

A COMPARISON OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC)
POLICY IN KOREA, GERMANY, AND THE UNITED STATES

by

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“A Comparison of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Policy in Korea, Germany, and the United States,” a thesis prepared by Bok Hyun Nam in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Public Administration degree in the department of Planning, Public Policy and Management. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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Title: A COMPARISON OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE
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This study aims at proposing desirable policy directions for ECEC in Korea in order to achieve ECEC goals by comparing the ECEC of Korea to that of Germany and the U.S. Suggestions for ECEC in Korea are: creating MOGEF-oriented, unified administration; increasing public funding; strengthening regulations for improving quality; expanding the range of beneficiaries; and securing equal access for the needy. These three countries are becoming convinced of the importance of provision for young children--both as a first investment in lifelong learning and as a support to the wider economic and social needs of families. Yet participation in ECEC varies, depending on the country. ECEC investment is not homogeneous, and does not yield a constant return. In shaping ECEC investment, countries face a spectrum of policy choices, and have to develop a wide range of systems that vary along several dimensions. At the same time, these tentative conclusions await further refinement and correction in the light of further research about various topics: tax policies such as tax credits and deductions; parental leave policies; preparing for unification with North Korea; expanding female workforces and improving total fertility.

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I. Introduction

Background

One of the most important issues of the twenty-first century will be the way nations care for and education children, who represent the future of all nations. While Korea has been a highly developed country for many years, it cannot afford to spend a much larger share of its GDP on social policy than do most other industrialized countries. Similarly, most countries of the world recognize the value of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), beginning with the opportunities available to children under 5 years old for public education. Recently, the Korean government has changed two main policies with regard to increasing women's participation in the workplace. First, the Korean government is increasing public expenditure on ECEC; second, it is relocating the agencies in charge of child care from birth to five, from the Ministry of the Health and Welfare to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. As of 2005, the Korean government provided \$ 696.7 million or 0.25 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) to ECEC and will plan to provide an increasing 27.3 percent every year: \$1,005.6 million (in 2006), \$1,146.3 million (in 2007), \$1,440.5 million (in 2008), and \$1,650.6 million (in 2009). The most remarkable achievement of the reform has been increased interest in ECEC on the part of the government authority. In June 2004, the Korean government relocated the authority of child care facilities management from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). Child care facilities are now administered by the Childcare Policy Bureau within the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. A childcare paradigm shift is taking place from selective childcare (which supports children from low-income families or with both parents working) to general childcare (which provides equal opportunities to every young child), and also public childcare systems are to be established by governmental financial support.

European governments have established ECEC programs that provide work support for parents, provide development opportunities for children and prepare all children for school. The U.S. has established three separate ECEC programs (Head Start, Pre-K and the child care voucher program) as offshoots of other major policy initiatives. Each program has its own funding sources, goals, administration, standards, policies and evaluation literature. Considering Korea's social, historical and economical background, even though the social democratic countries such as Sweden, Norway, and France could be an ideal model, these models have a limited feasibility as models for Korea in the short-term. Therefore, I would like to examine Germany as a conservative country and the U.S. as a liberal country to make feasible policies and programs. Moreover, as Germany was divided before reunification in 1990, there will be many suggestions for Korea, which is divided into South Korea and North Korea. South Korea should prepare for unification with North Korea not only in the ECEC field, but also all other fields.

In Korea, traditional attitudes toward women, their role in society and their expected duties within the household are widespread. The changing roles of women at home and the substantial growth in female labor force participation rates, starting in the 1980s, have had an impact on the supply of child care and education services, just as in countries such as Germany and the United States. As the number of working women has grown in the workplace, the status of women has changed. At the same time, the demand for ECEC has grown rapidly. While preparing my thesis, I suffered from a lack of comprehensive data for effective policy making for ECEC. Even though the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) required unified forms to analyze cross-national information for improving policy making in ECEC in all OECD countries, the requirement was not sufficiently satisfied. Especially the U.S. submitted research and data which are limited to single issues and are often focused on a specific period or policy regime. Also, Germany did not prepare enough back data supporting their current situation. In this paper, I try to pull together information from all sources. I draw these diverse literatures together to provide an assessment of the Korean system as a whole.

The purpose of my thesis is to assist policy makers in creating ECEC policies that are feasible and adequate to support ECEC programs. Korean policy makers have much to gain from studying childcare financing and delivery approaches in other economically developed countries. Well-tested and politically popular models of ECEC have been in place for many years in the European welfare states and the U.S. A study of these models suggests alternative avenues that Korea may take in the expansion of these services.

To briefly preview our conclusions, the Korean ECEC system does not reach all potential beneficiaries, often provides unstable care with limited education or developmental content, and frequently imposes high transaction costs on low-income families. None of the Korean ECEC policies provide work support for parents, child development opportunities for children and school preparation for low-income children. The paper is structured as follows: In the next section, I will briefly review the way in which Korean, German, and the U.S. government policies affect ECEC. The Literature Review provides an overview of ECEC systems by examining existing documents. Since there are enormous amounts of related literature, this study focuses on the literature directly dealing with at least one of my research questions. Chapter 3, "ECEC Policies in the Republic of Korea" explains background, content and the current situation of ECEC systems in Korea. Chapter 4, "ECEC Policies in Germany" describes background, content and the current situation of ECEC in Germany. And Chapter 5, "ECEC Policies in the United States" describes background, content and the current situation of ECEC in the U.S. In chapter 6, I will discuss the wide array of methods facing the current Korean policies by comparing three countries. Findings summarizes the analysis of the proceeding chapters. I return to the research questions posed in the introduction and discuss the lessons learned from experiences in Germany and the United States. Finally, Chapter 7, Conclusion, describes desirable policy directions for ECEC in Korea. Here I will also suggest implications in design and implementation of ECEC in Korea. Moreover, the chapter briefly discusses questions that are relevant to this thesis which require further research, and provides a final conclusion.

Research Questions

Generally speaking, most European governments have universal, education-based ECEC programs. On the other hand, The U.S. ECEC programs have targeted low-income families.

- 1) What kinds of policies for ECEC does Korea have, and what problems are there in these fields?
- 2) In the cases of Germany and the U.S., what policies of ECEC do they have, and what are the advantages and disadvantages to both children and parents?
- 3) What are the implications and the emerging issues for Korea? How applicable could findings for ECEC be to Korea?

Methodology

In order to deal with my research questions, I followed two major approaches:

- 1) Literature review, both primary and secondary document analysis.
- 2) Comparative case studies on ECEC policies from Korea, America and Germany.

Especially, as the frame of analysis for document review, I used the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Education Committee's new frame "Thematic Review of ECEC Policy"(OECD, 2001), which focuses on eight aspects of the programs: Current Status of ECEC; Access; Quality; Regulation and Evaluation; Staffing; Program Contents and Implementation; Family Engagement and Support; and Funding and Financing. These aspects will be analyzed in terms of each country, and literature review to approach the findings and conclusion. Moreover, Meyers's theory will be employed: Meyers and Gornick (2000) employed Esping-Andersen's three-part typology, which grouped countries into the social democratic welfare states, the conservative welfare states, and the liberal welfare states. According to Esping-Andersen, the U.S. and Korea are liberal states, and Germany is a member of the conservative welfare states.

Purpose of This Thesis

The purpose of my thesis is to assist policy makers in creating ECEC policies that are feasible and adequate to support early childhood policies and programs. As we enter an era of likely policy expansion, Korean policy makers have much to gain from studying child care financing and delivery approaches in other economically developed countries. Well-tested and politically popular models of ECEC have been in place for many years in the European welfare states and the U.S. A study of these models suggests alternative avenues that Korea may take in the expansion of these services.

II. Literature Review

As mentioned above, this project will compare ECEC policies in Korea, Germany, and the U.S. This comparison will mainly focus on eight aspects of the policies: Current Status of ECEC; Access; Quality; Regulation and Evaluation; Staffing; Program Contents and Implementation; Family Engagement and Support; and Funding and Financing. These aspects will be analyzed in terms of each country.

Context of ECEC

OECD (2001) defined the term ECEC, which includes all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programmed content. The ECEC age range is commonly defined as birth to age 8. “Care” and “education” are inseparable concepts, and quality services for children necessarily provide both.

Kammerman (2000) showed that “ECEC includes a wide range of part-day and full-day programs under education, health, and social welfare auspices, funded and delivered in a variety of ways in both the public and private sectors, designed sometimes with an emphasis on the “care” component of ECEC and at other times with stress on “education” or with equal attention to both.”

In terms of ECEC policy and programs, it is necessary to define the terms. Concerning the relation between policy and program, Kamerman (2000) noted that “the ECEC policy included the whole range of government actions designed to influence the supply of and/or demand for ECEC and the quality of services provided; direct delivery of ECEC services; direct and indirect financial subsidies to private providers; financial subsidies to parents both direct and indirect; and the establishment and enforcement of regulations.”

Therefore, the major cross-national differences have to do with such variables as: The locus of policy-making authority (national or local); administrative auspices (education, health, social welfare or a combination); age group served (infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and primary school-aged); other eligibility criteria (poor, with working parents); funding strategies (government, employer, parent fees); delivery strategies (supply or demand); locus of care (pre-primary school, center).

According to OECD (1999), the public administration of ECEC systems follows broadly three models. The prevailing model in OECD countries is a “split” system, in which the education authorities are responsible for preschool education and the health or social affairs authorities supervise care, generally for younger infants and toddlers. A second model, unified administrative arrangements, has been adopted by Sweden, Norway and Spain. A third model has been adopted in Korea and the U.S., in which both education, and health and social affairs ministries run parallel systems for young children.

Over the past decade, there has been a move in OECD countries toward the decentralization of early childhood services. In certain instances, this movement would seem to undermine policy coherence: central authorities can find it difficult to maintain co-ordination between educational, welfare and health aspects with increasing decentralization, deregulation, and privatization. But since decentralization responds to a desire to bring policy and funding decisions closer to the populations being served, the challenge is for central government to permit this shift while retaining the authority and capacity to monitor fair access to ECEC and maintain high quality services across regions and forms of provision.

Allen (2003) classified government involvement in child care into three categories: direct funding of childcare through government centers or subsidies to other public arrangements; government subsidies to families to offset costs; and regulation of center-based care and family childcare homes. On the other hand, Mogenheim (1995) demonstrated more simply two ways: first, by offering financial support or subsidies, and secondly, through regulations that directly or indirectly affect the supply of and demand for childcare. The political, economic, socio-cultural and demographic contexts in each

nation and analysis affect all ECEC policies and programs that have an impact on families with children from birth to compulsory school age.

Day-care in ECEC has at least three common purposes: to improve welfare-provision for indigent children or those who have problem families; to promote education; to facilitate work by parents, especially mothers (Mitchell, et al., 2001).

Current Status of ECEC

New labor market conditions, with women participating in the labor market, have led to an increased demand for early childhood services. The emphasis of the policy debate is no longer on whether to invest in ECEC, but how best to organize and deliver high-quality ECEC services. Recent demographic and labor market changes have created a situation in which there is growing need and demand for the care of young children whose parents are working.

Both the European and U.S. literature agree that the goal of early care and education programs should encompass: (1) providing work supports for parents, (2) providing situations conducive to the cognitive, social-emotional and physical development of children and (3) preparing children to enter elementary school (Boocock, 1995).

There are a variety of standard arguments for government intervention in a market, and many of these have implications for the child care market. One value that changes across the different arguments is who the beneficiary is. Market failure is a problem that causes the market economy to deliver an outcome that does not maximize efficiency (Gruber, 2005). Magenheim (1995) argued that market failures arise when conditions prohibit a market from achieving the Pareto optimal outcomes that would obtain if the market were perfectly competitive. There are two reasons for market failures: the existence of externalities and information asymmetries.

Externality is a classic example of a type of market failure. An externality occurs whenever the actions of one party make another worse or better off, yet the first party neither bears the costs nor receives the benefits of doing so. It arises when a party suffers

negative effects (a negative externality) or enjoys positive effects (a positive externality) from the decision without having been involved in the decision making. One of the characteristics of an externality is that without government intervention, a non-optimal amount of the good that generates the externality will be produced. This is because the marginal private and social costs or benefits do not coincide. Therefore, the government intervenes in order to ensure that these costs or benefits do coincide and that the socially optimal quantity of the good is produced. A perfectly competitive market can exist when there is perfect information: no one would ever make a mistake from having inadequate or incorrect information about prices, quality, or other product characteristics. When this condition does not hold, there is the potential for all types of mistakes to be made and, at a more general level, for greater variations in quality and prices, lower average quality, and higher average prices than would prevail if more information were available. ECEC can also be examined in terms of market failure. ECEC markets suffer from this problem. Consumers of ECEC have much less information than do providers of ECEC, who know much more about outcomes, costs, and probabilities. One possibility is for the government to provide full and accurate information.

According to Information Problems, two general types of information problems arise in child care markets: information asymmetries and costly search. Asymmetric information exists when the seller knows the quality of a good but the buyer does not. Markets characterized by asymmetric information are also characterized by lower quality than would be offered if perfect information prevailed. By drawing on “the market for lemons theory”, it can be shown that when there is asymmetric information, only the lowest-quality products will be sold. Schotter (2001) examined the problem of information asymmetry in the context of the market for car repairs, focusing on the question of what the equilibrium mix of honest and dishonest car mechanics will be.

Governmental efforts to solve information problems can take a variety of forms ranging from promulgation and enforcement of licensing requirements and regulations to providing information directly. The alternative or additional role that the government can play is to facilitate information flow between consumers and producers and other

interested parties. Two of the reasons for government to intervene of government are redistribution and quality control (Magenheim, 1995). The government can intervene to redistribute income from wealthier taxpayers to poorer workers and enable them to purchase better-quality child care and education. This redistribution will affect the welfare of both the recipient parent and child. It is difficult for parents to evaluate quality care in the ECEC market. Determining the implications of regulations for quantity supplied, prices, and quality of care is a complex problem, and there is the potential for regulations to yield outcomes in conflict with original intentions, or to decrease supply while raising quality.

There are many incentives for children, family, and society to achieve the correct ECEC. Neuroscientists and psychologists in OECD countries agree that the first years of life are critical for cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. Children's brains have a remarkable ability to change (and compensate for problems) in the first few years of life (Shore, 1997). It is during the earliest years that future capacity to participate positively in learning and adult life is relatively "hard-wired". If opportunities to promote children's development and learning are missed in this period, later remediation is more expensive and less effective (Shore, 1997).

ECEC services can also promote lifelong learning and other positive outcomes for parents and family members. OECD (1999) has found that benefits of ECEC for parents include enhanced relationships with their children, alleviation of maternal stress, upgrading of education or training credentials, and improved employment status. Also OECD (1999) shows that ECEC can help children perform better at school, can make them more likely to grow up to be more responsible citizens and can give their parents greater opportunities to participate in the labor market.

Access

In most of the OECD countries ECEC programs are publicly funded and publicly delivered. Governments expand the supply of ECEC places by funding and operating more such programs, or by increasing the subsidies they offer providers. Either local

government agencies operate programs or greater public subsidies are provided to religious organizations or other voluntary organizations to expand provision, as in Germany and the U.S. The U.S. is unusual in the extent to which it uses the tax system to subsidize parents who purchase these services and offset some of the ECEC costs (Kamerman, 2000).

According to Education Policy Analysis (OECD, 1999), access to early childhood services can be considered a right or a privilege. In many OECD European countries, the trend is to provide free, universal coverage for children within the public school system for a substantial period prior to compulsory education. Other countries consider ECEC to be compensatory or need-based rather than a universal right or standard, and take a more targeted approach. In the United States, much publicly-provided ECEC for 0 to 5-year-olds limits eligibility to low-income or at-risk children and families.

In nearly all OECD countries, the eligibility of the younger age group, 0-3 years, is much weaker than for older children. Most countries have no entitlement for infants, and placements are provided only under certain conditions (age of child, special need, income of parents, their working situation, etc.). Only seven countries— Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – currently provide publicly-funded placements for over 20% of under-three children (OECD, 1999).

The percent of children enrolled in ECEC programs and the ease of access with which parents obtain a placement in an ECEC program for their children are clearly important indicators of a country's commitment to young children. Germany has about 85 percent of its 3 - 6 year olds enrolled in kindergarten, the U.S. is lower than Germany, and Korea is classified with the low coverage countries (30-45 percent), which include the U.S. (Kamerman, 2000).

Quality

There is no agreed on definition of quality of ECEC programs cross-nationally, and there is little systematic attention to this subject in the literature. U.S. researchers have carried out the most extensive efforts at identifying the variables that account for the

most significant differences regarding program quality. These variables have been identified as group size, staff/child ratios, trained and educated staff, staff salaries, and regulatory status and connection to provider networks (Hauser, et al. 1997).

Currie (2001) argued that the most important aspect of quality for an early education program is the nature of the interaction between the teacher and the child. In general, didactic teaching methods and punitive strategies for dealing with children are associated with less favorable outcomes. This aspect of child care quality is difficult to regulate. However, small group sizes, better teacher training, and other regulable aspects of quality can make positive interactions more likely.

Evidence of effects of pre kindergarten on school readiness and subsequent educational performance is quite limited. Magnuson, et al. (2004) researched pre kindergarten versus other preschool child care arrangements, and showed that like pre kindergarten, preschools and many center-based child care programs provide curriculums designed to promote academic skills and enhance school readiness.

Although different ECEC programs produce different outcomes, studies uniformly show that the quality of provision has an important impact on children's development from the earliest stages: young children who receive high quality care, attention and stimulation in the first three years of life are likely to demonstrate better cognitive and language abilities and experience more positive mother-child and social interactions than children in arrangements of lower quality (OECD, 1999).

