
From Care to Education in the Spanish Nurseries for Children Aged 0 to 3 years (1990–2020)

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Abstract: This chapter looks into the evolution of day nurseries and educational services for children aged zero to three years in Spain from 1945 to 1990, and how they compare with those for children aged three to six. The main reforms, actors and legislation will be analysed. At least two different periods may be identified: from 1945 to the breakdown of fascism in 1975, and from then to 1990. The three most important educational laws were the *Ley de 17 de Julio de 1945 sobre Educación Primaria*, dividing preschool education into *maternales* and *escuelas de párvulos* that remained the first level of primary school); the *Ley 1970 Law of education*, introducing important changes to the education system (preschool was considered the first level of the education system and it was divided into two stages: *jardín de infancia* for two- and three-year-olds, and *escuelas de párvulos* for those aged four and five years); and the National Organic Law of Education (*Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo*, or LOGSE), introduced in 1990, that, for the first time, introduced two age groups: four months to three years, and three to six years. As a result, there was spectacular progress in ECEC for children aged three and over, while ECEC for children under three saw rather meagre development. Spain is an example of a country developing early childhood facilities in the context of the education system: care for children under three is not administered by welfare, but by educational authorities. This model causes difficulties for families since the characteristics of the preschool model (long holidays, rigid hours, large classes and so on) do not always satisfy the needs of either working parents or children.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, scientists have discovered that even the youngest children know more than what was previously thought. Studies have shown that children learn about the world the same way scientists do, by experimenting, analysing results and coming up with theories about their

physical, biological, and psychological realities. Furthermore, our knowledge about the mechanisms that underlie these skills has changed the way we see children, providing us with a new image of human nature¹. From an evolutionary approach, one of the most amazing aspects of human beings is our period of immaturity. Our childhood lasts longer than in any other species and children need help for a longer time, which also helps develop more valuable skills than most species. In sum, the attention paid to children is essential to Humanity. Nonetheless, when reviewing the history of education in 0–3-year-old children, one cannot help but to notice the scant attention that has been given to this period as compared to school-aged children and children aged 3–6. Early childhood education from 0 to 3 years old has been addressed by families, especially by mothers, and it was only when mothers could no longer care exclusively for their children that external “solutions” began to emerge, such as external help or ways of sharing this task other than family support.

Most of the research on the history of early childhood education has focused on preschool education in 4 and 5-year-old children, which developed due to industrialisation and in which the educational aspect was very clear². In Spain, only since 1990 early childhood education has been including children from birth to 6 years old, and it is a non-compulsory educational level. It is divided into two stages: the first one includes ages from 0 to 3 and is generally not free of charge, whereas the second stage includes ages from 3 to 5 and is free in public and state-subsidised centres. Although compulsory school begins in the year children turn 6, almost all 3, 4 and 5-year-olds are already in school. In general terms, children are sent to kindergarten in the year they turn 3, so approximately one third of them have not yet turned 3 when they start kindergarten, regardless of their family background or their parents’ employment situation.

The history of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is more than the history of children’s education itself³. Reports from UNESCO and

¹ A. Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby: What Children’s Minds Tell Us about Truth, Love, and the meaning of Life*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

² C. Sanchidrián, *Historia de la infancia. Historia de la educación infantil*, in J.-L. Guereña, J. Ruiz Berrio, A. Tiana (eds.), *Nuevas miradas historiográficas sobre la educación en España de los siglos XIX y XX*, Madrid, Ministerio de Educación, 2010, pp. 67-104.

³ C. Valiente, *(Pre)School Is Not Childcare. Preschool and Primary School Education in Spain since the 1930s*, in K. Hagemann, K.H. Jarausch, C. Allemann-Ghionda (eds.), *Children, Families and States. Time Policies of Childcare, Preschool, and Primary Education in Europe*, New York-Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2011, pp. 220-236.

OECD⁴ address both these educations together, as it is also how they are being studied at present: from a comparative approach⁵ and, eventually, from a historical perspective⁶. The European Union is a world authority in this field⁷, so it is important to insist on European history of childhood education, which offers different models, paces, notions and in which common stages or features can also be shared.

The concept of welfare state in Spain, to which education and childcare policies are linked, has developed later than other neighbouring European countries, as it only emerged in the mid-1970s and then underwent a rapid

⁴ See OECD, *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care, Education and Skills*, Paris, OECD, 2001; OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, Paris, OECD, 2006: <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/37425999.pdf>; OECD, *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2011: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/starting-strong-iii_9789264123564-en>. See also S.B. Kamerman, *Early childhood education and care: an overview of developments in the OECD countries*, in «International Journal of Educational Research», vol. 33/1 (2000), pp. 7-29; Ead., *A global history of early childhood education and care*, Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education, 2006, and J. Bennett, *Starting Strong. The Persistent Division Between Care and Education*, in «Journal of Early Childhood Research», 1 (2003), pp. 21-48. One of the conclusions of these reports is that each country addresses these stages according to their social and financial traditions, the perception of families and children, and the research studies they have conducted about the benefits of providing quality services to children.

