materials that encourage commination – small figures, books, toys for dramatic play. In 5 preschools the minimal requirements were not met. There were not enough toys for dramatic play and communication with children, staff didn't pay attention to children's questions.

3. **Language to develop reasoning skills** in 8 preschools got minimal or almost good results. 4 preschools didn't reach minimal requariments. Preschools need to improve staff talk about logical relationships and to encourage children to talk and explain their reasoning when solving problems.

4. **Informal use of language** is almost good or better in most of the preschools. During the monitoring it was observed that the staff have individual conversations with most of the children, sometimes children are asked a question to encourage them to answer, staff often speaks with children during free play.

D. Activities

1. **Fine motor skill** development in 8 observed preschools is good or better, in one almost good, but in 5 preschools it doesn't meet minimal requirements. In most of preschools there are many developmentally appropriate fine motors materials of each type, materials are well organized and varies in difficulty level, children with the help from the staff choose materials according to their needs and interests. In 5 preschools there are not enough materials for fine motor skill development available to children and some of the materials are not in good condition.

2. **Art** material selection in all but one preschool is lower then good and 4 preschools don't meet minimal requirements. In classrooms are many variable art materials, but teachers need to pay more attention for individual activities and children's access to art materials during free playing. In all preschool's at least once a week child work with three-dimensional art materials, and almost all activities are related to other classroom activities.

3. **Music and movement** skill development meets minimal or lower requirements in 8 preschools. The musical activities are organized in groups together with musical teacher outside classrooms, in classrooms there are almost no musical materials accessible for children's use. In most classrooms there are at least one musical activity daily – singing greeting song in the mornings or listening to the music during activities. During organized musical activities children participate singing, listening to the music, working with simple musical instruments such as wooden sticks, rhythmical movements and dancing.

4. **Blocks** in 4 preschools are sufficient for children's activities and have more than one type of blocks, they are organized by types, and have special area for block playing and are accessible in outdoor area. In 5 preschools the block playing is inadequate and don't have enough blocks available for children's play. Rest of preschools have some blocks available, but there is not enough variation in blocks.

5. **Sand and water** activities in 7 preschools are almost good, 1 good and 4 minimal. All preschools have sand play accessible outdoors during spring, summer and autumn, none of observed preschools had water play accessible for substantial time of day - mostly it is used

during specific activities. Some preschools had sand activities indoors accessible for substantial time of day. Preschools need to improve the variation of toys accessible for playing in sand.

Activities	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Fine motor	5	5	5	6	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	5	6	4
Art	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	5
Music/movement	2	2	2	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	3
Blocks	4	6	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	6	6	7
Sand/water	3	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	2	4	4	3	3	5
Dramatic play	4	4	4	5	5	4	6	3	5	5	6	7	4	7
Nature/science	5	6	6	6	6	6	3	4	3	3	4	6	4	7
Math/number	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	6	4	7
Technology	4	1	3	3	5	4	6	4	3	4	6	2	3	5
Diversity	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	6	5	6	6	5	2	3
Subscale averages	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.2	3.8	4	3.5	3.2	3.7	4.2	4.8	3.9	5.3

Table 13. *Activities subscale scores*

6. **Dramatic play** in 5 preschools is almost good, and in 8 preschools even good or better, 2 of them having excellent marking. In classrooms there are many materials for dramatic play accessible during free playing time, dramatic play has their own playing area, some preschools rotate materials for variety of themes and has props for different themes. In two preschools there were props accessible outdoors.

7. **Nature and science** in 6 preschools is almost excellent, 1 excellent and 1 good. It shows that in most preschools there are many developmentary appropriate games, materials are accessible for children during free play, the games and materials are in good repair and organized, in everyday activities nature and science elements can bee seen during activities. In all preschools nature and science activities requiring more impute from staff are organized once a week, in some classrooms there are books and pictures accessible for children's use.

8. **Math and numbers** in all but 2 preschools are at good or almost good level. There are many developmentary materials of various type in classrooms, materials are well organized and accessible for children during free play, math and numbers elements are integrated in everyday learning. In all preschools dedicated math and number activities are organized at least once a week.

9. **Technology, use of TV, video and/or computers**. In most preschools the access to technology is not daily and organized activities about use of theology are organized once a month. In learning activities staff works only with educational videos and short movies/ cartoons. Computers are not freely accessible to children and are used only in group activities as visual material. In some activity's children can sing, dance and do other activities according to materials shown. Cartoons, computer games and movies are not used during free paly.