Regulation and Evaluation

Morgan (2003) showed governments can supply services to be operated in the private market. Regulatory policy offers a third alternative: 1) governments can regulate programs that are operated in the private market. 2) regulatory policy enables a government to protect the public and to set a floor of quality for programs in the private sector. 3) with regulation, it is not necessary or desirable to rely only on supply/demand to have a long term effect on quality.

Chipty and Ann (1994) analyzed the impact of state-imposed quality regulations on equilibrium market price, quantity, and quality. Also regulations are binding on day care providers; that is, minimum quality requirements do have economically large and statistically significant effects on equilibrium prices, quantity, as measured by hours, and quality, as measured by staff/child ratios. Further, the results indicate that certain types of regulations are more effective than others at raising equilibrium product quality.

Witte and M. Trowbridge (2004) explained that The Good Start, Grow Smart initiative seeks a number of changes in Head Start. First, Head Start is to be subject to a new accountability system that will assess every Head Start center's performance in developing literacy, language and numeracy skills. Second, Head Start is being asked to align their activities with State K-12 standards. Finally, Head Start is being asked to upgrade the education and training of its staff.

It is less clear how the other types of ECEC will be related to behavior. Although high quality care is associated with lower levels of problem behavior, there may be features of pre kindergarten, such as teacher directed basic skill instruction, that are associated with less positive social climates and thus more behavior problems. Public intervention in ECEC markets might be justified either using arguments commonly made for the public provision of education or using arguments regarding imperfect information. State regulators have imposed various minimum quality standards on ECEC providers. However, little is known about the effectiveness of these regulations¹.

Also, Magnuson, et al. (2004) noted that pre kindergarten has few lasting positive effects on advantaged children's skills and persisting adverse effects on their behavior, but yields larger benefits for disadvantaged children. This suggests that the greatest return to public investments in early education may be obtained by using funds to increase disadvantaged children's enrollment in preschool and pre kindergarten. Additional

¹ For example, a local news conference was prompted by release of a national survey of Head Start graduates that found that adults who attended the program as children were nearly 10 percent less likely to be arrested or charged with a crime than siblings who did not attend. (The Register Guard, Section B, Friday, Feb 17, 2006)

expenditures to increase disadvantaged children's early education experiences are likely to improve their academic skills at school entry.

Kamerman (2000) showed that many of the specified dimensions of quality overlap those identified in the U.S.: group size; staff/child; caregiver, training, salaries and stability; the presence of males among the staff; national and local health and safety standards; adequate physical space; and active involvement of or links with parents.

Staffing

Generally speaking, staff working with children in ECEC programs have a major impact on children's early development and learning. The link between strong training and support of staff and the quality of ECEC services is strong (Bowman et al., 2000)

The balance between theory and practice is under discussion in many countries. Responsibility for developing training curricula has been decentralized. Focusing on the purpose, content, and structure of training is articulated at the national level, and the details are developed by individual training institutions. This can cause some variation, but also allows for tailoring courses to local needs and increasing the involvement of local institutions and community members (OECD, 2001).

Low wages and high turnover are major challenges in the field. There is a tension between keeping costs low and paying staff a fair wage. Shortages of well-trained staff are a growing concern. There are several strategies to address recruitment and retention concerns: 1) joint training requirements; 2) unions and professional associations; 3) mentoring programs; 4) recruitment campaigns, etc (OECD, 2001).

In the US, the goal of the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) project is to improve the training of ECEC workers, linking additional training to higher wages. TEACH is geared to all levels of practitioners working in ECEC centers (OECD, 2001).

Program Contents and Implementation

With a few notable exceptions, U.S. ECEC programs are funded to serve less than half of the eligible children. U.S. ECEC programs developed quite separately. They have

different goals, different funding sources, different administrations and policies, and generally last for an academic year or less. Pre-K and Head Start operate only 3 to 6 hours a day and are open only during the academic year. The evidence suggests that the U.S. ECEC system is neither efficient nor equitable. Consolidation of funding and administration of current U.S. ECEC programs could substantially lower transaction costs for parents and provide more stable care arrangements for children.

With respect to the national kindergarten curriculum, there are two aspects: one is aimed at development of the whole person including the physical, linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social areas; the other is play-based, integrated curriculum with five areas: health, social, expression, language, and inquiry based on recognized childcare programs.

In Korea, there are three types of curriculum is in place in ECEC programs: national kindergarten curriculum operating in all kindergarten facilities and structured themes that are explicated in a set of teaching manuals; a child care program that includes basic components on care, education, nutrition, health, safety, services for parents and exchanges with communities; and hakwon programs designed by individual hakwon centers to teach specific aspects of Korean language, basic mathematics, piano, art and similar specific subjects.

Family Engagement and Support

Maternity leaves were enacted in Germany more than a century ago to protect the physical health of working women at the time of childbirth. Child rearing payments, parental leaves and paternity leaves began during the 1960s and developed rapidly during the 1970s, as the labor force participation rates of European women began to rise rapidly. The current parental leave policy in West Germany was developed before unification. A very different policy developed in the GDR, culminating in 1986 in 12 months of post-natal parental leave, paid at 90% of earnings. At the end of this period, children entered ECEC services; the leave policy and ECEC services were linked. After unification, the GDR's former leave policy was replaced by West Germany's leave policy, which was longer, less well paid and not coordinated with ECEC access. European countries make

far greater use of parental leave than the U.S. and Korea. European leave policies tend to be universal rather than targeted. Today, all new parents in many European countries have the option of taking a period of paid leave after the birth of a child. In Europe, parental leaves are paid for through temporary disability programs, unemployment insurance programs, family allowance systems or as a separate social insurance benefit (Witte and Trowbridge, 2004).

The U.S. did not have a national family leave policy until 1993. However, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program was originally set up to allow divorced and unmarried mothers to stay home and care for their children (Helburn & Bergmann, 2002). The potential impacts of parental leave are many: (1) health effects for family members, particularly the mother and child; (2) static and dynamic employment and income effects particularly for the mother; (3) budgetary impacts for governments and (4) business impacts for employers (Witte and Trowbridge, 2004). Ruhm (1998) finds that parental leave guarantees an increase in the employment of women, but at longer durations, they may be paid for through the receipt of lower relative wages. Leaves will have to provide substantial wage replacement (about 50% to 75%) to encourage substantial numbers of parents to use parental leaves (Witte and Trowbridge, 2004). Maternity benefits and the provision of child care are better in Germany than in the United States. Germany has a maternity leave of 14 weeks at a high wage replacement rate, extensive “extra” leaves, and somewhat looser eligibility requirements (Kim and Weon, 2004).

Funding and Financing

Why is financing so important? At present the ability to improve access and quality for all young children is hindered by inadequate resources. It is time for us to approach this problem through an integrated system of early childhood education that is well financed. If we fail to make the investment, we will pay a heavy price: increased delinquency, greater educational failures, lower productivity, less economic competitiveness, and fewer adults prepared to be effective, loving parents to the next generation of children.

According to NAEYC (2001), “high quality ECEC has many benefits for both individuals and society: children develop better social skills as well as language and literacy and math skills to be ready for school, and families have more support. Federal, state and local governments, communities, parents, and the private sector must share in the responsibility of ensuring the well-being of children and families.”

Who pays for ECEC is closely linked to access: government, municipality, employers or parents. Government subsidy has a clear role, whether through direct expenditure on programs or indirect support through tax breaks to families, enterprises or sponsors. Unless there is stable and well-targeted investment by the state, the children of low-income parents are denied equal access to good quality ECEC services. But in order to maximize the effectiveness of constrained public resources, the cost of providing ECEC is usually shared among national/local government, businesses, and parents. In all countries, the financial burden on parents, especially for children 0-3, is higher than for 3 to 6-year-olds (OECD, 1999). The U.S., Germany, and Korea have tended to place the burden on family rather than government.

Witte and M. Trowbridge (2004) noted that federal government funding for ECEC has come from general revenue, while state and local governments have used a wide array of revenue raising and revenue enhancing methods to increase funding for ECEC. These methods include taxes, fees, lotteries and gaming, and partnering with the private sector, philanthropy or local community groups. With few exceptions, the programs do not provide ECEC for all eligible children whose parents want their children to participate. U.S. parents pay a much larger portion of the cost of ECEC than German parents. For example, in 1995, the U.S. parents provided 60% of the cost of childcare (Mitchell, et. al., 2001).

Some European governments require no parental co-payment for ECEC, while others require parental payments of from 10% to 30% of the cost of ECEC. For example, Germany requires that parents pay from 16% to 20% of ECEC costs, with the payment depending on family income. European ECEC programs tend to be open year round and to run from early in the morning until late in the evening (Witte, et al., 2004).

Cleveland and Krashinsky (2003) identified two methods: to provide that support directly to families and allow them to choose the types of ECEC they will purchase, or to provide subsidies to various approved producers of ECEC and therefore to constrain families in the kind of care they may choose if they wish to receive financial support. The debate over supply-side and demand-side subsidies has to some extent mirrored the voucher debate in ECEC. Those who believe in educational vouchers emphasize the effectiveness of parental choice. An example of demand-side subsidies would be tax credits or vouchers, which provide subsidies directly to parents with little requirement other than that they purchase some kind of ECEC. An example of supply side subsidies would be subsidies provided to private producers who meet certain specific requirements which might include various aspects of quality (staff/child ratio, educational attainment of staff), of parental involvement, and in some cases of mode of provision (public or non-profit).

III. ECEC Policies in the Republic of Korea

Current Status of ECEC

As of 2005, according to the National Statistical Office (NSO) of the Korean government, the number of Korean women participating in the economy is 51 percent, up from 39.3 percent in 1970. But Korea's male economic participation rate is 75.4 percent. Generally speaking, Korea's female economic participation rate is estimated low. We can assume that lower female participation in the labor market is a result of childcare and education factors. Korea experienced an M shaped relationship between female labor force participation and the male rate. Most Korean women in the labor force, both married and unmarried, hesitate to drop out of the labor force when they get pregnant and even after childbirth. Some of the women in the labor force postpone childbearing as much as possible, or forgo child-bearing altogether lest they should lose their job.

A. Financial Structure and Market in ECEC Policy

1. Financial Structure

Korea's ECEC market is private based rather than public. Of the total scale budget for ECEC, the private section addressed 72% and the government section covered 28% in 2002. Internationally, the U.S. contributes 41%, and Sweden 83% to the ECEC market supported by government section (MOGEF, 2005).

As of 2002 in ECEC, the Korean government provided \$214.7 million (91.2%) to childcare and \$20.7 million (8.8%) to education. The local authorities allocated \$226.4 million (40.3%) to childcare and \$334.8 million (59.7%) to education. In short, the budget for childcare was shared between the government and the local authorities, while the budget for ECEC was covered by the local authorities. Compared to the international level at present, the government's subsidy needs to increase more. According to OECD (2001), public expenditure on education and pre-primary education in Korea is very low: 0.04% as a percentage of GDP in 1998, Germany is 0.36% and the U.S. is 0.36%.

Moreover, public expenditure on ECEC in Korea is very low also: 0.27% as a percentage of GDP in 2004, Germany is 0.55% and the U.S. is 1.07-0.81% (MOGEF, 2005 and Meyers and Gornick, 2004).

2. Characteristics of the Market

The private sector occupies almost 70% of the total size in ECEC market in Korea. However, government regulations, with price control and the restriction of market access by for profit corporations, have led to low quality of ECEC service and dissatisfaction from consumers. According to Yang (2002), many parents, in Korea, consider the biggest problem for ECEC is the low service level and the reason for the low service is regulation of the price. Korean families shoulder a very large financial burden for private education expenses beginning in early childhood and expect the government to invest in ECEC opportunities.

B. History of Korean ECEC

ECEC in Korea has developed from separate kindergartens and childcare facilities with different historical origins. Education for young children in Korea has developed mainly through kinder-gartens, the representative official educational institution for children aged three to five. The 'Child Care Act' was established in 1991. Since then, the Ministry of Health and Welfare has taken charge of childcare nation-wide, and transformed 'daycare' into 'childcare', integrating education and care. In Korea, traditional attitudes toward women, their role in society and their expected duties within the household are widespread. The changing roles of women at home and the substantial growth in female labor force participation rates, starting in the 1980s, have had an impact on the supply of child care and education services just as in such countries as Germany and the U.S. As the number of working women has grown in the workplace, the status of women has changed. At the same time, the demand for ECEC has grown rapidly.

C. Administrative Agencies

The Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (MOE) and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) are currently in charge of ECEC from three to five years old. The MOE takes responsibility for children between the ages of three and five while the MOGEF takes responsibility for children from birth to five years of age. This area of government management was re-located from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) to the MOGEF in June 2004.

1. Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

Within the Ministry of Education and HRD, the Early Childhood Education Division currently heads early childhood education. After the establishment of a division that should took responsibility of early childhood education in 1983, the special education and early childhood education groups worked as special sub-committees within the Ministry of Education & HRD until 2001. The major tasks of the Early Childhood Education Division are as follows: 1) the establishment of basic policies regarding the promotion of early childhood education, 2) the provision of early childhood education as public education, 3) the provision of tuition free kindergartens, and 4) support for the establishment and management of early childhood education institutions.

2. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family

The Childcare Policy Bureau within the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is responsible for care for infants and children. This is a new Bureau, consisting of three divisions, and was created on March 11, 2004. Prior to this time, care for infants and children were dealt with in conjunction with other childcare related tasks by the Department of Child Welfare. The creation of the childcare Policy Bureau shows the significance of the heightened interest of the present government in childcare as well as the higher priority given to childcare by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. The major tasks of the Childcare Policy Bureau are: 1) formulating a master plan on childcare

policies, 2) developing laws, policies and programs to improve the quality of childcare, 3) extending childcare financial assistance, and 4) expanding access to childcare services.

D. The ECEC Services

Currently, the representative ECEC institutions in Korea are kindergartens and childcare facilities under the administration of the Early Childhood Education Division of the MOE, and of the Child Care Policy Bureau of the MOGEF respectively.

Table 1. ECEC Services in Korea

Admin. Agency	Ministry of Education		Ministry of Gender Equality and Family			
Name of ECEC Institution	Kindergarten		Childcare Facilities (House of Children, Play Room)			
Types of ECEC Services by the establisher	National/ Public	Private	National Public	Private	Work places	Home
Age Range of Children Served	3 to 5		0 to 5			

Source: Ministry of Education & HRD (2002). Ministry of Health and Welfare (2002).

1. Kindergartens

Kindergartens are the schools for educating children from the age of three to five, functioning according to educational laws concerning elementary and secondary schools and according to the Early Childhood Education Promotion Act which was enacted in 1982. As of 2002, there were 8,308 institutions, 21,493 classes, 29,521 teachers and 550,150 children being educated in them. While 78.3% of children enrolled in private kindergartens, 21.7% were enrolled in national/public kindergarten. There is a tendency for kindergartens to operate on a half day basis. However, there are an increasing number of schools that offer extended care for 5-8 hours or care for children all day long, making for more than 8 hours of care a day. Out of a total of 8,308 schools, 4,240 (51%) offer these extended services while 2,458 (30%) offer all day care.

2. Childcare Facilities

Childcare facilities serve children from birth until entrance into elementary schools, providing the basic infant care guaranteed by regulations. As of 2002, 21,267 institutions with 770,029 children were using the childcare services. Of these, 1,294 institutions, or 6.1%, are public, with an amazing 93.9% using private facilities.

Childcare facilities generally operate on a small scale. Overall, the greatest segment, comprising 35.4% of the facilities, have less than 20 children, with those having 31 to 39 (19.7%) next, followed by those with 20 to 30 children (17.1%). However, public facilities tend to operate on a larger scale. Childcare facilities of between 66 and 91 children take up 35.3% of the total, followed by those with 40~65 individuals (29.4%) and then those of 92~117 children (14.0%). Private facilities have 31~39 children at the most and 98.6% of family daycares have fewer than 19 children.

Policy Concerns in ECEC

For some people the primary concern is with the well-being of children, socializing children into the society's values, and school-readiness. For others, the primary issue may be that of facilitating or increasing female labor force participation rates. In many countries, there is interest in the effects of different types of childcare arrangements on such diverse domains as child development, school performance, fertility, marriage, female labor force participation, and public expenditures. The most generous ECEC policies and the most extensive coverage tend to have high rates of female labor force participation; some countries have comparable policies and equally high or higher rates of coverage, yet have lower proportions of women in the workforce, while others have far less generous policies and higher proportions of women working.

In this chapter, I focus on quality and access. Quality and access have been identified as concerns for further investigation. It is also important to identify which particular groups of children and families are the focus of concern.

A. Access

1. Establishment and Management of Kindergarten and Childcare Facilities

Since 1991, there has been a great increase in the number of childcare facilities, and consequently, access to ECEC has increased. In particular, private childcare facilities increased because facility ownership was not required and opening a childcare center was only a matter of reporting. There was a great increase in the number of kindergartens from 1985 to 1995, but, beginning in 2000, the numbers began to drop, despite the gradual increase in the number of kindergarten-aged children. During last decade, over 20,000 childcare facilities were established with remarkable increases in the number of enrolled children. Because of the increased number of working mothers as well as the increased consumption of individual households, more people became drawn to childcare centers, which have lower costs and longer hours of operation in comparison to kindergartens, which cost more and operate for fewer hours.

2. Exemptions of Childcare Fees for Children of Low Income Families

The government supports children of low income families by giving a certain proportion of childcare fees directly to parents of individual children. This governmental support provided since the early period of childcare facility expansion resulted in increased access of disadvantaged children to childcare. The unit cost of childcare support varies according to family income levels and the age of the child.