⁵ See A. Ancheta Arrabal, *Avances y desafíos de la comparación internacional en educación y atención de la primera infancia*, in «Revista Española de Educación Comparada», 21 (2013), pp. 145-176; Ead., *El desarrollo y seguimiento de las políticas para la educación y atención de la primera infancia en el contexto europeo*, in «Perfiles educativos», vol. 35-140 (2013), pp. 134-148; W.T. Gormley Jr., *Early childhood education and care regulation: a comparative perspective*, in «International Journal of Educational Research», 33 (2000), pp. 55-74; E.C. Melhuish, P. Moss (eds.), *Day Care for Young Children. International Perspectives*, London, Routledge, 1991.

⁶ See K. Scheiwe, H. Willekens, *Introduction: Path-dependencies and Change in Child-care and Preschool Institutions in Europe – Historical and Institutional Perspectives*, in Id., *Child Care and Preschool Development in Europe: Institutional Perspectives*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 1-22; K. Hagemann, K.H. Jarausch, C. Allemann-Ghionda (eds.), *Children, Families and States. Time Policies of Childcare, Preschool, and Primary Education in Europe*, New York-Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2011.

⁷ A. Ancheta Arrabal, *La formación y el desarrollo profesional en la educación y atención de la primera infancia en la Unión Europea*, Madrid, Delta, 2018.

process of modernisation⁸. The history of early childhood education must be explained in relation to variables such as women's access to education and to the labour market, as well as economic, demographic, geographical elements, together with the welfare state model. The Spanish welfare state model follows a Mediterranean approach, in the sense that it combines features from three models: Nordic-social democratic model, continental-corporatist model and liberal-Anglo-Saxon model; with a characteristic familism that involves that the caring of children is basically the family's responsibility and, in many cases, women's responsibility. In Spain, support for families has been conspicuous by its absence, although women's intense integration into the labour market (61% in 2018, when the European average was 66.5%⁹) has led to important changes both in lifestyle values and work-life balance policies, such as the creation and extension of paternity leave and the increase in the offer of early childhood education services¹⁰; all these policies are inevitably connected to the rest of social and economic policies.

The education of Spanish 0–3-year-old children in the last few decades can only be understood from an overview of the Spanish history of early childhood education and in comparison to preschool education, which covers the years prior to compulsory schooling (6). This will also allow us to interpret the legislation, the educational curriculum, the training given to professionals and children's attendance figures. At this point, it is worth clarifying some terms. By "preschool" education or "kindergarten" this chapter will refer to the education of children aged 3 (since 1990), 4 or 5 years old, that is, immediately prior to compulsory schooling. Likewise, we will use the term "early childhood education" to refer to the education of younger children, from birth to 3 years old.

While preschool education has always been considered within the education system, there was a certain legal loophole around early childhood education that took place in nurseries (*guarderías* in Spanish), in terms of their sponsorship, size, hours, management, salaries, methods, quality standards, etc. In sum, nurseries were often unknown to the educational administration. In nursery centres, childcare is often more important than

⁸ A.M. Guillén, M. León, *Introduction*, in Id., *The Spanish Welfare State in European Context*, Surrey and Burlington, Ashgate, 2011, pp. 1-16.

⁹ One-third of employed women were working part time (30%) in the EU in 2018, nearly four times the rate for men (8%). Data are lowest in Spain, 5.4% of employed men and 23.6% of employed women. Eurostat, *Women's employment in the UE*, 2020: <<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20200306-1>>.

¹⁰ I. Campillo, *Políticas de conciliación de la vida laboral, personal y familiar en la Unión Europea*, Madrid, UNAF (Unión de Asociaciones Familiares), 2019, 2^a ed., pp. 114-115.

child education, although it is sometimes difficult to tell these two functions apart. Hence the importance, in 1990, of the Law of General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE in Spanish)¹¹, which, for the very first time, took early childhood education from birth as education into consideration.

After a brief tour through the history of early childhood education in Spain, this chapter will focus on the education of children from birth to 3 years old since 1990. This period has hardly been studied, as only since 1990 early childhood education has been regarded as part of the education system, thus regulated by the Spanish Ministry of Education. These are especially relevant decades, when governments took an interest in the early stage of childhood education, where childcare and education were so closely linked that it was sometimes difficult to tell them apart.

