



## 1. National System of Child Care in Austria<sup>1</sup>

Legislation for Child Care in Austria is partly regulated by national laws and partly by specific regional laws which are applied only in one of the nine Regional Provinces of Austria.

Generally speaking we can see that extra familial care and education for 3-6 year old children as well as 6-15 year old children is by common agreement accepted in society which is reflected in national legislation. However, extra familial care and education for under three year old children is treated differently in the nine Austrian Regions and reflects that there is still a tendency to see the family, or rather the mother as the ideal care institution.

### 1.1 National Legislation

This regulates

- Kindergarten and After School Care (for children aged 3-6 and 6-15 years)
- Practice kindergartens and after school cares which are directly connected to the Schools and Colleges for Early Years Pedagogues (BAKIP - Bundesbildungsanstalten für Kindergarten- und Hortpädagogik)
- Curriculum and Training of Kindergarten and After School Pedagogues: 5 years Vocational School for 14-19 year old students and 2 years College for over 18 year old students.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.plattform-educare.org>

## 1.2 Regional Legislation

This regulates

- Training and requirements for employment of assisting staff in all childcare services
- Training and requirements for employment of childminders/day-mothers/day-fathers
- Day-mothers and crèches

## 1.3 Childcare Services in Austria

We have the following services for the different age groups:

Age Group	Child care service	National term	Exists all over Austria	Only in specific regions
0-15	Day-mother /Day father	Tagesmutter/Tagesvater	Yes	
0-3	Crèche	Kinderkrippe	Yes	
0-15	Children's house	Kinderhaus	No	Lower Austria, Styria, Vienna
3-6	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Yes	
6-15	After School Care	SchülerInnenhort	Yes	

## 1.4 National Curriculum<sup>2</sup>

The national curriculum for pre-school education (Bundesländerübergreifender BildungsRahmenPlan für elementare Bildungseinrichtungen in Österreich) was released in 2009 and is applied by all pre-school institutions..

It describes 6 different areas which are

1. Emotional and social relations
2. Ethics and society
3. Language and communication
4. Motion and health
5. Aesthetics and creativity
6. Nature and science

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/sb/bildungsrahmenplan.xml>

## 1.5 Towards a national standard in training for day-mothers/day-fathers<sup>3</sup>

In 2011 a nationwide initiative was launched by the Federal Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth to standardize the training for day-parents and thus increase the quality of care and education for children. As a consequence a curriculum for the training of day-parents was released comprising 300 hours practical and theoretical training. Training organizations can apply for a "Seal of Quality" (Gütesiegel) if they can prove to an independent jury installed by the Federal Ministry that their training is in accordance with the suggested curriculum. By June 2012 eight training institutions have been awarded this "Seal of Quality" in all Austria, among them Volkshilfe Steiermark..

## 2. Perspective of INPRO in Austria

Interprofessional cooperation in child care is increasingly applied in Austria, but very often only at random in cases of urgency and not as a general principle underlying the daily routine in child care. Especially in the case of children with special needs or children at risk certain strategies are in place that facilitate problem solving, such as so-called "helper conferences" (Helferkonferenzen). These conferences are working interprofessionally towards a greater benefit for children.

In addition, there exist interprofessional teams in the care of pre-school children with special needs who work towards an optimization of inclusion of these children by providing support for parents, caring team and children in a childcare service.

However, contacts to vocational and training organizations as well as various professions involved in child care during the lifetime of the INPRO project have revealed a great need for more exchange and training in interprofessionality.

Both University Colleges for Education in Graz and Vocational Schools for Pre-school Education in Styria have shown a great interest in the INPRO Modules and estimate that in initial as well as in further training this subject will become increasingly important.

In addition, the various professional guilds which have been involved in the INPRO project in Austria, namely managers of childcare, psychologist, nutritionists, kindergarten teachers, daymothers, childminders and administrative staff in childcare would welcome greatly interprofessional trainings and regular exchange . The common consensus is that regular

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<sup>3</sup> [www.bmwfj.gv.at/Familie/.../1,%20KONZEPT%202011.pdf](http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Familie/.../1,%20KONZEPT%202011.pdf)

meetings and short theoretical inputs on interprofessional work would strengthen a good working atmosphere and create good communication and interaction so that in cases of urgency working together would become easier and more efficient.

Also interprofessional workshops could function as a rich source for information, processes, or perspectives that supports work and activity by providing guidelines and explanation for certain ways of performance. A larger network for interprofessional work could be developed in these regular meetings which could be used and updated according to all actors' needs.

### **3. Why Module "Intercultural Opening" and "International Competencies" is important for INPRO**

#### **3.1 Intercultural Opening**

Caring for children from different backgrounds calls for great flexibility and cultural empathy. Very often caregivers have not enough knowledge and strategies to support families from other cultural backgrounds. There may be lack of information about the status of residence of parents, there may be special educational needs or general misunderstandings between caregivers and parents from another culture where an interprofessional network and problem-solving strategies can help greatly to facilitate communication from the very beginning.

The intention of the module "Intercultural Opening" is that the participants reflect on their knowledge from practice and identify situations where interprofessional work would be beneficial for children from other cultural backgrounds but for the group as a whole as well. Through considering background and living situation of all children in their childcare service they will promote a mutual respect and understanding for the integration of new citizens and strengthen the self-confidence of both parents and children. The pedagogical content of the module is based on active participation where the participants themselves get the chance to find out what to do in practice, discuss different kinds of possibilities and thus use their own knowledge and combine it with new findings in the course. The trainers support this process which helps the participants to apply a problem solving attitude when confronted with tricky situations in the daily care of children from other cultural backgrounds.

## 3.2 International Competencies

In order to be able to work interprofessionally in child care it is vital to reflect on one's own ideas and perceptions of the ideal care situation for a child. As this may differ according to social and cultural background, but also according to age and kind of profession, it is important to make it transparent first to oneself and reflect on it and then also to the group.

The module "International Competencies" thus reveals to participants that we all start from our own reality which has similarities and differences to the reality of those people we are working together. It then examines different perceptions and ideas of childcare and also trains participants' observation skills and awareness for analyzing various care institutions imbedded in their social and cultural background.