As of 2002, the government supported childcare fees for 154,560 children, 20.1% of a total of 770,029 enrolled children. The percentage of support for 0-2 year-olds is 15.5% (27,439 out of 177,544 children), and that for 3-5 year-olds is 19.1% (112,925 out of 592,475 children). Out of 154,560 children supported by the government, 51,016 children (33.0%) of low income families are exempted totally 100%, while 103,554 children (67.0%) of low income families are exempted from 40% of their childcare fees.

3. Free Education and Care for Five-Year-Olds Voucher

As of 2002, free ECEC for five-year-olds was provided to a total of 113,184 children, making up 8.3% of the total numbers of five-year-olds. Children eligible for free ECEC are children of low income families (four family members per household with a total income of less than \$1,600 per month or total property worth of less than \$50,000).

Adopting the voucher system, the government supports registration and tuition fees if the eligible children enroll in national/public institutions, and offers supports of up to \$100 per month if children enroll in private institutions. Free education and care for five-year olds will be extended gradually by the new government.

4. The Policy of Priority for Children with Special Needs

It is stated in the “Special Education Promotion Act” that special education for handicapped children is free. Special education schools implement curricula focused on the education of handicapped children with visual and hearing difficulties, mental and emotional retardation, and physical disability.

As of 2002, childcare facilities focusing on the needs of special children only totaled 66 facilities with ten public and 56 private facilities. In these facilities, there are 2,425 enrolled children and 768 childcare teachers.

B. Quality

1. The Importance of Reconsidering Quality

Research on childcare began to blossom after the establishment of the Childcare Act in 1991. Recently, research has been encompassing a range of topics including improving the quality of childcare staff and programs in terms of the establishment of standards, management, staffing, and so on.

2. Improving Staff Qualifications

Strategies for improving qualifications of kindergarten teachers and of childcare teachers are administered by the MOE and MOGEF respectively. Since 2000, the establishment of departments of early childhood education has been allowed only in 4-year colleges, not in 2-year colleges. Since 2001, 2-year-college programs for pre service kindergarten teacher training have been extended to three years.

3. Regulations and Standards for Establishment, Facilities, and Equipment

In order to establish and run kindergartens, necessary facilities and equipment must meet standards set out by presidential decree and laid down in the Regulations for establishment and operation of schools below the high school level. At the same time, the standards of childcare facilities are stated clearly within the Childcare Acts². More specifically, the standards for establishment, the rules of the location, construction and provisions, and integrated childcare for children with special needs are clearly given.

4. Supervision

The supervision of the kindergarten is conducted by 16 individuals under the head superintendent of the city and provincial office of education and 180 individuals from the early childhood education superintendents in the county and district office of education. At the same time, according to Child Care Act No.19, the Minister of Gender Equality and Family can request cooperation from the Minister of Education and HRD regarding supervision and childcare program development and delivery.

² In Child Care Act No. 6, there is a clear vision laid out as to the availability of the different kinds of childcare facilities: national/public, private, employer, and family childcare. In Child Care Act No. 7, the different requirements for establishing each of these different facilities are stipulated.

ECEC Policy Approaches

A. Regulations and Evaluation

1. Kindergarten

The size, tuition, and extra curricular program of the kindergarten system have been directed and influenced by the MOE. The city or county superintendent of education has the authority to monitor the size and the system of the kindergarten. The MOE tried to persuade the kindergarten owners and parents not to run excessive early extra-curricular programs by providing research results demonstrating the negative effects of excessive extra-curricular programs. Furthermore, the MOE evaluates the city and the provincial Offices of Education biannually.

2. Childcare Facilities

The guidelines for operating childcare facilities are established in law regarding the child/teacher ratio, childcare fees, and so on. The child/teacher ratios with children under 2-years-old, 3-years-old, and over 3-years-old are 1:5, 1:7, and 1:20, respectively. In particular, childcare facilities for children with special needs must keep a 1:5 child/teacher ratio, and must have one teacher with the teacher certificate of special education per 10 children.

B. Staffing

1. Kindergarten Staff

There are four levels of kindergarten staff qualifications, including grade 2 teachers, grade 1 teachers, assistant director, and director³. The same qualifications are

³ The main tasks of the kindergarten staff, broken down by qualification standard, are as follows:

- Director: Managing the operation of the kindergarten, supervising teachers, and educating children.
- Assistant Director: Supporting the director and taking over the tasks of the director in the absence of the director. In the case of kindergartens without an assistant director, the director designates a teacher to take over the tasks of the director.
- Teacher: Educating children.

applied to national/public and private kindergarten staff. As of 2002, there are 29,673 staff involved in kindergarten education with 3,248 (10.9%) directors; 712 (2.4%) assistant directors; 6,868 (23.1%) grade 1 teachers; and 18,623 (62.8%) grade 2 teachers. The reason for the comparatively small number of kindergarten directors is that many primary school principals carry out the dual roles of kindergarten director and principal.

College graduates make up 99.8% of kindergarten teachers, though 70% are graduates of 2-year colleges and only 30% are graduates of 4-year universities. In public kindergartens, 66% of the teachers graduated from 4-year universities, almost twice the percentage of 2- year college graduates.

2. Childcare Staff

The childcare staff consists of director, teacher, nurse, nutritionist, cook, and other staff members. Childcare teachers may be graduates of two-year or four-year colleges, specializing in early childhood education or child welfare or related subjects. According to the National Survey of Childcare Facilities (2002), there are 88,504 staff working in childcare facilities with 21,066 (23.8%) directors, 26,195 (30.0%) grade 1, and 24,059 (27.2%) grade 2 childcare teachers. Childcare teachers working within the public sector are comparatively higher in qualifications than those in the private sector.

3. Early Childhood Special Education Teachers

Special education teachers must major in special education at a four-year college or must be trained to the graduate school level. This is true of early childhood special education teachers. About 150 early childhood special education teachers are trained annually in the department of special education at five universities in the nation.

C. Program Contents and Implementation

1. Kindergarten Curriculum

The planning and implementation of kindergarten curriculum in Korea is based on the National Kindergarten Curriculum issued by the MOE. Specific guidelines for curriculum vary according to the city/provincial office of Education, local office of Education, and individual kindergarten. In particular, local offices of education establish plans for supervision, and conduct supervision on a regular basis. They also develop and deliver various educational materials and conduct in-service teacher training regarding curriculum planning and implementation.

2. Childcare Programs

Daily, weekly, and monthly childcare plans must be established in accordance with developmental levels of infants and children. Childcare plans need to include various activities for children's whole development, a balance of individual and group activities, active vs. quiet play, and consider children's needs for nursing, toilet use, and the rest. Similar to kindergarten curricula, areas of health, social relationships, expressiveness, language, and scientific inquiry need to be considered in childcare programs.

D. Family Engagement and Support

1. Kindergarten

It was in the 1980s that many children aged 3 to 5 came to attend kindergarten in Korea. At that time, the government had a strong will for early childhood education and expanded public kindergartens in farming and fishing communities. As of 2002, 550,150 children, making up 27.8% of the eligible child population between the ages of three to five years, were enrolled in kindergartens.

2. Childcare

As of 2002, 20.7% of the children between the ages of 0 to 5 used childcare services prior to entering elementary school. The number of infants and children who attend childcare facilities has rapidly increased. The coverage rates for 0-5 year olds were 7.4% in 1995, and 17.3% in 2000 (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2002).

3. The Integration of Infant Education and Childcare Participation

While 59% of the 3-5 year olds attend kindergartens or childcare facilities, 10% of the children ages 0-2 use childcare facilities. A breakdown of participation by age reveals that 42.8% of three-year-olds, 57.8% of four-year-olds, and 68.7% of five-year-olds are in attendance.

Table 2. Numbers of Infants and Children Enrolled in Kindergartens and Childcare Facilities

Unit: % (N. of child)

	Classification	Under 1yr	1yr-old	2yr-old	Total Under 2	3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	6yr-old & over	Total
Kindergarten	National/Public	-	-	-	-	1.3	4.0	12.8		6.2
	Private	-	-	-	-	10.7	22.8	32.3		22.2
	Sub total	-	-	-	-	12.0	26.8	45.1		28.4
Child Care Facilities	National/Public	0.2	1.1	2.5	1.3	4.1	4.3	3.4	(4,392)	4.1
	Private	1.4	6.6	17.3	8.7	26.7	26.7	20.2	(38,889)	26.5
	Sub total	1.6	7.7	19.8	10.0	30.8	31.0	23.6	(43,281)	30.6
Ratio of children enrolled		1.6	7.7	19.8	10.0	42.8	57.8	68.7	(43,281)	59.0
Ratio of children unenrolled		98.4	92.3	80.2	90.0	57.2	42.2	31.3		41.0
Total Population		100.0 (566,388)	100.0 (598,585)	100.0 (617,346)	100.0 (1,782,319)	100.0 (624,032)	100.0 (642,011)	100.0 (671,651)		100.0 (1,937,694)

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002).

4. Others, Including Hakwons

As of 2002, about 510,000 young children attended private educational institutions, called “Hakwons” (learning places) in Korea (MOE, 2002). Hakwons teach children Korean language fundamentals, basic mathematics, playing the piano, art, and so on. It is difficult to figure out the exact numbers of children attending Hakwons because many children attend kindergartens or childcare facilities along with Hakwons. Thus, ECEC participation rates in Korea can be very different depending on whether participation rates in Hakwons are included or not. If children's participation in Hakwons is included, ECEC participation in Korea reaches over 90%. If not, ECEC participation in Korea is only 59%.

E. Finance and Funding

1. Financial Support by Government

As of 2002, the government provided \$214.7 million (91.2%) to childcare and \$20.7 million (8.8%) to early childhood education. The local authorities allocated \$226.4 million (40.3%) to childcare and \$334.8 million (59.7%) to early childhood education. In short, the budget for childcare was shared between the government and the local authorities, while the budget for early childhood education was covered by the local authorities.

Table 3. 2005-2009 National Long-Term Operation Plan (Draft)
(Million dollar, %)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Average rate/ year
Total	696.7	1,005.6	1,146.3	1,440.5	1,650.6	27.3
Early child care	600.1	792.8	900.9	1,155.0	1,358.0	22.7
Early child education	96.6	212.8	245.4	285.5	292.6	31.9

Source: The Ministry of Finance and Economy (2005), unpublished data.

2. Budget Settlement

The budget for ECEC is mainly allocated to salaries (\$423.8 million, 53.2%), direct support for infants and young children (\$245.6 million, 30.8%), support for facility operation (\$126 million), and other expenses. In early childhood education, the budget is allocated to salaries (\$206.6 million, 58.1%) which take the largest portion, facility operating cost (\$111.5 million, 31.4%), and direct support for children (\$37.4 million, 10.5%). In contrast to that for education, the budget for childcare allocates a portion of funds to direct support for children similar to that allocated to salaries. That is, 49.2% goes to salaries (\$217.2 million), 47.2% is earmarked for direct support for infants and young children (\$208.2 million), and the rest goes for facility operating costs (\$14.6 million) and other expenses (\$11.0 million).

The government subsidizes salaries and facility operating costs for national and public kindergartens and childcare facilities. On the other hand, the private sector gains subsidies for material costs only. Thus parents whose children go to the national and public institutions pay minimum fees while those whose children go to the private ones pay more. Support for national/public and private institutions are similar in education and care for children of low-income families and free education/childcare for five-year-old children. In these cases, parents can choose an institution for their children by using vouchers.

3. Free Education and Care for Five-Years-Old Vouchers

The Korean government started to provide free education and care to children at age 5 in 2002. Less than 20 % of five-year-olds receive this benefit. If parents choose national/public facilities for their children, tuition fees are waived. If private facilities are chosen, parents can receive \$105 dollar/per month.

4. Tax Benefits

From 2002, parents whose children go to kindergartens, childcare facilities, and private academic school, can deduct up to \$1,500 from the annual account settlement.

5. International Comparison

Korea's ECEC budgets are insufficient to achieve appropriate functions. As of 2005, the level of ECEC is lower than in any other developed country. Moreover the subsidy rate is also lower than that. Therefore, compared to international levels at present, the government's subsidy needs to increase.

Table 4. Public Expenditure on Education and Pre-primary Education
(As % of GDP)

HDI Rank	Country	On ECEC ⁴		On education ⁵		For pre-primary education ⁶
		Rate/GDP	Subsidy rate	1990	1998-2000 ⁷	1998
7	U.S.	1.07-0.81 ⁸	82%	5.2	4.8	0.36
18	Germany	0.55	91%	-	4.6	0.36
30	Korea	0.27	32%	3.5	3.8	0.04

Source: calculated on the basis of GDP and public expenditure data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), 2003.

⁴ In case of Germany and Korea, the data came from The Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (2005). As for the U.S. in 2004, the data is adapted from Meyers and Gornick (2004), p.28.

⁵ http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/indicator/indic_159_1_1.html, Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) includes both capital expenditures (spending on construction, renovation, major repairs and purchase of heavy equipment or vehicles) and current expenditures (spending on goods and services that are consumed within the current year and would need to be renewed the following year). It covers such expenditures as staff salaries and benefits, contracted or purchased services, books and teaching materials, welfare services, furniture and equipment, minor repairs, fuel, insurance, rents, telecommunications and travel.

⁶ Start Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care (2001), p. 189.

⁷ Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

⁸ According to Meyers and Gornick (2004), "The full cost of such a system is an estimated \$135.5 billion annually; if government assumes 82 percent of costs, the total public cost would be an estimated \$111.1 billion. Less than universal take-up – or use of care for fewer hours – would decrease costs. In Sweden, for example, enrollments of children age one to two in public care are about 48 percent; similar levels of take-up in our estimates for the U.S. would (holding other assumptions constant) reduce the total public cost to \$84.4 billion (at 82 percent subsidization)."

IV. ECEC Policies in Germany

Current Status of ECEC

A. The Significance of Unification

In 1990, the unification of East and West came true and formed a new Germany. These events form a strong and unique historical context that has a significant impact on the current situation in ECEC in Germany. The differences between East and West in ECEC go beyond the issue of quantity of provision. The two ECEC systems were structured, funded and regulated differently. In the West, there was a powerful ideology of motherhood, a strong belief that the young child should be cared for in the family and in particular by the mother. At the age of 3, children might go to kindergarten, but then only on a part-time basis, being home for lunch. In this way of thinking, the kindergarten was a support to the essentially family-based upbringing of children. School hours were short and children were expected to finish at midday, and then go home for lunch and homework. By contrast, in the East it was assumed and expected that parents would be employed, and further that the government would provide services for children from 12 months of age upwards. Moreover, as parents needed to be free to devote their energies to employment, these services were expected to be run by well-trained, professional staff, in which parents could place their trust. Furthermore, they had the responsibility of starting the process of forming future citizens fitted to the values and needs of a socialist society. After unification, this distinction between West and East has become mixed. Attitudes to maternal employment are changing in the West, while some women in the East prefer to spend more time at home. The strengths of the system in the NBL⁹ are now receiving wider recognition. At the same time, staff in the NBL are working and living in more

⁹ The NBL forms the German Democratic Republic and the ABL means the Federal Republic of Germany before unification.

open and democratic conditions, where they have more freedom to explore different ways of working and are not regulated prescriptively by a centralized state. Yet, the traces of difference remain.

B. Administrative Agency

The Constitution of Germany guarantees parents an unrestricted right to raise their children¹⁰. The legal basis for ECEC in Germany is based on Book Eight of the Social Code - Child and Youth Welfare Act (KJHG)¹¹. The system of day facilities for children belongs legally and organizationally to child and youth welfare. That is not the field of “education” (school system), but the field of “public welfare” (social services, welfare). The KJHG entered into force in the Eastern Federal Landers as of 1990, and in the Western Landers in 1991. To promote the development of children and youth, and to support parents and families, there is a varied supply of social work and services, a large section of which is governed by the Child and Youth Welfare Act (KJHG), including early childhood promotion of children in day facilities, different types of assistance for child raising and youth work.

C. ECEC Service

1. Labor Market

As part of its support for working parents, the Federal government has taken two important childcare initiatives. The first initiative aims to increase ECEC services in the ABL. Since 2002, the Federal government has had a target of building 230,000 places for

¹⁰ The Basic Law (Grundgesetz) is the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany. It determines the legislative tasks and responsibilities of the Federation and the Landers as well as the implementation and funding of the statutes, in addition to citizens’ basic rights.

¹¹ Shortly Book Eight of the Social Code (this term is used below for the KJHG). In Germany, Sozialgesetzbuch - Achtes Buch (VIII) - Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (Artikel 1 des Gesetzes v.

26. Juni 1990, BGBl. I S. 1163), <http://www.bmfsfj.de/RedaktionBMFSFJ/Abteilung5/Pdf-Anlagen/sgb-viii.property=pdf.bereich=.rwb=true.pdf>

children under 3 in the ABL by 2010. The second Federal initiative was to stimulate the growth of “All Day Schools” which could provide for school-age childcare. The younger the children, the more likely mothers are to take temporary leave or to work part-time. The rate of working mothers increased in the West from 37.3% to 47.9% between 1991 and 2001. In the same period, it fell in the East from 75.9 % to 53.2 %¹².

Table 5. Regional Comparison of Women’s Employment

Selected Indicators	East Germany	West Germany
Labor force that is female (1990)	49%	40%
Women of working age employed (1990)	91%	58%
Children under 3 in childcare (1990)	80%	5%

Source: Quoted from Adler, Marina A. and Brayfield April. East-West differences in attitudes about employment and family in Germany, 1996.