10. **Diversity** varies from almost excellent and good in 6 preschools, and lower then minimal in 7 preschools. In preschools that didn't got minimal points for diversity are no racial, gender, age and culture diversity visible in materials or props. In all preschools staff intervene appropriately to counteract prejudice shown by other adults or children, discussing similarities and differences, establishing rules for fair treatment of others.

Interaction	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Supervision of gross motor activities	6	6	7	6	7	6	2	2	2	2	2	6	7	6
General supervision	7	5	7	7	7	5	2	2	2	2	3	7	7	6
Discipline	7	4	7	7	7	6	5	4	4	4	3	6	7	4
Staff-child interactions	7	3	7	7	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	7	7	6
Interactions among children	5	6	7	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	3	6	6	6
Subscale averages	6.4	4.8	7	6.6	6.8	6.0	3	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	6.4	6.8	5.6

Table 14. *Interaction subscale scores*

E. Interaction

1. **Supervision of gross motor activities** in 9 preschools is excellent or almost excellent. Staff act to prevent dangerous situations before they occur by removing dangerous toys, stopping rough play. Steff- child interaction is pleasant and staff introduce children with new equipment and how to use it. Staff help children to set materials for activities, and develop positive social interaction. 5 preschools doesn't meet minimal points, that shows that supervision is not adequate to protect children's health, staff can't see all areas and doesn't move around as needed, staff always don't use pleasant tone of voice.

2. **General supervision** results are similar as seen with supervision of gross motor activities, preschools who had difficulties with gross motor activity supervision has difficulties with general supervision. Minimal criteria are: supervision to protect children's safety, attention to cleanliness and appropriate use of materials, non – punitive supervision. Preschools that did well had staff that help children and encourage when needed, pay attention to whole group

even when working with one child or in small group, ask questions related to child's play. Staff maintained balance between child's need to explore and learning impute from staff.

3. **Discipline** in most of preschools is good or better. Staff use non- punitive discipline, duplicate toys are assessable to prevent conflicts, all staff in one classroom plays the same rules. Staff help children to develop skills for solving their conflicts and problems, during activities staff help children to better understand social skills.

4. **Staff-child interactions** is excellent or almost excellent in 8 preschools and minimal in 6 classrooms. There can be seen correlation between supervision and staff- child interaction. Preschools where supervision was beloved minimal staff almost always respond to children in warm manner, and had only five unpleasant interactions. Staff don't show warmth true appropriate physical contact, and always don't show respect to children, staff doesn't seem to enjoy being with children, and don't encourage the development of mutual respect between children and adults.

5. **Interaction among children** shows the same coloration between supervision and interaction as seen above. Preschools with best results help children to develop appropriate social behavior with peers by helping children to talk trough conflicts, stops negative and hurtful peer interactions, help find friends, help understand feelings of others, models good social skills. In classrooms peer interaction is positive, children can work together to complete task appropriate to their age.

Program Structure	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Schedule	6	6	6	6	5	5	2	1	1	2	2	6	5	5
Free play	4	4	7	4	6	4	3	4	5	4	3	6	6	4
Group time	5	5	6	5	5	6	3	4	1	2	3	5	6	5
Provisions for children with disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Subscale averages	5	5	6.3	5	5.3	5.0	2.7	3	2.3	2.7	2.7	5.7	5.7	4.7

Table 15. *Program Structure subscale scores*

F. Program structure

1. **Schedule** in 9 preschools are good or almost excellent. In these preschools schedule provide balance of structure and flexibility, teachers can make changes in schedule if learning process or individual needs. A verity of play activities occurs each day both structured and free play. Most of the day are dedicated to play activities. Staff organize smooth transitioning between activities and children don't need to wait for long periods of time. In preschools where, minimal points weren't met or schedule was inadequate the schedule was to rigid and strict, leaving no

time for individual interests and free play or too chaotical, staff focused to children's needs was to high and no organized learning activities took place.

2. **Free play** in 7 preschools is almost good and in 5 almost excellent or excellent. Children can play freely and according to their one interests for substantial part of the day indoors and outdoors, ample and varied toys, games and equipment provided and are rotated for new experience, during free play supervision is provided. When staff supervises children, they do educational interaction with play.