1. *From Kindergartens to Early Childhood Education (1838–1990)*

In order to understand the current situation and how we got here, we need to go back to the 19th century, when the first institutions emerged for the childcare and education of preschool children before going to school¹². Several stages can be distinguished at this point, ranging from the creation of schools for the children of poor working mothers, to their general spread. All these stages allow for comparison among countries¹³.

In Spain, the beginnings of early childhood education are strongly linked to industrialisation and the birth of the state education system. Women's employment in factories in the cities called for the need to care for young

¹¹ Ley Orgánica 1/1990, de 3 de octubre, de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo. «BOE» núm. 238, de 4 de octubre de 1990, pp. 28927-28942: «<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/1990/10/03/1>».

¹² D. Caroli, *Day Nurseries in Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: The Challenge of the Transnational Approach*, in E. Fuchs, E. Roldán (eds.), *The Transnational in the History of Education*, Cham, Palgrave, pp. 69-100.

¹³ C. Sanchidrián, *La extensión de la escolaridad temprana como síntoma y resultado del cambio educativo y social*, in R. Berruezo, S. Conejero (eds.), *El largo camino hacia una educación inclusiva: la educación especial y social del siglo XIX a nuestros días*, Pamplona, UPNA, vol. II, 2009, pp. 451-462; Ead., *The Role of the State and the Church in the Development of Early Childhood Education in Spain (1874–1975)*, in H. Willekens, K. Scheiwe, K. Nawrotzki (eds.), *The Development of Early Childhood Education in Europe and North America*, Houndmills, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, pp. 92-111; H. Willekens, K. Scheiwe, *Looking Back. Kindergarten and Preschool in Europe since the late 18th century. A short comparative study of pioneers and laggards*, Hildesheim, Universitätsverlag, 2020.

children, who had been so far looked after at home, in workshops, in the neighbourhood or even abandoned in institutions.

The first kindergarten school (*párvulos*, in Spanish, which was the name given to all the institutions for preschool children until 1990) was created in Madrid in 1838, promoted by Pablo Montesino, who also inspired the Spanish Law of July 21, 1838 on Primary Education. This law established compulsory education for boys and girls from 6 to 9 years old. Montesino also published *Manual para maestros de escuelas de párvulos* (Manual for Kindergarten School Teachers) in 1840, which served as a guide for teachers in kindergartens and schools for several decades¹⁴. He defined kindergartens as «centres designed to gather and educate poor children of both sexes from 2 to 6 years old»¹⁵. To do so, the proposed method used many mutual teaching elements, imitating the so-called infant schools or *salles d'asile*¹⁶, considered by the philanthropists of the time as a means of reform and social improvement.

Throughout the 19th century, kindergarten schools grew slowly and disorderly, with the private sector taking the leading role. In the second half of the 19th century, an attempt was made to promote preschool education based on Fröbel's theories, first by Cardelera¹⁷ and then especially by García Navarro¹⁸. This led to an interesting debate about whether children learned more in traditional kindergarten schools (through memorisation and academic learning), or in Froebelian Kindergartens. In the end, they were very similar to traditional schools¹⁹. However, the idea began to spread that kindergartens were not only for poor children and a solution for working parents, but instead they could be suitable for everyone, for children to learn

¹⁴ C. Sanchidrián, *Funciones de la escolarización de la infancia: Objetivos y creación de las primeras escuelas de párvulos en España*, in «Historia de la Educación», 10 (1991), pp. 63-87.

¹⁵ P. Montesino, *Manual para los maestros de escuelas de párvulos*, Madrid, Imprenta Nacional, 1840, p. 67.

¹⁶ C. Sanchidrián, J. Ruiz Berrio (eds.), *La educación infantil en los sistemas educativos*, Barcelona, Graó, 2011, pp. 47-89.

¹⁷ M. Carderera, *Jardines de la infancia*, in «Anales de Primera enseñanza», 35 (1859), pp. 1029-1034.

¹⁸ P. de A. García Navarro, *Estudios pedagógicos. Fröebel y los jardines de infancia*, Madrid, Imprenta y estereotipia Aribau, 1974; Id., *Manual teórico-práctico de enseñanza de escuelas de párvulos según el método de los jardines de la infancia de F. Froebel*. Madrid, Colegio Nacional de Sordo Mudos y Ciegos, 1879.