2. The Structure of ECEC Services in East and West

Background Report Germany (2004) explained that Center-based ECEC services in both West and East Germany have been of three main kinds: centers for children under 3 years (Krippen); centers for children aged 3 to compulsory school transfer (6 years) (Kindergarten); and services providing school-age childcare (Hort).

The increase in the labor force participation of mothers with children under three years of age in the West occurred despite a lack of day facilities for children. It indicates the desire of mothers to work and the necessity of gainful employment to secure the family’s income.

In the former GDR, these services were strictly separated: even if Krippen and Kindergarten shared the same premises, they were run as separate centers with no contact between children or staff. Krippen and Kindergarten were the responsibility of different Ministries (health or education) and staff in all three services (Krippen, Kindergarten and Hort) received a different specialized training. However, the contact between

¹² OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany (2004), p.25.

Kindergarten, primary school and Hort was close (all being under the Ministry of Education). Since unification, the separation in the NBL between Krippen and Kindergarten has broken down. Today most centers are run as “mixed age services” for children under and over 3, often including some provision for school-age children. Before unification, center-based services differed in two main ways between East and West. First, levels of provision were far higher in the East. Second, services in the East served to working parents. Therefore, they were open on an all day basis. In the West, significant levels of Krippen and all day Kindergartens were only found in larger cities. The most common service in the West was usually a part-time service, with children attending up to 4 hours a day and with no lunch provision.

3. A Merging of the Traditions

The ABL has achieved almost universal kindergarten provision, at least on a part-time basis, and the concept of entitlement to an ECEC placement has been introduced. With changing conditions, developments in the West are moving ECEC services to the pattern found in the East. These changes reflect the needs of working parents. The combination works well between the well developed ECEC system in the NBL and its gradual extension toward the West. It has been an important achievement to maintain much of this provision following unification.

Policy Concerns in ECEC

A. Access

1. Facilities

Before unification, levels of provision of ECEC services differed greatly between the West and East. As we can see at table 5, the West had places for less than 5% for children under 3 years, but in the East there was almost complete coverage and all places were available on a full-day basis. The same situation applied in school-age childcare: placements for about 6% of children in the West, and for all children needing them in the East. After unification, there was a large fall of placements in the NBL, as parental

employment and numbers of children fell, reducing demand. The situation might well have been worse without special Federal funding to support ECEC services in the NBL. Today the situation has stabilized after the initial post-unification drop in placements, while the falling child population has ensured that the coverage rate has remained constant or even increased.

Table 6. Available Places and Supply Rates for Children in Germany

Type	Under 3 years		3 -6 years		6-10 years	
	1994	2002	1994	2002	1994	2002
Germany	6.3%	8.5%	77.2%	89.8%	17.2%	14.2%
ABL ¹³	2.2%	2.7%	73%	88%	5.1%	6.4%
NBL ¹⁴	41%	36.9%	96%	105%	58.2%	67.6%

Source: OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany (2004)

2. Parent's Fee for Education

Like many aspects of ECEC services in Germany, complexities arise in a system in which 16 Landers are each responsible for funding arrangements in their own territory. The broad picture is as follows: the Federation, due to the allocation of authority, has no direct role in the basic funding of ECEC services. This means that funding of running costs comes from four sources: Lander, municipalities (local government), volunteer providers, and parents. The first two government levels pay 75-80% of costs, parents around 14% and voluntary providers (freie Träger) the remainder. Parents should contribute to all services, including Kindergarten for 3 to 6 year olds, which are an entitlement. However, the volunteer providers' share is decreasing because they have hardly any revenues of their own. Parental fees are related to income, so low income families may not have to pay fees. One of the most obvious differences is in the amount paid by municipalities (varying from 30% to 83%) and parents (from about 10% to 20%

¹³ The ABL formed the Federal Republic of Germany before unification.

¹⁴ The NBL formed the German Democratic Republic before unification.

of total running costs). The German system is broadly based on supply funding to centers, but there is some movement towards a more demand-side approach. For example, Hamburg State has taken the demand-side approach further by recently introducing a voucher system based on several eligibility criteria.

3. Policy for Children with Special Needs

Children with special learning needs fall into two main categories: children with disabilities (Category A) and children with learning challenges stemming from a combination of at-risk indicators, such as low income, ill-health, immigrant status, or family dysfunction (Category C)¹⁵.

The Federal Government recommends integrative promotion of disabled children. Since the entry into force of Book Eight of the Social Code, services providing joint education for children with and without disabilities have been expanded and children with disabilities accepted into so-called standard facilities. With the bill to reform Book Eight of the Social Code, there is more effort to work towards children with and without disabilities being promoted together in groups. Background Report Germany (2004) pointed out that there is no statistical basis for a precise examination of the supply rate¹⁶. Estimates presume a share of 4 to 5% of children with disabilities virtually unchanged for

¹⁵ According to the OECD definitions, children with special learning needs may be divided into three categories:

Category A is children with organic disabilities - such as blind and partially sighted, deaf and partially hearing, severe and profound mental handicap, and multiple handicaps. These are conditions that can affect students from all social classes and backgrounds, and are considered in medical terms to be disorders attributable to organic pathologies, that is, in relation to sensory, motor or neurological defects. Countries normally fund in this category, 5-10% of the school populations.

Category B is children who have difficulties in learning which do not appear to be directly or primarily attributable to factors that would lead to categorization as 'A' or 'C'. For instance, children with benign learning disabilities and traumatized children are classified here. They constitute a very small percentage.

Category C is children whose educational need arises primarily from socio-economic, cultural and/or linguistic factors. There is some form of background present, generally considered to be disadvantaged, for which education seeks to compensate. Countries may fund in this category 5- 30% of the school population.

¹⁶ OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany (2004), p.73. Without data it is extremely difficult to make sound policy, for these children need high quality socio-educational services that practice outreach to their families and communities.

decades, of which roughly 1.5% are severely handicapped children. However, there are no data showing the number or proportion of children with disabilities attending a day facility. Because of differing ministerial authority, only the number of placements available can be collated. There are no definite data on the number of children with disabilities in special facilities.

Table 7. Places for Children of Nursery Age with Disabilities by Nature of the Facility and Relative Supply Rate (Germany, 1998)

	Germany	Western States	Eastern States
Integrative	30,078	20,974	9,104
Special facilities	15,682	14,610	1,072
Together	45,760	35,584	10,176
Share of places for children of nursery age with a disability among peer population			
Integrative	1.07	0.84	2.88
Special facilities	0.56	0.59	0.34
Together	1.63	1.43	3.22

Source: OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany (2004)

A much stronger effort to include has been made in the NBL, which maintains almost 3% of places for these children in mainstream services, compared to 0.84% of places in the Western States.

Official policy in Germany recommends integration of Category A children, and increasing numbers of children with disabilities have been admitted into mainstream services in the last decade. Between 1994 and 1998 the number of places in integrated kindergartens increased nearly 60%, and today the NBL has overtaken the ABL in the provision of integrated provision. It seems that much progress has been made in every part of Germany to ensure that children with disabilities may be part of regular groups in centers, with additional staffing provided. “Integrative services” groups will have fewer children than the usual group, and may have additional staffing. On the other hand, some separate services continue to exist providing for children with the most severe disabilities. The situation for Category C children – children from at-risk backgrounds – is equally

unclear, given that only 64% of children from the lowest income families ever attend a kindergarten.

B. Quality

1. The Workforce

The main part of the workforce in center-based early childhood services in Germany is provided by a particular occupation: the educators (Erzieherinnen¹⁷).

a) The Educators (Erzieherinnen)

Today, educators may be used in integrated and wide-ranging training and occupation in the West; therefore, the former GDR followed a different and more specialized approach to the workforce in its ECEC services. They work with children and young people in a range of services, including all types of ECEC services and various forms of youth work.

1) A Relatively Low Level of Training

Despite being a broad occupation, the training of educators is at a relatively low level in the German system of further and higher education. This is below the tertiary level of education, because the technical college for social pedagogy is being separated from higher education institutions and universities. There is a considerable gap between the training of educators and both the training of other professionals working with children and the world of research.

2) Lower Secondary Certificate Plus 4 Years

Students training to be Educators will start college at 17 or 18, and will mostly come with a lower school qualification, the intermediate leaving certificate, having

¹⁷ The name Erzieherin derives from the German term Erziehung – upbringing – and the term might best be translated as social pedagogue, both to emphasize the discipline with which workers identify and to distinguish them from ‘teachers’, a term associated with school and a very different type of relationship with children focused on the transmission of certain types of knowledge.

studied at the lower secondary stage at a type of school which emphasizes vocational rather than academic education¹⁸. The training period is generally 4 years. Mostly this has consisted of gaining an initial year's experience working in a kindergarten, followed by two years at college, then concluded by a year's 'internship', where the student spends a year working in a service under some degree of supervision. Some Landers are currently making changes to this training format¹⁹. The three-year training with two years at school and a subsequent year of internship has not been changed.

3) Educator Earnings

Educators earn around the average wage, which is roughly in line with the earnings of other occupations with a similar level of education. After completing training and with three years of experience, an educators would normally earn around €1,363 (\$1,636)²⁰/month, rising to €1,793(\$2,152)/month at age 33 and €1,924(\$2,309) at age 45 (figures are for the end of 2003).

Promotion prospects are limited, usually confined to becoming the leader of a center. The highest pay rate as a leader, only likely in a large center, is €2,738 (\$3,286) at age 33 rising to €3,085(\$3,702) at 45. By comparison, school teachers are usually to be found on this higher pay scale, and further benefit from lower social insurance contributions as they are treated as having 'lifetime tenure'.

¹⁸ After a common system of schooling up to the end of grade 4, German schooling divides into four main types; the more academically-oriented Gymnasium (which accounted for 30% of grade 8 pupils in 2001), which leads towards tertiary education; the more vocationally-oriented Hauptschule (23%) and Realschule (24%) which leads towards vocational education in Fachschulen; and a fourth type of school – Gesamtschule (9%) – which integrates academic and vocational approaches.

¹⁹ For example, in Baden-Württemberg, the previous 2 year period at college followed by the 1 year internship will be replaced by 3 years of college. The NBL (79%) has a higher proportion of Educators rather than the ABL (58%) and consequently fewer assistants, trainees and staff with no qualifications.

²⁰ Current Exchange Rate: \$1=0.83EUR (Mar 6, 2006); in this study I used this exchange rate.

4) The Downgrading of the Former GDR Training System

This way of structuring the workforce and its training is very different from the system that prevailed in the former GDR, which was swept away after unification. This workforce structure complemented the separation that existed between the services for these different age groups. A great deal of professional co-operation existed between the school and the Hort in the former GDR. Because of the closure of many services after unification and ensuing large cuts in staff, the workforce in the NBL are, on average, older than in the ABL²¹. They felt that this training and their experience had been devalued following unification, and to be recognized in the new unified Germany as a qualified educator, they had been obliged to attend 100 hours of “adjustment” training. Many found this unhelpful, feeling it implied that their own original training was not considered good enough.

b) Other Professionals in ECEC Services

1) Other Features of the ECEC Workforce

The workforce in ECEC centers also has three other features. First, less than half (44%) work full time, the figure being as low as one fifth in the NBL, where reduced working hours were introduced after unification to limit job losses. This means that most ECEC workers cannot rely on their employment alone to support themselves financially. Second, 14% have temporary contracts and the proportion is increasing. The ABL with 17% of temporary contracts compares unfavorably with the NBL at 7%. Finally, and this is not particular to Germany, the great majority of workers are women – about 95% in 1998. Also, the younger the children the fewer the men, while the more senior or prestigious the work, the higher the proportion of men.

²¹ German labor laws meant that young staff were the first to be made redundant. In 1998, 62% of the workforces in the NBL were aged 40 or more, compared to 36% in the ABL.

2) The Recruiting Workforce

The focus of the present debate is about the future level of training and its downstream costs. Basically, the present recruitment situation depends on drawing students and staff from a group of young women with lower levels of school qualification as levels of educational qualification among women increase. Newly qualified educators in the East have had to find some alternative form of work, or look to the West for employment in ECEC services. Services in the ABL are expanding, and services in the NBL are now recruiting new staff. Moreover, as so many staff in the NBL are over 40, large numbers will be lost through retirement in the next few years.

2. Regulation

Landers set standards for ECEC services in their territory, and these standards are supervised by Land Youth Welfare Offices, which are independent of Laender governments and funded by both Land and local government. Standards may cover a range of items, including calculation of the number of places needed, hours of opening, parent fees, building requirements and maintenance, group size, staff/child ratios and space both inside and outside. Each Land has different staff/child ratios. As a general rule, staff numbers depend on the group size, the hours the group is open, and other circumstances, such as if children are from non- German backgrounds or with disabilities.

ECEC Policy Approaches

A. Regulation and Evaluation

The Laender may further interpret Federal law by issuing their own statutes. All the Laender have made use of this opportunity. The municipalities have the overall responsibility for implementing the Federal and Land statutory provisions. In particular, this makes them responsible for planning, but also for providing ECEC services themselves, which means they have services of their own. At the Laender level, departmental responsibility for ECEC services varies, sometimes being in education ministries together with other child and youth services, sometimes in welfare ministries.

The German system is complex and highly decentralized, with three levels²² of government intersecting with many voluntary providers who are organized into six main groupings. There is great scope for diversity, for example between Laender and between individual providers.

1. Coordinating Mechanisms

There are institutions that provide connections and set some limits on diversity. At the national level, there are Conferences of Laender Ministers, where issues are discussed and frameworks agreed within which Laender often work. In the field of education where the Laender have sole responsibility, the Standing Conference of Education Ministers (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister) carries more clout than the similar body on child and youth welfare, which is a field where responsibility is divided between all three levels of government.

Another coordinating mechanism is the structure of State Youth Welfare offices referred to above, as required by Federal Law in each Laender. These offices are not part of Laender governments, but autonomous agencies funded by both Laender and municipalities, charged with certain state-wide functions such as regulation and planning of services. To some extent, therefore, they connect the two lower levels of government.

2. A Centripetal Tendency

The German federal system makes for a decentralized and democratic system of government, full of checks and balances. Navigating the system requires extensive negotiation skills because of the differing interpretations of broad frameworks, with the role and responsibilities of different levels of government being constantly debated. It is not a context helpful to the uniform implementation of national policies and standards, as tensions are generated easily between the different levels. There are some Laender who would like to see Federal responsibility for ECEC removed to Laender level; however, the Federal Constitutional Court has stated that it assigns childcare to the field of public welfare. Some at the municipal level resent the involvement of the Laender in children's

²² Federal, Laender, and Municipal government

services and advocate complete responsibility for ECEC to be passed to them, cutting out the role of the Laender with respect to regulation and funding. This is intended to hand greater responsibility and power to the most local level of government.

B. Staffing

1. Specialist Staff

Specialist staff for ECEC are nursery teachers, qualified social educationalists (professional school) and qualified educationalists²³.

a) Nursery Teachers

Nursery teachers are the traditional, main professional group in the system of day facilities. 55% of all persons working were nursery teachers in 1998. As of 2002, 64% of staff in ECEC day facilities were trained as a nursery teacher. Training to become a nursery teacher takes place at technical colleges for social education. The Laender are responsible for training nursery teachers. Framework agreements of the Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education are to ensure comparability, but no two Training Codes are identical. A framework timetable (at least 3,600 hours) has been introduced within which the Laender are able to set foci: (1) at least 360 hours in the supra-profession learning area, (2) at least 1,800 hours in the profession-specific learning area, and (3) at least 1,200 hours in social educational practice.

b) Qualified Social Educationalists (Professional School, Fachhochschule)

Qualified social educationalists with three to four years of studies at a professional school – for which there is no national regulation as to the content – work largely as managers or in specialist consultation.

²³ OECD Early Childhood Policy Review 2002-2004 Background Report Germany (2004), p.90-92

c) Qualified Educationalists

Qualified educationalists study for at least eight semesters at a University with different points of emphasis (infant education, social education, early childhood education and the like). Their specialty is specialist advice or management of organizations. The share of academics among the specialist staff of early childhood care, education and child-raising is very small, at less than 4%.

2. Women and Men on the Job

The system of day facilities for children in the Federal Republic of Germany is a field in which the bulk of work is done by women: roughly 95% as against 5% men²⁴. On the other hand, the rate of women that has been reached means for the old Federal Lander a ten-fold increase in comparison with the figure at the end of the seventies.

3. Representation of Interests

Roughly 25% of the teaching staff is in a trade union. The larger of the two trade unions (General Services Trade Union) unites the employees of the service sector, while the smaller of the two (Trade Union of Education and Science) targets staff in the teaching professions. The extent of trade union membership is rather low in comparison with neighboring countries. The cause of this is that membership is entirely voluntary.

4. Challenges

The birth-rates in the East, linked to the dismissal of younger nursery teachers during the reduction in the number of places after unification, require 30,000 posts to be filled by the year 2015 (OECD, 2005). Since training capacities were reduced at the same time, it can be presumed that sufficient nursery teachers will not be available. The share of staff aged between 40 and 60 has increased constantly since unification, and nationally is now almost 50% (at the end of 2002), while in the new Lander it is almost 70%. The

²⁴ This falls well short of the quality goal set in 1996 by the European Union's Childcare network of experts, according to which 20% of the staff in ECEC day facilities should be men.

share of 25- to-40-year-olds has fallen to fewer than 40% nationally, and in the new Lander to less than 30%.