Parents and Staff	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Provisions for parents	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	5
Provisions for personal needs of staff	4	4	6	6	6	6	7	6	7	7	7	4	5	6
Provisions for professional needs of staff	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	4	3	3	4	5	7
Staff interaction and cooperation	5	5	7	7	7	7	3	3	4	3	3	4	7	5
Supervision and evaluation of staff	3	4	4	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	4
Opportunities for professional growth	5	5	6	6	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	3	6	4
Subscale averages	4.7	4.8	5.7	5.5	5.7	5.5	3.7	3.5	4	3.7	3.7	4.2	5.3	5.2

Table 16. *Parents and Staff subscale scores*

3. **Group time** in 4 preschools reach minimal requirements or less then minimal, only some or no activities in these preschools done in small groups, most of the time children are together as whole group, staff really interact with children individually. In other preschools group time is good or almost excellent, whole group gathers only in beginning of activities, greeting and discussing team of the day. Most of play activities done individually or in small groups. Children groping differs from task and skill level, or children choose. Staff organize learning activities in small groups, individually or with whole group.

4. **Provision for children with disabilities** wasn't graded, because in selected preschool classrooms was no children with disabilities. In Latvian regular preschools children are with no disabilities or mild food allergies, dallied speech development and mild problems with sight. These children are integrated in preschools and staff tends to their needs if needed, providing special food in mealtime, accepting environment in classroom and extra time to speak out if needed.

Subscales	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14
Space and Furnishings	5.4	5.4	5.9	6.1	5.1	5.9	3	3.1	3.1	3.3	3	5.6	5.1	5.5
Personal Care Routines	5.3	5.7	6.3	6.3	6.2	5.8	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.3	5.3	6.2	5.5
Language-Reasoning	4.3	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.5	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.8	3.0	6.3	4.5	6.5
Activities	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.2	3.8	4	3.5	3.2	3.7	4.2	4.8	3.9	5.3
Interaction	6.4	4.8	7	6.6	6.8	6	3	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	6.4	6.8	5.6
Program Structure	5	5	6.3	5	5.3	5	2.7	3	2.3	2.7	2.7	5.7	5.7	4.7
Parents and Staff	4.7	4.8	5.7	5.5	5.7	5.5	3.7	3.5	4	3.7	3.7	4.2	5.3	5.2
Total mean scale score	5	4.8	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	5.5	5.4	5.5

Table 17 . *Subscales of learning environment in preschools subscale scores*

G. **Parent and staff**

1. **Provision for parents** in all preschools is good or almost excellent. Parents has opportunity to observe work in preschool before enrollment, parents are informed about philosophy and approaches by providing discipline policy, descriptions of activities and other materials. Parents asked to evaluate program and work of preschools, involved of decision making in preschool one or two times a year. If needed parents are referred to other professionals. Child related information is shared every day when greeting and departing from preschool.

2. **Provisions for personal need of staff** needs to be improved in 3 preschools providing, Longue with adult- sized furniture preferably not used for any other purpose and for adult use only. Secure and convent storage for personal belongings, brakes provided daily.

3. **Provision for professional needs** of staff is good or better in 8 preschools and almost good in 2. Staff has ample storage space, administration has separate well equipped office space, there are space for conferences and adult group meetings with no difficulties for scheduling do to dual use and are conveniently located.

4. **Staff interaction and cooperation** in most of observed preschools is good or excellent. Child related information is communicated daily, staff interaction are positive and warm, responsibilities are shared between staff members, some preschools still need to find time for both teachers to plan activities together at least once a week, many preschools has organized social events.

5. **Supervision and evaluation** of staff needs be improved in all preschools by organizing annual observation and self-evaluation by staff, written evaluation and frequent feedback of performance shared with staff, strengths and areas for improvement defined in the staff, act to implement recommendations.

6. **Opportunities for personal growth** ranges from almost good to excellent in 8 preschools. 5 preschools don't reach minimal requirements and need to improve orientation for new staff and support organizing attendance of courses, conferences, workshops and other activities. Regular in-service training provided, accessible professional library, staff meetings include staff development activities.

Subscales of preschool environment evaluation

Most preschools have good total score for preschool environment, which shows that although some improvements can be made overall situation are good. To improve learning environment all preschools needs to improve materials for activities. Best reslts for most of the preschools we can see in interaction. This category is directly affected by teacher's professionalism and practice in classrooms.

As we can see from table above preschools P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 has worst results from all preschools in all categories with total score reaching minimal requirements. This shows that all categories are connected, and if the preschool is lacking in one area then all is affected. Worst categories for these preschools are language and reasoning, interaction and program structure. These categories are directly affected by teacher's professionalism, but other categories are affected by physical environment. To improve teacher's professionalism administration needs to pay extra attention to teachers professional and personal development, by regular assessing teachers work and establishing what needs to be improved.

Conclusions:

•education reform aims to encourage confidence that successful pedagogical work can be achieved if the teacher is open to the demand and change of pupils in Latvia,

•participation in local and international projects provides an active exchange of information and a deeper understanding of the development of the environmental and pedagogical work process.

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