The other challenge is education reform. The Federal Republic of Germany is a federal state. Responsibility for the field of general education lies with the Lander. With its “Future of Education and All-Day Schools” program, the Federal government is helping the Lander to establish and expand all-day schools, particularly through the “Emergency Program to Reduce Youth Unemployment” and its program “BQF”. The BQF program supports the disadvantaged. This not only involves the strengthening of the international focus of the range of courses offered in Germany, but also the reform of the content and structure of individual courses.

C. Program

1. A Strong and Equal Partnership with the Education System

There is a good trend toward increased co-operation between the educational role of ECEC and the school system. Before proceeding to discuss this issue in Germany, it is worth recalling the words of the OECD report, *Starting Strong* (OECD, 2001, p.129): “The needs of young children are wide, and there is a risk that increased co-operation between schools and ECEC could lead to a school-like approach to the organization of early childhood provision. Downward pressure on ECEC to adopt the content and methods of the primary school has a detrimental effect on young children’s learning. Therefore, it is important that early childhood is viewed not only as a preparation for the next stage of education (or even adulthood), but also as a distinctive period where children live out their lives. Stronger co-operation with schools is a positive development as long as the specific characters and traditions of quality early childhood practice is preserved.”

2. The All Day School and the Hort

Another development is the development of All Day Schools, a policy actively supported by the Federal government and most Landers. One consequence of this development is the likely reduction of a separate Hort provision, because of its higher costs.

Child care staff were often critical of this prospect, expressing concerns that school-based services would not be able to provide children with the same pedagogical opportunities. There are a number of barriers to be overcome. First, schools are more powerful and prestigious institutions, and teachers are a more powerful and socially valued group of workers than Educators, with a higher level of education, better pay and more status. This is not a good basis for developing a ‘strong and equal relationship’ between two systems. Secondly, responsibility for ECEC services and schools is divided. There is a federal responsibility for ECEC services in the sense of framework legislation for child and youth welfare. Schools are the exclusive responsibility of Landers, within the education system. Moreover, Landers differ in whether they locate their responsibility for ECEC in education or other departments. Finally, provision and direct funding of ECEC services rests with another level of municipalities and private providers.

3. Transfer of ECEC Responsibility to the Education System

A transfer of ECEC services from child welfare to school education is not simply a shift of Federal responsibility for ECEC from one ministry to another. The Federation lacks legislative authority for school education, so a shift toward education within the Lander’s responsibility would not always lead to progress in terms of a standardization of conditions and opportunities for children growing up. Splitting the system into two has had the consequence of condemning the services for children under 3 years to low quality conditions, such as weak investment, low levels of training and pay for staff, and the lack of an educational vision. This type of situation tends to move public “childcare” into the

realm of being a welfare service limited to low income families, and to drive middle-class parents to find alternative solutions, often in the private, non-regulated market.

D. Family Engagement and Support

1. Parent's Right

Parents have primary responsibility for bringing up their children. Cooperation between nursery teachers and parents has pursued different goals and taken many forms as the years have passed. This is based on the legal situation. On the side of nursery teachers, the entire cooperation with parents is a major challenge. They frequently face parents who are older or better educated than they are. Therefore, they do not feel sufficiently well prepared by their training for cooperation with parents.

Book Eight of the Social Code obliges nursery teachers to cooperate. Parents are to be involved in decisions in major matters of the day facility (Art. 23 para. 3 of Book Eight of the Social Code). They have the freedom to choose between various services that are available (Art. 5 of Book Eight of the Social Code), as well as the right to respect for the basic orientation of their child-raising (Art. 9 of Book Eight of the Social Code). Nursery teachers also have influence and specialist skills. It is best when parents and nursery teachers shape the world in which the children live together (co-construction) with largely agreeing goals and in mutual recognition of the best interests of the child. The mutual responsibility is expressed in the guiding principle of child-raising and educational partnership. The rights of parents in day facilities can be characterized as individual and collective, informal and formal and settled between the poles of rights to information and rights to participate in decision-making.

2. Maternity and Parental Leave

Germany has well-established, statutory parental leave policies with a potential bearing on demand for and use of ECEC services. There is a period of maternity leave (6 weeks before birth and 8 weeks after, or 12 weeks if there is a multiple or premature birth) during which mothers receive, if applicable, maternity pay from public funds

supplemented by an employer's allowance, which brings up their income to average annual earnings. Parental leave in Germany has two elements of flexibility. First, parents taking leave may work up to 30 hours per week, with a reduction of benefit paid. The wages earned in part time are taken into account when determining the child rearing benefit. Second, the third year of leave may be saved with the consent of the employer and used at any time until the child is 8 years of age. Leave is taken overwhelmingly by mothers; only about 2% of fathers use the entitlement.

However, in 2001 just under a fifth of mothers with a child under 3 were on leave (49% of mothers were employed or taking leave – 31% employed, 18% on leave)²⁵. As leave taking is usually higher the younger the age of the child, it seems likely that a substantial proportion of German women with very young children (i.e. under 18 months) are at home on leave. Current parental leave policy was developed in West Germany before unification. After unification, the former GDR's leave policy was replaced by West Germany's leave policy, which was longer, less well paid and not coordinated with ECEC access. Maternity benefits and the provision of child care are better in Germany than in the United States. Germany has a maternity leave of 14 weeks at a high wage replacement rate, extensive "extra" leaves, and somewhat looser eligibility requirements (Kim and Weon, 2004).

E. Funding and Financing

1. Partners in Funding

Due to the allocation of authority, the Federation has no direct role in the basic funding of ECEC services. This means that funding of running costs comes from three sources: Public (state) institutions, independent and private organizations of facilities and parents contribute towards the funding of the system of day facilities for children. Broadly speaking, on average of all 16 Landers, the governments pay 75-80% of costs,

²⁵ OECD Country Note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany (2004), p.24.

parents around 14-20%, and independent and private organizations (freie Träger) pay the remainder.

a) The State Agencies

The Federation may not contribute directly towards the cost of early childhood care, education and child-raising, but only indirectly via the financial equalizations between the Federation and the Laender. In accordance with the authorities set forth in the Basic Law, the burden of funding is linked with the responsibility for implementation, primarily the local authorities. In all Federal Laender, however, the Laender themselves contribute funds from their budgets towards the investments necessary for the operation of day-care facilities. Land statutes and statutory orders regulate the respective funding modalities.

b) The Organizations (Providers)

Organizations of public youth welfare promote voluntary providers or private providers and may themselves operate facilities. A financing condition in some Land is the regulation that a facility must be included in youth welfare planning. However, the providers' share is decreasing because they have hardly any revenues of their own. For example, church tax is on the decline. Overall, the principle is that parents should contribute to all services, including Kindergarten for 3 to 6 years old, which are an entitlement.

c) Parents

The third partner in funding is the parents. Their contributions increase on the one hand in relation to the cost per place. On the other hand, parents' contributions are graduated according to social criteria. The criteria²⁶ are oriented according to their

²⁶ In some Land statutes, upper limits are set (Rhineland- Palatinate = 20% of the staff costs), others make abstract instructions, such as socially responsible contributions (Brandenburg); contributions taking into account the economic burden on the family (Baden-Württemberg) or suitable contributions (Thuringia).

economic situation, the family income, the number of children in the household or the number of children in a family attending a facility at the same time.

Parental fees, however, are related to income, so low income families may not have to pay fees, and usually to the number of children from a family attending a service. Parents can be partly or completely exempt from cost contributions for economic reasons.

2. Funding Procedure and Management

The funding procedure for day facilities for children has contributed towards the creation of a varied range of services, but has also led to a situation of the expansion in quantity and quality. According to the Background Report Germany (OECD, 2005), there are two types of possible funding.

a) Subsidies

Traditional funding via subsidies promotes facilities or projects, and the voluntary providers contribute a suitable share of their own. The responsible public organization grants the provider funds for their services so that users can take advantage of the service provided. The users (beneficiaries) have no influence on the structure of the services provided within the context of this principle, while the beneficiaries are recipients of subsidies as far as the organizations are concerned.

b) Fees

With subject promotion and funding via fees, the users are entitled to the subsidies if they have a subjectively attributable right. The system of day facilities for children provides two possibilities for this. First is the statutorily determined legal right to a nursery place, second is a need is determined. Parents go to the youth welfare office and explain their wishes as to type and extent of care. Depending on the legal situation, the need is determined. This leads to costs being assumed to the degree approved. After this, the parents go to an organization of their choosing, and a contract is concluded if there

are free places. The providers have their costs refunded on the basis of cost agreements with the public organizations.

3. Budget Settlement

Concerning the funding of childcare services run by supporting organizations, the law differentiates between investment costs and running costs.

a) Investment Cost

75% of the investment costs (construction costs, initial equipment etc.) for building up a childcare service must be subsidized by the respective municipality²⁷. There are three exceptions (Bode, 2003. p.641):

- ①. In case a childcare service is established within an “area of social priority” (sozialer Brennpunkt) subsidies can amount to 90% of the investment costs.
- ②. If a childcare service is set up by a voluntary organization which does not dispose of much capital (a so-called “poor” organization), and if the service otherwise could not be installed, subsidies can be augmented to 90% of the investment costs.
- ③. In case the supporting organization intending to establish a childcare service is an association of parents and meets the requirements mentioned above, subsidies can be raised to 95% of the investment costs.

b) Running Costs

The running costs of a childcare service include expenses for staff and maintenance as well as costs for materials. The respective municipality subsidizes the supporting organization of a childcare service for at least 73%²⁸ of the running costs. Childcare services run within ‘areas of social priority’ and those held by ‘poor’ supporting organizations may receive subsidies up to 90% of their running cost expenses.

²⁷ The municipality itself is refunded by the Land for 50% of the subsidies it pays.

²⁸ The amount of costs a supporting organization has to pay on its own account varies largely between the German Federal states.

Childcare services held by associations of parents are to be subsidized for up to 95% of their running cost expenses.

c) User Costs

As to user fees, there is a special regulation that takes into account the family income of those who want their children to attend care centers. Notably, associations are free to demand complementary fees for special services offered. Fees are collected by the local municipality. This way of collecting fees via the municipality again illustrates the relationship between public interference and private institutions as a kind of public-private partnership. The fees are supposed to sum up to about 20% of the total running costs of a childcare service. As a general tendency, parent fees are increasing. As a result, the quality of childcare increasingly depends upon private inputs. All this occurs while the service quality of statutory and traditional voluntary providers is under heavy public scrutiny. Hence it is not surprising that the middle and upper classes increasingly turn to providers for additional services financed by private money.

V. ECEC Policies in the U.S.

ECEC plays an important role in responding to the complexities and challenges of an advanced industrialized country. In the U.S., ECEC has been a key ingredient for the achievement of social and economic integration across income, ethnic and racial groups. It assists in the assimilation of immigrants, responds to the changing work roles and composition of families, helps to equalize life opportunities for children of low income families, and aids in enhancing child development and child well-being generally. ECEC was designed to accommodate the social needs of vulnerable children, the educational needs of all young children, and the needs of working parents.

Current Status of ECEC

A. The Historical Background

Kammerman (2000) explained that in the U.S., infant schools stressing education were established in the early 19th century, expanded rapidly, and then largely disappeared to be replaced later by part-day kindergartens. The U.S. story is evolving from two parallel streams. Infant schools were established in New England in the early 19th century, and 40 percent of three year olds in Massachusetts were enrolled in 1840. These programs had largely disappeared by the end of the century, with the growing emphasis on the role of mothers in child development except in disadvantaged and inadequate homes. The infant schools were replaced with part-day kindergartens established by voluntary organizations, and used largely by children from middle class families. At about the same time, day care centers or day nurseries were created, also under voluntary auspices, to provide custodial care for the deprived children of poor working mothers. These programs expanded during World War II as women with young children entered the workforce, contracted after the war as the women returned home, only to expand again when such women re-entered the workforce beginning in the 1960s. The public

policy focus remained largely on poor children, with a market response emerging for middle and upper class families.

B. The ECEC System in the U.S.

1. Administrative Agencies

Administrative auspice is a key dimension affecting program content and philosophy. The major difference has to do with whether the auspice is education, health and social welfare, or some combination. In the U.S., both education and health and social welfares ministries run parallel systems for young children. The U.S. model tends to divide responsibility between education and welfare for the whole age group but without consistency in assigning responsibility or administering programs.

2. The ECEC System in the U.S.

The U.S. noted in “OECD country note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the United States of America” (2000) that there is no ‘system’ in the U.S. system of ECEC. That means there is no national coordinated policy framework, and none of the 50 states across the country has as yet established a coherent in-state approach concerning early services for children under compulsory school age. Instead, three separate sub-systems operate alongside one another, and in competition with one another. These are (1) Head Start, targeting very poor young children, (2) the market-oriented, purchase-of-service system, serving children from birth to compulsory school age in centers and private homes, and (3) the public school system, offering kindergarten classes, education for designated target groups of pre-school age children, and sometimes wrap-around out-of-school services for school-age children.

a) Coverage

In 1995, roughly 60% of all children under age six not yet attending a public or private kindergarten were in some kind of non-parental care arrangement (in-home care, care by relatives, family child care homes, centers) on a regular basis, accounting for 12.9

million infants, toddlers and pre-school age children (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). According to an extensive study carried out by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (1996, reported in Kamerman & Gatenio), more than half of children under the age of one are cared for by a relative, 22% in family child care, 9% in center-based settings. When children reach the age of three, parental preference for type of care tends to be changed. Whereas only 19% of 2 year olds attend a center, 41% of 3 year olds are in center-based settings. The percentage of children ages 3 to 4 who are enrolled in pre-primary programs increased significantly between 1996 and 1997—from 45% to 48% (Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1999).

b) Head Start

Head Start is a federal government initiative with a 41 year old history in 2006. Beginning with a task force recommendation in 1964 for the development of a federally sponsored preschool program to meet the needs of disadvantaged children, Head Start has grown to serve children from birth to age 5 and their families. Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, it was created as an anti-poverty program with a strong local and community base. Head Start was designed to provide comprehensive services on a part-day (3 to 6 hours), part-year (generally the school year) basis to three- to five-year-old children living in poverty (i.e., living in families with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level).

Head Start has never been funded to serve all eligible children. Even today, it serves less than 40% of eligible children. Head Start was seen mainly as a child development program and family intervention program. It provides a wide array of services (e.g., medical and dental screenings) in addition to ECEC services. Traditionally most children in Head Start came from families that were either current or former cash assistance recipients because of Head Start income limits and because Head Start required active parental participation in the program. Head Start grants were given directly to mainly non-governmental local groups such as anti-poverty programs called Community Action Programs. In 2003 there were 19,200 Head Start Centers, serving 909,608 children with

an average cost per child of \$7,092. Of these centers, the majorities were community programs, and 115 centers were sponsored by faith-based organizations.

Table 8. Head Start Enrollment History

FISCAL YEAR	ENROLLMENT	APPROPRIATION
1965 (Summer only)	561,000	\$ 96,400,000
1970	477,400	325,700,000
1975	349,000	403,900,000
1980	376,300	735,000,000
1985	452,080	1,075,059,000
1990	540,930	1,552,000,000
1995	750,696	3,534,128,000
2000	857,664	5,267,000,000
2001	905,235	6,200,000,000
2002	912,345	6,536,570,000
2003	909,608	6,667,533,000
2004	905,851	6,774,848,000

*source: adapted from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/research/2005.htm>

The U.S. explained in “OECD country note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the United States of America” (2000) that over the years, Head Start has received continued funding through both conservative and more liberal administrations. Budget allocations have increased steadily. Today Head Start, as distinct from most other child care and pre-kindergarten provision, funds community-based agencies which aim to provide comprehensive education, health and support services for poor families with young children. Parent participation is one of the key aims of the program. To be eligible for Head Start, a child must be living in a family with income below the federal poverty line. Ten percentages of the children enrolled in each program may be filled by children whose families exceed the low-income guidelines, and 10% of the available places are

intended for children with disabilities²⁹. Although Head Start reaches an impressive number of children, expansion has not kept pace with growing need; 36% of eligible children receive services. Local grantees are required to meet national Head Start Performance Standards, and the program is subject to a 20% funding match at the local level. While basic funding for Head Start comes from the federal government, grantees are expected to provide 20% matching funds³⁰.

Individual local organizations apply for funding, and grants are awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services Regional Offices on a three-year basis. Each year, funding is disbursed by the regional offices, but first the federal government allocates money to the states based upon a formula which takes into account the number of children from birth to age four who are living in families with incomes below the poverty line in each state (Currie and Neidell, 2003).

c) Purchase-of-Service System

The purchase-of-service delivery system is dominated by private providers. In 1990, while approximately 10% of providers were in the public system, 90% were in the private sector. Of these, roughly two-thirds were not-for-profit agencies and one-third for-profit enterprises. For-profit organizations can range from large franchising operations (child care chains) to an individual woman caring for two or three children in her own home. In the United States, ECEC is provided by a combination of market and managed systems: private non-profit and for-profit center-based programs for all ages, school-age child care services, family child care, informal (unregulated) care are components of a wide-ranging market system whose public requirements are the regulatory system set by the individual states.

²⁹ In 1997-1998, 13% of Head Start attendees were children with disabilities. Head Start program are predominantly center-based but may also be home-based, reaching (in 1999) a total of 826,000 children aged mostly 4 years.

³⁰ Eighteen state governments help local groups to meet the federal match requirement. Nine of these states provide funds above the federal matching requirements to expand the number of children served by Head Start (Education Commission of the States, 2004).

d) Public School System

The only kind of nearly universal provision is the state-funded kindergarten under the auspices of the education authorities, which covers the year before entry into primary school. Kindertartens are available to nearly all children who meet the age requirements (which differ by state) at public expense. Although most kindergarten classes are part of public primary schools, parents also have the option of enrolling their children in privately-sponsored kindertartens (Kamerman, 2001). The number of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs is growing significantly (Witte and M. Trowbridge, 2004). However, the definition of “pre-kindergarten” is very broad: state policies differ concerning their goals, administrative structures and funding, the types of agencies operating programs, the eligibility criteria, the quality standards, and the scope of supports provided to children and families. At the same time, like Head Start, most state-funded pre-kindergarten programs are targeted at children considered to be at-risk of later school failure. The share of U.S. children attending early education programs has risen dramatically in recent years. 66% of 4-years old were enrolled in centers or school-based preschool programs in 2001, up from 23% thirty years earlier (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970; US Department of Education, 2003). Expansion of pre kindergarten is partly motivated by concerns that many children are insufficiently prepared at the time of school entry, with particularly large academic skill deficits for disadvantaged groups.

Policy Concerns in ECEC

A. Access

Having access to ECEC should mean that the needs of both parents and children are addressed. All parents will have a choice among a variety of programs that meet their needs for location, hours of care, friendly and knowledgeable staff, curriculum content and stability and reliability of care at a cost that is within the family budget. At the same time, the program must also meet the needs of all children for an appropriate, caring and stimulating environment that emphasizes both education and nurture, and addresses any special needs.

1. Background

The characteristics of ECEC access are linked to the basic economic, social and political nature of the country in which the children and families live. The United States is pluralistic society with a democratic form of government and overlapping roles for one federal, 50 state and thousands of local government structures and is subject to a continuum of attitudes directed toward child rearing.

The U.S. history of ECEC access to programs has been based on sets of dichotomies (Ranck, 2003):

- ①. Day care vs. early childhood education: Who receives services of what type and curriculum design? What are the goals and objectives of individual ECEC programs?
- ②. Women, especially mothers, at home with children vs. in the paid workforce: Who provides services, who gets paid for services, who pays for the services?
- ③. Governments vs. private sector (families, employers, religious institutions, and philanthropists): What are the sources for the fiscal and in-kind resources to design, build, house and operate ECEC programs?
- ④. Federal vs. state government support: How much of the total public resources come from which level of government? How equitable is state support?
- ⑤. Crisis conditions of federal government support for ECEC vs. universal support for all: When is it acceptable for the government to support ECEC? When is it not acceptable?

2. Main Barriers to Access to ECEC

The main barriers to equitable access to ECEC are the restrictions that limit services universally to all children, such as the artificial categorical boundaries of age, residency, family income, parental workforce participation, presence or absence of special needs, hours of program operation, etc., and the funding limits on existing programs. Another barrier is the wide range of staff professional preparation and continuing education opportunities that affect program quality. While some ECEC

professionals claim that regulations limiting group size and child/adult ratios are barriers to enrollment, others believe that the health, safety and developmental needs of young children demand small group size and age-appropriate child/adult ratios. Eligibility requirements based on age, location, health needs, special needs, and economic conditions will affect all these categories of children in one or both of two ways: if the programs are not entitlements and funding runs out, or if programs are able to set their own enrollment criteria. Accreditation for these programs which indicates services above the minimum set by state regulations is entirely voluntary. The ECEC programs in public and private or independent schools and the Head Start program are separately managed systems whose requirements are based on the state education laws. Head Starts may also be licensed by the state.

3. Strategies to Increase ECEC Access

Communities are urged by government funders and many ECEC professionals to keep lines of communication open among all the deliverers of ECEC, including programs targeted for children with special physical, emotional and mental needs. Children are evaluated by local school child study teams and mental health professionals.

Program staff and family child care providers are encouraged to enroll children with special needs, and most find it beneficial not only to the child but to all the children in the program. Professional support for working with children with special needs is often supplied and should be made available to programs unable to hire a specialist in such needs. Choices among child care options for all parents, regardless of income, are determined by the following (Ranck, 2003):

- ①. Location, number and variety of center-based programs in relation to child's home and parents' places of employment including urban and rural locations.
- ②. Available space within any of the programs.
- ③. Provision for care for mildly-ill children.
- ④. Cost of tuition or co-payment.
- ⑤. Eligibility for subsidy.

- ⑥. Availability of subsidy.
- ⑦. Transportation availability, public transportation availability, schedule, degree of difficulty (number of transfers needed), and cost.
- ⑧. Program comfort level to parent: child-rearing and educational philosophy compatibility.
- ⑨. Program comfort level to child: developmentally appropriate for ages and stages of children.

B. Quality

This section will focus on the main concerns related to ECEC policy in the U.S. Three central questions: How is quality conceptualized by different stakeholders? ; How is quality assessed? ; What policy approaches have been directed toward quality improvement? These three questions are concerning quality are answered to provide an introduction to definitions of quality of ECEC services, and to indicate how policy has been directed at meeting the needs of children and families with regard to ECEC. It should be noted that since the questions are somewhat overlapping, some information provided in response to one question may also apply to other questions as well.

1. Conceptions of Quality

What is high quality child care? There are certainly many opinions within the U.S. Cryer (2003) pointed out in “The OECD thematic review of ECEC policy Background Report United States of America” that child advocates, especially those who study the development of children, would disagree, saying that childcare in the U.S. is not usually of high quality, because it does not sufficiently meet children’s developmental needs, nor does it sufficiently protect their health and safety.

In an attempt to define the quality of almost any service, it is obvious that subjective values will come into play. Just what ECEC quality is can be controversial, depending on what aspect of the service is being considered and who is doing the

defining. This is certainly true when attempts are made to define quality of ECEC environments, for both center-based classrooms and family child care environments.

Quality of early care and education settings can be defined from many perspectives, and can include a variety of indicators. Any definition is likely to be challenged by those with differing priorities or perspectives. When considering the various definitions of quality of ECEC in the U.S., it helps to understand the roots of our early childhood programs. As in many countries, two primary types of ECEC evolved over many years: both Care and Education.

The original purpose of child care was to provide full-day care for children whose parents, often of lower income groups, worked as part of the labor force. Thus, childcare quality was defined in terms of meeting the custodial (health and safety) needs of children. The purpose of nursery schools or preschools was to provide part-day socialization and educational experiences for young children whose mothers generally were not part of the labor force, so the emphasis in these programs was educational rather than custodial. With the more recent recognition of the importance of the early years for learning, the goals of providing both care and education are being merged.

Within the two types of ECEC now found within the U.S. (custodial and educational) as well as the many programs that now represent some combination of these two types, there are vastly different quality levels represented.

The levels of quality that stakeholders are willing to accept as high quality depend on the vision that stakeholders have for children, their understandings of how to prepare children to be successful in the society, and the resources available to meet the standards that are set. Both care and education are the core elements of the professional definition of quality that is widely held in the U.S. These core elements include (Cryer, 2003):

- ①. Safe care, with sufficient diligent adult supervision that is appropriate for children's ages and abilities; safe toys, equipment, and furnishings;
- ②. Healthful care, in a clean environment where sanitary measures to prevent the spread of illness are taken, and where children have opportunities for activity, rest, developing self-help skills in cleanliness, and having their nutritional needs met;

- ③. Developmentally appropriate stimulation where children have wide choices of opportunities for learning through play in a variety of areas such as language, creativity through art, music, dramatic play, fine and gross motor skills, and number and nature/science;
- ④. Positive interactions with adults where children can trust, learn from and enjoy the adults that care for and educate them;
- ⑤. Encouragement of individual emotional growth, allowing children to operate independently, cooperatively, securely and competently; and
- ⑥. Promotion of positive relationships with other children, allowing children to interact with their peers with the environmental supports and adult guidance required to help interactions go smoothly.

Whatever the setting, family childcare or care in a center, the same components of quality are thought to be required. This is because it is believed that children need the same basics for positive development, whether they are at home, in family child care, or in center-based programs, even though they may be carried out in different ways.

2. Quality Evaluations and Improvement

According to Vandell, et al (2000), there are two general approaches to measuring childcare quality: process quality and structural quality. Process quality refers to children's experiences in child care settings. Some process measures focus specifically on caregivers' behaviors with children. A second way of measuring child care quality is structural and caregiver characteristics, such as child/adult ratio, group sizes, teacher formal education, and teacher specialized training.

These two sets of indicators are consistently related. When child/adult ratios are lower, children generally appear less apathetic and distressed; caregivers spend less time in managing their classrooms and offer more stimulating, supportive care. When staff is more highly trained and better compensated, children's activities are of higher quality, and caregivers are more responsive and less restrictive. Higher quality settings are likely

to have better health and safety practices, resulting in fewer respiratory and other infections among the children, and to have fewer playground injuries.

Childcare licensing regulation consists primarily of specified objectives for structural quality in ECEC programs. There is no federal childcare regulation in the U.S., although an attempt was made to create a national standard for child care in the 1970s. At present, licensing of childcare programs is set and enforced by each of the states in the U.S. These regulations usually include requirements such as number of children allowed per teacher, space, general sanitation, nutrition, building inspection requirements, teacher training and qualifications, prevention of child neglect or abuse, emergency procedures, and health requirements for children and staff.

There is an extensive research literature linking structural and caregiver characteristics to process quality. A review of regulatory standards in the 50 states shows that few states have adopted standards that are consistent with the recommendations of professional organizations. It appears that childcare structural and caregiver characteristics are in need of improvement. They can be improved if additional resources are allocated. This could occur through a combination of increased subsidies for care, especially to low-income families; federal standards and/or increased state standards for both physical settings and caregiver training and child/staff ratios; improved information to parents on the quality of providers; and/or direct provision or expansion of childcare in schools.

ECEC Policy Approaches

A. Regulations and Evaluation

Regulation provides a framework for governments to monitor privately run programs. For more than one hundred years, ECEC services in the U.S. have been predominantly provided by the private sector and licensed by the government. In present-day policy terms this means that there are 50 separate sets of regulations, both for the setting of standards and for ensuring that programs meet these standards. There is no federal licensing, although federal programs may be regulated by funding requirements.

States define the services they will license, and in general these are market programs. These may be full-day centers, part-day nursery schools and pre-schools, large and small family childcare homes, or school-age programs. Government-run programs (e.g. kindergartens) do not need to be licensed, since the public agency administering them is responsible for their quality. Licensing is a form of setting minimum standards to which all programs must adhere. Additionally, some states have chosen to support voluntary accreditation according to the much higher quality standards set by professional associations.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has been very influential in the field of center accreditation, as has the National Child Care Association (NCCA) with regard to the for-profit programs. The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) has similarly set standards for family child care, and the National School-Age Care Alliance for school-age programs.

In connection with asymmetric information in ECEC, there are two solutions: resource and referral agencies; and licensing and regulations (Magenheim, 1995). National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA)³¹ is a good case to reduce asymmetric information. With regard to the licensing and regulations, we should consider the extent to which ECEC regulations are enforced and the extent to which they affect behavior by producers and consumers. Though regulations sometimes positively influence quality, they do not have the effect that they would have if they were strictly enforced.

Care in the home of the provider of the care is called family child care. Family child care homes are permitted to enroll a larger number of children: usually up to 12, with 2 caregivers. Many states have a threshold number of enrolled children that require licensing, as many small family child care homes are not licensed (OECD background report, 2003). Regulation of child care is a responsibility of the states, and states vary widely in how they exercise that responsibility. States generally regulate family child care homes via licensing or registration approaches. Hofferth (1996) classified that

³¹ <http://www.naccrra.net/>

“licensing means that family child care homes must meet certain minimum health, safety, and programmatic standards before they can serve a specific number of children. Registration is a limited approach in which providers are either required or encouraged to identify themselves to state authorities to certify that they comply with state standards and requirements.” States may exempt family child care providers serving small numbers of children from all requirements³².

B. Staffing

The fact that there is no coordinated or unified system of ECEC in the U.S. is mirrored even magnified, in the staffing of services. There is no agreed framework system for staff qualifications, neither at the state level nor at the federal level, and there are no agreed procedures for staff licensing. The U.S. Bureau of Labor identifies two roles: a ‘childcare worker’ is classified as someone who dresses, bathes and feeds children and supervises play. A ‘pre-school teacher’ instructs children in a pre-school program or childcare center. In practice, the term ‘teacher’ can be any of a number of alternatives, as discussed below.

a) Staffing in Head Start Services

The U.S. Congress recently mandated a requirement that 50% of Head Start classroom staff have A.S. (2-year degree from a community college) or B.S. (4-year degree from a university) degrees by 2003. Ohio state has even passed legislation which requires that all (100%) Head Start teachers must have an A.S. or a B.S. degree by the year 2006.

b) Staffing in the Purchase-of-Service System

A number of recent initiatives aim to raise the quality of staffing. Three such initiatives are: (1) A new scholarship program called Teacher Education And

³² In 1993, only eight states and the District of Columbia required that all family child care providers be registered or licensed (Hofferth, 1996).

Compensation Helps (TEACH) Early Childhood Program was developed in North Carolina in order to help individuals already working in the field to attend courses. Funding sources are mixed: federal, state, and private. TEACH is a non-profit service, with a built-in evaluation component. (2) The U.S. Department of Labor has introduced a 'Child development specialist' credential within an apprenticeship program which involves working in a center for two years under close supervision and taking two semesters of courses in child development at a community college. (3) A new accreditation for family childcare homes, developed by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) was recently piloted and is generally considered to be a kind of credential for the family child care worker.

c) Staffing in the Public School System

Public school employees working with young children have to hold a teacher license (teaching certificate) certified by the state. This license is based on a bachelor's degree and in some cases a master's degree with a specialization in education. In some states, teacher certification is not required for teaching young children in a public school (and these employees are paid less than certified teachers). Only a few states require a practicum with children younger than school age for teacher certification. Teacher aides do not usually need pre-serve qualifications, nor are they offered any specific training that might help them to progress professionally. In the U.S., the goal of the TEACH project is to improve the training of ECEC workers, linking additional training to higher wages. TEACH is geared to all levels of practitioners working in ECEC centers (OECD, 2001).

C. Program Contents and Implementation

Program content reflects different historical traditions and philosophies concerning the purpose of ECEC. Some are geared to preparing children for the next stage of schooling (school readiness), and this in practice is reflected in activities that stress literacy and numeracy skills. Others emphasize child development and individual

learning paths around the notion of “developmentally appropriate practice.” Of the federally funded programs, Head Start program goals and curriculum are framed by “program performance standards” and “performance measures” which endorse a comprehensive approach to fostering child development and school readiness.

The Even Start early childhood family literacy program is designed to build children’s language and literacy and includes a program to train teachers at the community level. Once the federal dollars get to the local school level, there is considerable flexibility of use, and many public schools choose to integrate elements of the Even Start program into the mainstream curriculum, rather than taking children out of class for specific tutoring.

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is another federally funded program which targets children from age three onwards. According to this law, which was revised in 1997, all states provide services to pre-school children with identified special needs according to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which sets out a program that will meet the student’s educational needs, ensure appropriate placement, and provide related services.

D. Family Engagement and Support

1. The Role of Parent

Family support programs are sometimes also included with other ECEC programs, because they provide a range of services for young children and their families. Family support programs tend to serve families living in or at-risk of poverty. Family support services rely both on public funds and on private foundation support, and are offered free of charge. The American public’s concern with government’s role also is reflected in the reluctance to mandate high standards for children’s care and education through state licensing programs. Therefore, the primary legislated restrictions on family choice are minimum standards, which vary from state to state and are usually limited to health and safety measures. There are four primary ways in which families are involved in early childhood settings (Bowman, 2003). They are as 1) recipients of education to improve

child rearing, 2) seekers of support to stabilize or improve family functioning, 3) community activists to improve institutions serving their children, and 4) advocates for their children with special needs. As the barriers to parent involvement to ECEC, Bowman (2003) classified three reasons: poorly executed programs; parental reluctance to participate; and insufficient public support.

2. Parents' Expectations

Parents' expectations for ECEC are enormously diverse. For their children, some parents expect no more than that they are safe, while others want an educational program in an emotionally and socially supportive environment. Social classes and ethnic communities tend to prefer particular arrangements or types of programs. Some prefer part day educational programs while others want full day care. For themselves, parent expectations are also diverse.

E. Finance and Funding

a) Background

ECEC is an area of public policy where education and child rearing intersect. Political ideology in the U.S. emphasizes the primary responsibility of the family for child rearing to an even greater extent than it does for education. According to Barnett and Masse (2003), the role of government is limited to: (a) assisting all families in meeting their responsibilities by reducing their tax burden; (b) assisting families who cannot fulfill their responsibilities due to the extraordinary circumstances of poverty or a child's disability; and (c) regulating providers of childcare services.

Regulation is primarily a state government responsibility. There is a strong tendency for regulated industries to "capture" their regulatory agencies, and regulatory agencies tend to represent the interests of the providers rather than the consumers.

b) Federal Funding

Although there are dozens of federal programs involved in ECEC, 10 account for the vast majority of the funds. For example, the table presents estimates of the funds that each of these programs spent in 1999 on children from birth to age 4, together with the historical funding for these programs and other major programs that were funded in earlier years.

Table 9. Federal Expenditures on Early Care and Education in the U.S.
(Data are in Millions of 1999 Constant Dollars)

Program ³³	1973	1977	1988	1992	1995	1999
Head Start	1315	1192	1479	2522	3709	4660
CCDF	-	-	-	1116	1523	2200
SSBG	871	1434	600	513	296	191
CDCTC	570	864	3109	2041	1979	1637
CCFP	-	213	532	908	1108	1052
Even Start	-	-	-	80	108	138
DCAP	-	-	-	-	477	923
Title I	124	-	-	614	568	666
IDEA – B	-	-	-	202	210	206
IDEA – C	-	-	-	200	334	370
Totals	2880	3703	5720	8196	10312	12043

Source: OECD thematic review of ECEC policy Background Report United States of America (2003)

³³ AFDC Aid to Families with Dependent Children
ARCC At-Risk Child Care
CCDBG Child Care and Development Block Grant
CCDF Child Care Development Fund
CCFP Child Care Food Program
CDCTC Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
DCAP Dependent Care Assistance Plan
IDEA-B Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act - Preschool Grants Program
IDEA-C Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act - Infants and Toddlers
SSBG Social Services Block Grant
TCC Transitional Child Care

c) State and Local Funding

State and local government spending on ECEC is less than federal spending³⁴. The relative roles of the various levels of government in funding early childhood education differ from the situation in education finance for public education generally. In elementary and secondary education, the federal role in education funding is quite small, and state and local governments bear most of the burden. As much state and local spending on early childhood programs is not centrally reported, it is difficult to estimate the state and, especially, the local share of funding. Most states prefer a demand-driven system and individual choice at the family/private level rather than direct government intervention through the supply and support of services. However, a demand-driven system only works in an effectively perfect market. The problem is that the market in the U.S. is currently far from perfect: buyers lack both financial resources and full information on quality and accessibility.

d) Alternative Approaches to Funding and Finance

There are distributional issues with respect to the incidence of various taxes, but they are not straightforward. There are a number of major alternative approaches that have been suggested for improving the ECEC system in the U.S. One is paid parental leave. This could be funded directly by the government, through tax-sheltered savings, or through employer mandates. Parental leave is particularly attractive for infants, given the high cost of their care and the belief that professional caregivers do not provide much added value. Another alternative is a voucher program that simply transfers money to parents and allows them to choose programs. Parents could be given vouchers through a social welfare or educational system much as they are now for subsidized childcare or educational choice programs.

³⁴ It is estimated to be from \$7.5 to \$8 billion in 1999. This estimate is larger than most previous estimates, but funding has been increasing and past estimates did not include preschool special education. Produced estimates for state and local funding include most state spending plus local school spending on special education for children birth to age 4. This omits some local school and municipal funding for ECEC.

VI. Findings

As ECEC varies in different countries, it is difficult to compare three countries' ECEC policies with each other. ECEC policies are structured in various patterns, and ECEC decision making and operating systems are different in terms of historical, political, economic and social contexts and backgrounds. Moreover, ECEC may have benefits to children, parents and society; it should be addressed and approached prudently. Therefore, I return to the research questions posed in the introduction, and this chapter "Findings" compares the ECEC policies of Korea, Germany and the U.S.

Comparison of ECEC Policies

In three countries, the most basic different character is the historical background. The U.S. and Germany are decentralized nations and Korea is a centralized country. ECEC also is impacted by this background. The political, economic, socio-cultural and demographic contexts in each nation affect all ECEC policies and programs that have an impact on families with children from birth to compulsory school age. Government involvement in ECEC falls into financial support or subsidies and regulations (Allen 2003; Mogenheim, 1995).

A. Equity of the Benefits of Policies

Regardless of whether a nation chooses to make policies and programs universal or to target them for specific populations that cannot receive the benefits through other means, the goal remains equity of coverage.

In terms of comparison of ECEC policies in equality of access, the three countries have many similarities: no unified program; day care costs are expensive and private-oriented; subsidized care is based on means-tested welfare; and low availability and affordability for some families and in some geographic areas.

The U.S. system of ECEC does not provide access to ECEC that is either horizontally or vertically equitable (Witte et al., 2004). As far as vertical equity is concerned, the OECD estimates that only 45% of three to five year old children in the U.S. living in low-income families are enrolled in preschool, while 75% of three to five year olds in higher income families are enrolled (OECD, 2004). Parents that receive vouchers will pay anywhere from \$0 to 10%-20% of their gross income for the CCDF subsidized care. In 2000, a total of 39 states had pre-kindergarten initiatives, although fewer had made substantial per capita investments (Education Week, 2002). Local school districts also invest in pre-kindergarten programs independently, although the bulk of this money comes from federal funding streams (Smith et al., 2003).

ECEC participation rates in Korea can be very different depending on whether participation rates in “Hakwons” (learning places) are included or not. If children’s participation in Hakwons are included, ECEC participation in Korea reaches over 90%. If not, ECEC participation in Korea is only 59%. As of 2002, about 510,000 young children attended private educational institutions, called Hakwons in Korea (MOE, 2002). Hakwons teach children Korean language fundamentals, basic mathematics, playing the piano, art and so on. It is difficult to figure out the exact numbers of children attending Hakwons because many children attend kindergartens or childcare facilities along with Hakwons. The ECEC of Korea heavily relies on the private sector which has a participation rate of over 70%, compared to the public sector, which is around 30%. Under this situation, it is difficult for the government to intervene in the ECEC market. As mentioned, government involvement in ECEC affects both financial support or subsidies and regulations (Allen 2003; Mogenheim, 1995).

With respect to regulation, the size, tuition and extra curricular programs of the kindergarten system have been directed and influenced by the MOE. Furthermore, the MOE evaluates the city and the provincial Offices of Education biannually. At the same time, the guidelines for operating childcare facilities are established by law regarding the child/teacher ratio, childcare fees and so on.

In the case of Germany, after unification, there was a large decrease in placements in the NBL, as parental employment and numbers of children fell, reducing demand. The situation might well have been worse without special Federal funding to support ECEC services in the NBL. Today the situation has stabilized after the initial post-unification drop in placements, while the falling child population has ensured that the coverage rate has remained constant or even increased. Like many aspects of ECEC services in Germany, complexities arise in a system in which 16 Laender are each responsible for funding arrangements in their own territory. The broad picture is as follows: the Federation, due to the allocation of authority, has no direct role in the basic funding of ECEC services. This means that funding of running costs comes from four sources: Landers, municipalities (local government), volunteer providers, and parents. The first two government levels pay 75-80% of costs, parents around 14%, and voluntary providers (freie Träger) the remainder. Parents should contribute to all services, including Kindergarten for 3 to 6 year olds, which is a right. One of the most obvious differences is in the amount paid by municipalities (varying from 30% to 83%) and parents (from about 10% to 20% of total running costs).

B. Similarities and Differences in the Three Countries

1. Similarities

While the three countries differ in many important respects- culturally, socially, historically- their similarities are worth addressing. They are democracies in which citizens enjoy personal freedom and in which most economic functions are carried out by private enterprise.

Three countries have similar rates of taxation, despite a radically higher unemployment rate in Germany compared to the U.S. and Korea. The U.S. and German per capita income is about 280% and 230% that of Korea. Women participate in paid work to a significantly different extent in the three countries.

The cultural and historical differences among countries mean only that such policies and programs cannot be copied from one country to another without extensive

adaptation. But the basic structure of a solution to the ECEC that works well elsewhere is worth examining by a country such as Korea.

Table 10. Economic and Demographic Data for Three Countries

Data	Korea	Germany	U.S.
Population (1000 person)	48,082	82,645	295,410
GDP (\$)	14,144	32,573	39,724
Annual Rate of Economic Growth (%)	4.6	-0.1 ³⁵	4.4
Taxation as a % of GDP	20.3	21.1	18.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.7	10.6	5.5
Female's Labor Force Participation (%)	52.8	64.5	69.7

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2004, <http://www.nso.go.kr>), Korea Institute of Public Finance (2003, <http://www.kipf.re.kr/>)

Differing levels of government support affect the equity of coverage for childcare. Equity of services tends to be even more problematic in the three nations that do not have unified government policies for childcare and depend more on private resources.

The U.S. passed the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PWORA) in 1997, restructuring the major means-tested welfare program by placing lifetime limits on public assistance for families with children. This is further evidence of the emphasis on individualism and self-sufficiency for adults. This legislation is having a major impact on ECEC policies and programs through an increased need for subsidized non-parental childcare. Although government support of ECEC in the U.S. varies by state, PWORA seems to have given some boost to day care for low-income families. Some states are making efforts to provide licensed family daycare options to augment center-based care for low-income families. Larner, Behrman, Young and Reich (2001) call for the U.S. federal government to take a more active role in ensuring ECEC support for all families, especially those with low incomes. In the field of ECEC, without government

³⁵ As of 2003

subsidies, having to use private resources to pay for daycare becomes another aspect of the expensive prospect of raising children.

In all three nations, availability of care is most problematic for women who work irregular and non-daytime hours, and who usually have a lower income and less education.

2. Differences

The U.S. and Germany are basically based on a decentralized tradition. On the other hand, Korea has a central tradition.

There is a big difference in public expenditure for pre-primary education as a percentage of GDP levels between the three countries: expenditure in the U.S. and Germany was 0.36 % of GDP levels, but in Korea it was 0.04% in 1998.

One important cultural difference between the three countries is the attitude toward fertility rates. The Korean and German governments believe that fertility rates are too low; on the other hand, the U.S. is satisfied with fertility rates. Therefore, the Korean government is trying to raise the rates, but Germany and the U.S. do not interfere with the fertility levels. As the U.S. builds immigrant policy to control labor issues, the government does not need to make policies for the fertility rate. In the case of Germany, the government seems to have the opinion that a high population exists in a small area. In Germany the annual rate of growth is negative but unemployment is high. This may be the reason Germany does not act to increase the fertility rate. At the same time, the German government also handles the immigrant policy instead of fertility policy. Korea's anxieties about the size of its population provided some of the original impetus for programs to provide generous benefits to families with children. Korean pronatalists expect through such programs to encourage large numbers of married couples to have big families. The U.S. and Germany do not have a pronatalist agenda. Their policies would not help Koreans looking for a new approach to the problems of ECEC.

C. Policy and ECEC Market

1. Parent Responsibilities

Korean families were found to shoulder a very large financial burden for ECEC expenses beginning in early childhood. ECEC programs are funded largely by government, national, state, or local authorities, depending on the country. In the U.S., while government authorities (national, local, and family allowance funds) cover 100% of capital and the operating costs for 5 year olds, parents pay a large amount of costs for 0-4 year olds. In Germany, the parents may pay a maximum of 20% for 3-6 year olds. In Korea, parents are responsible for up to 100% of ECEC costs. In the U.S., parents are responsible for up to 76% of ECEC fees. German parents are only charged up to 16-20% of ECEC costs.

Table 11. Data on Expenditures for ECEC in Selected OECD Countries

Country	Locus of Policy Making - National or Local	Age Group Served	Eligibility Criteria - Universal, Poor, With special needs., Working parents	Funding strategies (Gov't, Employer, Parent fees, Comb.)
Korea	National/local	3-5	Universal	State and local gov't.
		0-5	With special needs, Poor, Welfare, Working parents	Federal/state/local gov't. Parent fees cover @ 100 % of costs maximum.
U.S.	National/local	5	Universal	State and local gov't.
		0 - 4	With special needs, Poor, Welfare, Working parents	Federal/state/local gov't. Parent fees cover @ 76% of costs maximum.
Germany	State	3 – 6	Universal	State and local gov't plus parent fees (income related, max 16-20% of costs).
		under 3	With special needs, Poor, Working parents	

Source: adapted from Kamerman, S. B. (2000) "Early Childhood Education and Care: An Overview of Developments in the OECD Countries. pp.20

ECEC could be related to equity of coverage. ECEC policies and programs support parents' and their communities' efforts to place children in safe and growth-enhancing environments. Infant research has shown that stability of arrangements and access to nurturing caregivers correlates with better outcomes in respect to attachment to parents and social and emotional adjustment later in childhood (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1997). However, quality non-parental infant and toddler care is expensive.

2. Government Roles in Information Services

In terms of effectiveness and equilibrium, it is necessary for governments to intervene in ECEC market. The way to intervene should solve the problem of market failure and support low income families or children with disabilities by supplying ECEC services. The alternative role that government can play is to facilitate information flows between consumers and producers and other interested parties. In the U.S., Child Care Resource and Referral centers (CCR&Rs) could provide information that helps consumers evaluate quality and economize on search costs³⁶. In Korea, the Central Child-care Information Center (CCIC) has contributed to improving child-care services in Korea by providing child-care-related consultation and information services. As a state agency with the function of a supporting organization under the child-care service delivery system of the MOGEF³⁷, it specializes in providing information and consultation related to child and infant care, to nationwide child-care facilities, parents, and others interested in child-care information.

³⁶ According to the organization's website, NACCRRRA's projects are improving child care by supporting CCR&Rs, state networks and parents, researching the child care field, and improving the quality of child care for all families. Moreover, the organization has three basic functions: parent consultation, support for providers, and collecting data. Increased public funding for the information dissemination and education roles of CCR&Rs would help to ensure that such services are provided on an expanded basis for all consumers and producers.

³⁷ The CCIC was established according to Article 7 of the Act on Protection of Infants and children.

3. Supporting Method to Providers or Parents

To strengthen public benefit of ECEC, the Korean government should distribute the budget in two ways: directly to parents and indirectly to providers. The budget for ECEC in 2002 Korea is mainly allocated to direct subsidy to parents (30.8%, \$245.6 million), support for facility operation (16.0%, \$126 million) and salaries (53.2%, \$423.8 million). The first distribution method is to divide families into two groups: low income families and middle or high income families. Low income families can be beneficiaries of free ECEC and middle or high income families receive Tax benefits such as tax credit and tax deduction. The government can intervene to redistribute income from wealthier taxpayers to poorer workers and enable them to purchase better quality ECEC. This redistribution will affect the welfare of both the recipient parent and child.

The other distribution method is to support providers rather than parents. Almost 70% of the subsidy contributes to salaries and facility operation. In Korean ECEC market, there is a price control and the gap between market price and cost is subsidized by government to the providers. This is not proper direction. The government subsidy may create moral hazard for providers. The government should control the quality by evaluating and assessing. Therefore, public expenditure for ECEC should be based on the demand side (families), not on the supply side (providers). Public subsidy on demanders will give more purchasing power, which can lead to competition among providers.

ECEC Advantages and Disadvantages

A. Administrative Responsibility

As administrative responsibility is based on historic background, we could not briefly define a specific system that is better than others. However, in Korea it would be better to choose a unified system instead of a parallel system at present.

According to OECD (Education Policy Analysis, 1999), the public administration of ECEC systems broadly follows three models. The prevailing model in OECD

countries is a “split” system, in which the educational authorities are responsible for preschool education and the health or social affairs authorities supervise care. Germany has adopted this system. A second model, unified administrative arrangements, has been adopted by Sweden, Norway and Spain. A third model has been adopted in Korea and the U.S., in which both education, health and social affairs ministries run parallel systems for young children.

The unified system generally is likely to seem to use resources effectively and to implement care and education not as separate activities for different age groups, but as essential components of all programs for young children. In the case of Korea, there have been discussions about combining this system, but it could not be achieved because of inter-minister competition. The disadvantages of split and parallel systems is that they have different funding streams, objectives and service mechanisms for each sub-system, despite a growing overlap in underlying goals and types of families served.

In Korea, recently there was a consensus on the need to establish policy plans for ECEC based on nation-wide support as well as to prepare plans at the inter-ministerial level. Despite ECEC creating a foundation for the development of human resources in the future as well as the base of the nation, the sharing of roles between the government and the market is unclear, and weak links and poor collaboration among the ministries cause ineffective administration and financing.

The goals may vary by system. For example, the U.S. has expanded its public school-based preschool programs to include poor and handicapped children and to provide compensatory education for some, as well. Also, the U.S. seems to be moving towards a two-tier system in which one system (education) stresses cognitive, socialization, and developmental goals, while the other (social welfare) emphasizes facilitating work for low-skilled poor women and custodial care for children.

Therefore, Adopting a unified system under the MOGEF in Korea is required because the priority of policy in the MOGEF is ECEC. The department budget rate shows that in MOGEF, the portion of the budget was 89.8% in 2005, and 90.4% in 2006 of the ministry’s total budget. In contrast, the early education budget of the MOE was only

3.11% in 2005 and 6.86% in 2006. Objectively as this table shows, the priority and passion toward ECEC should not be overshadowed by competition between two ministries.

Table 12. Comparison of the Ministry Budget in Korea

Ministry	Gender Equality and Family (Child Care)		Education (Early Education)	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Year	2005	2006	2005	2006
%	89.8	90.4	3.1	6.9

Source: MOGEF and MOE white book (2006), unpublished budget data.

B. Relationship between Access and Financial Support

It is necessary that the Korean government take responsibility for ECEC from targeted groups (such as low income families and children with disabilities) to universal availability because of financial ability through the method of increasing and expanding expenditure. In many OECD European countries, the trend is to provide free, universal coverage for children within the public school system for a substantial period prior to compulsory education. Other countries consider ECEC to be compensatory or need-based rather than a universal right or standard, and take a more targeted approach. In the United States, much publicly-provided ECEC for 0 to 5-year-olds limits eligibility to low-income or at-risk children and families.

By offering financial support or subsidies, every government in the world could be involved in the ECEC sector. The reason to invest in ECEC has been its many benefits for both individuals and society: to enhance child development and well being; and to facilitate balancing work and family. However, because who pays for ECEC is closely linked to access. According to NAEYC, NAEYC believes that “If we fail to make the investment, we will pay a heavy price: increased delinquency, greater educational failures, lower productivity, less economic competitiveness, and fewer adults prepared to be effective, loving parents to the next generation of children”.

Unless there is a stable and well-targeted investment by the state, the children of low-income parents are denied equal access to good quality ECEC services. But in order to maximize the effectiveness of constrained public resources, the cost of providing ECEC is usually shared among national/local government, businesses, and parents. In many countries, the financial burden is on the parents.

The percentage of children enrolled in ECEC programs and the ease of access with which parents obtain a placement in an ECEC program for their children are clearly important indicators of a country's commitment to young children. Among the three countries, Germany has about 85 percent of its 3 - 6 year olds enrolled in kindergarten, and the U.S. is lower than Germany but higher than Korea. Korea is classified with the lowest coverage countries.

Moreover, public expenditure on ECEC in Korea is very low: 0.27% as a percentage of GDP in 2005, whereas Germany is 0.55% and the U.S. is 1.07-0.81% (MOGEF, 2005 and Meyers and Gornick, 2004). According to Korean government's long-term operation plan (The Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2005), the budget on ECEC in Korea will increase 27.3% every year. If we calculate this rate of increase, Korean government will take 4 years to reach the German level and 6 years to reach the U.S. level³⁸.

C. Regulatory Policy

It is important that the Korean government take responsibility for ECEC regulations to enforce and to establish necessary provisions. At the same time, the implementation should be controlled by the federal government, not at state levels. Because Korea has a centralized history, it may be helpful to improve service quality, rearrange policies and programs related with ECEC, encourage public responsibility and expand public services. The size, tuition and extra curricular programs of the kindergarten system have been directed and influenced by the MOE, and the law "Early Childhood Education Promotion Act." Moreover, the guidelines of operating childcare

³⁸ 1st year (2005): 0.27%; 2nd year (2006): 0.34%; 3rd year (2007): 0.44%; 4th year (2008): 0.56%; 5th year (2009): 0.71%; 6th year (2010): 0.90%.

facilities are regulated by law in the “Childcare Act” such as the child-teacher ratio, childcare fees, facilities’ basic size and arrangement, and so on.

In the U.S. and Germany, each state and Land has its own definition of what services it will license. Federal government run programs are not covered by licensing because the public agency that runs them is responsible for their quality. One of the similarities in the three countries is that non-market care is not usually licensed.

It includes: care by a parent at home or at work, care by a sibling, care by grandparents, and care by other relatives, all of whom are kin. With regard to family child care, there are no government’s financial supports. Also, there are many more unregulated family child care homes than regulated ones.³⁹

According to Kisker and Ross (1997), family child care account for 12% of all childcare. However, the quality of child care is not high.⁴⁰ Therefore, the regulation to family child care (unregulated) may be important in solving the ECEC problems. For example, effective regulation can reduce the likelihood that children receive low quality child care.

It is natural that the more we recognize the importance of ECEC, the more changes the three countries can make to their licensing regulations, tending to tighten the rules rather than loosen them. In Korea regulatory policy is run at the federal government level; in the U.S. and Germany regulatory policy is run at state level. For example, in the U.S. there is no federal licensing. In general, the 50 states are separately responsible for licensing, both for setting the rules and for assuring that programs meet the rules. Agencies that deliver or fund services are responsible for fiscal monitoring. Licensing functions are defined as laws passed by the state Legislatures.

³⁹ In 1990, some 23% of regulated and 2% of non-regulated providers was sponsored by an outside organization. Moreover, between 10% and 18% of all family child care homes were thought to be regulated (Hofferth, 1996).

⁴⁰ Kisker and Ross (1997)

The Quality of Child Care (%)	Inadequate	Adequate	Good
Home-Based Child Care	35	56	9
○ Regulated family child care	13	75	12
○ Non-regulated family child care	50	47	3
○ By relatives	69	30	1

The rationale for licensing is that it is essential to prevent harm to children. Poor enforcement can be the result of a weak law that does not empower the licensing office to apply a variety of sanctions, as well as be the result of inadequate training for licensing staff. In Germany, Laender set standards for ECEC services in their territory, and these standards are supervised by land Youth Welfare Offices, which are independent of Lander governments and funded by both Lander and local governments. Standards may cover a range of items, including calculation of the number of places needed, hours of opening, parent fees, building requirements and maintenance, group size, staff/child ratios and space both inside and outside.

VII. Conclusion

The goal of ECEC is to organize and deliver high-quality services, not to question whether to invest in ECEC any more. This thesis will propose desirable policy directions for ECEC in Korea in order to achieve this goal. Of course, these policy directions are drawn from comparing the ECEC of Korea to that of Germany and the U.S., as mentioned above. Kamerman (2000) explained “ECEC policy includes the whole range of government actions designed to influence the supply of and/or demand for ECEC and the quality of services provided.” Here I will suggest implications to design and implementation of ECEC in Korea. Moreover, the chapter also briefly discusses questions that are relevant to this thesis which require further research, and provides a final conclusion.

Suggestions for ECEC in Korea are: creating a MOGEF-oriented, unified administration; increasing public funding; strengthening regulations for improving quality; expanding the range of beneficiaries; and securing equal access for the needy. At the same time, these tentative conclusions await further refinement and correction in the light of further research about various topics: tax policies such as tax credits and deductions; parental leave policies; preparing for unification with North Korea; expanding female workforces and improving total fertility.

These three countries are becoming convinced of the importance of provision for young children-both as a first investment in lifelong learning and as a support to the wider economic and social needs of families. Yet participation in ECEC varies, depending on the country.

Overall benefits remain inconclusive. Research shows a strong initial effect, particularly for disadvantaged children. Claims about long-term social and individual benefits are derived from relatively few studies of particular programs, and such gains

may depend on specific program features. But this underscores a general conclusion that results do vary with program quality.

ECEC investment is not homogeneous, and does not yield a constant return. In shaping ECEC investment, countries face a spectrum of policy choices, and have to develop a wide range of systems that vary along several dimensions.

Implications of ECEC for Korea

A. MOGEF-Oriented, Unified Administration

First, the unified system may be oriented toward MOGEF. There are two reasons to move toward MOGEF: the advantages of the system and the priority of the department.

As is mentioned in the case of Norway, the unified system generally seems to use resources effectively and to implement care and education not as separate activities for different age groups, but as essential components of all programs for young children. A prerequisite for the success in rearranging the government's role is inter-minister competition being resolved among other stakeholders, such as interest groups. The merit of unifying systems can be ensuring a more rational use of resources and implementation of care and education, not as separate activities for different age groups, but as essential components of all programs for young children, all done more effectively than other systems. In the case of Korea, there have been discussions about combining systems, but this combination could not be achieved because of inter-minister competition. On the other hand, the disadvantages of split and parallel systems can be that they have different funding streams, objectives and service mechanisms for each sub-system, which contradicts a growing overlap in underlying goals and types of families served.

The other reason for unifying systems is that the priority of policy in MOGEF is childcare. The department budget rate shows that in MOGEF, the budget for childcare was 89.8% in 2005, and in 2006, 90.4% of the total budget was for childcare. In contrast, the early education budget of the MOE was only 3.11% in 2005 and 6.86% in 2006.

Objectively, there is no competition between the two ministries because MOGEF addresses childcare so much more completely than MOE.

B. Increasing Public Funding

Second, the Korean government should increase public funding and steering for ECEC. In most countries, government policy has concentrated on increasing the budget for childcare services. The budget on ECEC in Korea will increase 27.3% every year. If we calculate this rate of increase, Korean government could catch up with the German level in 2008 and the present U.S. level in 2010.

In many countries, the financial burden is on the parents. The state has a duty to ensure access for the most needy, while the role of the private sector to enhance provision is also important. Statistical data collected by the OECD show that Korean public investment levels for young children are low: less than half that of the OECD mean. If early year services are regarded as a private family responsibility and supply left to the market, the result will be a fragmentation of service types and quality; an insufficient supply of services in those areas where parents have difficulties in paying market prices; a continual movement of teachers from one service to another; and poor quality of provision.

Experience shows that without public financing and steering, the coverage and quality of services will inevitably suffer. Political leadership and steering through legal and financial instruments is essential to surmount difficulties. The Korean government is trying to expand current expenditures by the government to support young children from poorer families and to provide them with targeted fee relief. This effort could be further reinforced by multi- and cross-agency initiatives on behalf of disadvantaged families. Free access to early childhood services cannot by itself address structural poverty, income inequality, or the limited access of poor families to what is primarily a private system of services.

I encourage the Korean authorities to find the means of subsidizing the capital and operational expenses of the quality private providers, especially NGOs and non-profits

which work in localities that lack services. I would also recommend subsidization of teachers' salaries, but within the perspective of generating a coherent professional profile for the field, straddling both education and care.

To establish the foundation for ECEC, government financial support must be provided for individual children and their families through a voucher system to guarantee parents' right to choose institutions. At the same time, the amount of financial support per child will be differentiated depending on the parent's income level.

How will funding resources influence ECEC policy in Korea? Where is the money coming from for ECEC? A decrease in the national defense budget or construction and transportation budget can be practical alternatives for ECEC budget⁴¹.

C. Strengthening Regulations for Improving Quality of ECEC

Third, the rationale for regulation is that it is essential in preventing harm to children. Poor enforcement can be the result of a weak law that does not empower the enforcing office to apply a variety of sanctions, and inadequate training for licensing staff can contribute as well.

The government's role in providing information about ECEC providers should prevent adverse selection and moral hazard. Public investment in information could generate benefits in excess of the initial investment by increasing the efficiency of the child care market. Increasing efficiency should yield lower prices, higher quality, and reduced variance. The more information may enable consumers to evaluate quality better, and apply competitive pressure on producers to raise quality and make quality levels more consistent. However, because restriction provides a select group of business owners

⁴¹ According to the 2007 Budgeting Guidelines in Korea, the Ministry of Planning and Budgeting (MPB) is suggesting basic direction to allocate the 2007 budget. Under the guidelines, MPB plans to incrementally cut military defense budget, local airport construction and road building in transportation (p.5). Recently, the Gyeongbu High Speed Rail opened in 2004 at the Seoul – Daegu sector. Building Daegu-Busan sector will commence in 2010. Total project cost is \$18.436 billion dollar (18,435.8 billion won). The building of Gyeongbu High Speed Rail decrease the need for local airport construction average 8.7% in 5 years due to decrease of client (The Ministry of Construction and Transportation, 2006).

with the opportunity to make a monopoly profit, the providers who support economy of scale are limited in Korea. As ECEC service has a tendency toward high fixed costs at early stages and high possible economy of scale, for-profit corporation entry can be helpful to stimulate the ECEC market.

It is important that the Korean government take responsibility for ECEC regulations to enforce and establish necessary provisions. At the same time, the implementation should be controlled by the federal government, not at state levels. Because Korea has a history of centralization, federal regulation may be helpful to improve service quality, rearrange policies and programs related with ECEC, encourage public responsibility and expand public services. In Korea, the private sector occupies almost 70% of the total size of the childcare service market. However, government regulation, with price control and restriction of market access by corporations for profit, has led to the low quality of childcare services and dissatisfaction. Organizations in the private sector do not need to compete with each other to increase the quality of childcare services or satisfy the demand side of child care service.

The quality of ECEC is hard to measure, but is linked to the intensity and focus of programs and to the qualifications of staff. The training and professionalism of those working with young children vary widely across countries and sectors. The conclusion reached by a growing number of OECD countries is that family-friendly strategies, sustained by law and public policy, are necessary in contemporary economies to balance equal opportunity for women and parental time with children. Tremendous progress has been made in gender equality issues in Korea in the last decade. However, legal and practical support for women with young children is still relatively weak.

D. Expanding the Range of Beneficiaries

Fourth, it is necessary to expand the range of benefits by gradually increasing the support and targeting of the needy of ECEC. However, most important in this case is the capacity for government to provide support. Our approach should not be academic, but

instead realistic and reasonable. Without supporting the government budget or funding, it will be difficult to achieve a universal method in ECEC.

In the short-term, we should improve targeted such as low income families and children with disabilities ECEC, but in the long-term we should consider universal ECEC. Support to targeted methods should increase gradually, not all at once. I agree with the spirit that access to ECEC should be considered a right, not a privilege. Therefore, in the long-term, the government should provide free, universal coverage for children within the public school system for a substantial period prior to compulsory education.

Government should focus on providing child care service for low income households, as child care has the characteristics of economic externality. However, the private market should be activated for middle and high income households by lifting government regulation. Local government should have a more important role in providing child care service for low income households, rather than the central government.

Most European governments have universal, consolidated, education-based ECEC programs that are available from early in the morning to late in the evening throughout the year. European ECEC programs are uniformly of high quality, generally last at least three years, and are funded to serve all children. European programs yield benefits to both the mother and the child. They also narrow the achievement gap faced by disadvantaged children, though most of these effects tend to diminish over time. Recent economic research suggests that there is a high return to ECEC and a much lower return to compensatory interventions later in the life cycle (OECD, 1999). Another research also highlights the importance of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills that are formed early in the life cycle for educational achievement, earnings and other dimensions of socioeconomic success (Carneiro & Heckman, 2003).

E. Securing Equal Access for the Needy

Fifth, the Korean government should implement a priority policy for the needy, such as children with disabilities, single parent families, welfare institution children and

low-income families. It is accepted commonly that positive early experiences are important for the child's subsequent development and learning.

It is necessary to secure the equality of access for the needy. Access to affordable ECEC is also a challenge for many women, whether unemployed or occupying low- or modestly paid jobs. Employment statistics show that the participation of Korean women in the labor market is still relatively low, and that their participation curve further sags during the child-bearing range from 25-34 years. Yet, women and their families gain greatly, both at a personal and a professional level, from being in employment. Family-friendly national policies and workplace practices should respect the important role of families in the economy and society, and value the work of raising children. The pressure to form dual-income families comes not only from the personal choice of women but also from the fact that our modern service and knowledge economies need the labor of women, who are increasingly better educated than men.

In addition, new labor market conditions, with women participating in the labor market in far higher numbers than ever before, has led to an increased demand for early childhood services. There is growing consensus that sound provision for young children is essential to meeting the changing social, economic and educational needs of today's families.

Final Discussion and Work Needed

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to providing an impetus for strengthening desirable policy directions for ECEC in Korea. These tentative conclusions await further refinement and correction in the light of further research about various topics: tax policies such as tax credits and deductions; parental leave policies; preparing for unification with North Korea; expanding female workforces and improving total fertility.

First, ECEC related tax policies consist of two methods: tax credits and tax deductions. The U.S. is based on tax credits and Germany is focused on tax deductions, even though both countries are supportive of both tax policies. Germany tends to have

universal child or family allowances and to make more limited use of tax deductions and tax credits. On the other hand, the U.S. has no child or family allowance, but it has exemptions, deductions and credits related to children. Most of these U.S. tax policies depend on family income.

Second, Germany makes far greater use of parental leave than the U.S. In 1952, maternity leaves were enacted in Germany to protect the physical health of working women at the time of child birth. Child rearing payments, parental leaves and paternity leaves developed rapidly during the 1970s-1990s, as women's labor force participation rates began to rise rapidly. The leave policies of Germany and Korea tend to be universal rather than targeted. The U.S. is not only based on a targeted method, but also did not have a national family leave policy until 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Aid to Families with Dependent Children program was originally set up to allow divorced and unmarried mothers to stay at home and care for their children.

Third, it is time to prepare for unification with North Korea. Germany's unification can be a good lesson for Korea. We can learn from Germany, which could not wholly assimilate into a unified Germany, because they did not prepare for rapid unification. Because Germany was divided before its reunification in 1990, there might be many suggestions for Korea, which is still divided into South Korea and North Korea. South Korea should prepare for unification with North Korea not only in the ECEC field, but also in all other fields. South and North Korea have been separated since 1945, and should try resolving their differences and achieving harmony on both sides. So the Korean government should examine North Korean ECEC policies and programs to prepare for unification, not only to unify institutionally, but also to integrate consciousnesses in both Koreas.

Fourth, it is necessary to improve the total fertility rate and expand women's participation in society by reducing low fertility and increasing the female workforce. ECEC policy can stimulate women's social activity and resolve low fertility. Lots of women worry about raising their children; therefore, the Korean government should reassure them. A more aggressive relief policy is required to achieve this purpose. In

Korea, traditional attitudes toward women, their role in society and their expected duties within the household are widespread. The changing roles of women at home and the substantial growth in female labor force participation rates, starting in the 1980s, have had an impact on the supply of ECEC services- just as in countries such as Germany and the U.S. The continued rise in labor force participation rates in women with young children, coupled with the growing recognition of the value of good quality ECEC programs for children, regardless of parents' employment status, suggests that the pressure for expanding supply, improved quality, and assured access will continue in all countries, despite variations in delivery. As the numbers of working women have grown in the workplace, the status of women has changed. At the same time, the demand for ECEC has grown rapidly. Moreover, in the past, Korea's fertility rate rapidly declined and the population rapidly aged. This population phenomenon will eventually cause a serious deficit in the labor force and an increase in social welfare costs in Korea. Therefore, the Korean government should make a policy addressing low fertility with the ECEC. The Korean government can achieve the goal of enlarging the number of women in the workforce and addressing low fertility, at the same time.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABL: Alte Bundeslaender (the Federal Republic of Germany before unification)
AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children
CCDBG: Child Care and Development Block Grant
CCDF: Child Care Development Fund
CCFP: Child Care Food Program
CDCTC: Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
DCAP: Dependent Care Assistance Plan
ECEC: Early Childhood Education and Care
FMLA: Family and Medical Leave Act
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
IDEA-B: Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act - Preschool Grants Program
IDEA-C: Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act - Infants and Toddlers
ILO: International Labor Organization
KJHG: Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz (Child and Youth Welfare Act)
MOE: Ministry of Education
MOGEF: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
MOHW: Ministry of Health and Welfare
NACCRRRA: National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children
NBL: New Bundeslaender (the German Democratic Republic before unification)
OECD: Organization for Environmental Cooperation and Development
SSBG: Social Services Block Grant
TCC: Transitional Child Care

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