¹⁹ A. Viñao, *Una cuestión actual: sobre el academicismo en la enseñanza preescolar en el siglo XIX*, in «Historia de la Educación», 2 (1983), pp. 179-187.

things they could hardly learn at home and also so that they could get used to the next school level.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Spain was one of the poorest countries in Western Europe and education still had major basic problems, despite the general climate favourable to carry out educational reforms (56.07% of the population over 10 years old was illiterate). To this end, important measures were taken, such as the first attempts to implement the new schooling system called “*escuela graduada*” (school with different teaching stages), the creation of the Spanish Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, and the state’s decision to take on the payment of teachers’ salaries. The Spanish Royal Decree of October 26, 1901 established preschool education legally as the first stage of primary school, which was divided into 3 levels: kindergarten, primary and higher education (Art. 2). It also established that each of these stages shall cover all the subjects specified in Article 3, «only distinguishing each level by the extent of the teaching programme, the pedagogical nature and duration of the exercises» (Art. 4).

In 1900, most schoolchildren under 6 who attended schools, did so at primary schools, and there were also school-aged children in kindergartens. Kindergartens were considered as “reduced” primary schools, which led to their tense relationship with primary education, in which kindergartens were considered different and subordinate²⁰. Attendance of children under 6 in primary schools was common ever since primary education was made compulsory; and was motivated by the fact that siblings attended school together: this way the older ones did not have to choose between going to school or staying home looking after the little ones. The administration was tolerant in this regard. However, this situation ended with Spanish Royal Decree of July 17, 1913, which set the age for the attendance of primary schools and kindergartens, trying to put an end to mixed ages in both. Following this regulation, kindergartens would only admit children from 3 to 6 years old²¹.

At the beginning of the 20th century, medicine had begun to take interest in learning about childhood and responding to the debates on what is innate and what is learned, nature vs. nurture. In this context, it is not surprising that some of the best-known authors in the field, such as Montessori and Decroly,

²⁰ A. Viñao, *Escuela para todos. Educación y modernidad en la España del siglo XX*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2004, p. 134.

²¹ M.J. Martínez Ruiz-Funes, *La cultura material y la educación Infantil en España. El método Froebel (1850-1939)*, Tesis doctoral, Murcia, Universidad de Murcia, 2013, pp. 102-103.

were doctors²². These debates were relevant to all those who dealt with children, especially educators and psychologists, and parallel to the theoretical and methodological development promoted by the New Education. New educational and psychological theories arrived in Spain in the first decades of the 20th century. Fröbel, Montessori and Decroly unveiled new methods for preschool in their essays and publications. However, these methods did not quite take hold in the daily life of kindergarten schools. Antonio Ballesteros, an inspector of primary education, stated in 1930 that there were not enough kindergarten schools and that the very few that were working

do not allow for anything other than disciplinary and verbal teaching, which is contrary to the restless and playful condition of children, and this was so because of the school installations, outdated furniture, deficient organisation and excessive number of children per teacher²³.

The arrival of the Franco dictatorship (1936–1975) meant a halt in the attempts of educational renewal, ended the progress that the Spanish society was experiencing and marked the beginning of an unfavorable period for educational development, as the Church played a major role over the State²⁴. Spanish Law of July 17, 1945 on Primary Education maintained preschool education as the first level of primary school (Art. 18 A and B). During the Franco regime, the desire to keep women at home in their role as mothers and wives, together with campaigns for childbirth, made preschool education unnecessary. In 1943, it was even stated, that «educational action in children is limited to the sphere of the family and the Church», and that, neglecting those years would be like

handing over the education of children to strangers; as during these years, children belong almost exclusively in their families. Families are the only responsible for children education and their action can save their children²⁵.

²² See B. Jiménez-Alonso and J.C. Loredano-Narciandi, 'To educate children from birth': a genealogical analysis of some practices of subjectivation in Spanish and French scientific childcare (1898–1939), in «History of Education», 45-6 (2016), pp. 719-738.

²³ A. Ballesteros, *Notas preliminares*, in V. Neyrinck, *La educación en las escuelas de párvulos*, Madrid, Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando, 1930, pp. XVI.

²⁴ A. Mayordomo Pérez, *Historia de la educación en España: textos y documentos. V: Nacional-catolicismo y educación en la España de la posguerra*, Madrid, Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deporte, 1989, 2 vols.

²⁵ Bohigas, cited in J. Monés, *La educación preescolar en España desde el final de la Guerra Civil hasta los años 60*, in «Historia de la Educación», 10, (1991), p. 166.

However, the slow integration of women into the labour market and the increasingly widespread belief that it was “good” for children to start school before 6, favoured the spread of *escuelas de párvulos* or kindergarten schools (for 4–5-year-olds) and *guarderías* or nurseries in the 1950s, especially in the new neighborhoods of the cities that were growing rapidly. However, the shortage of free places in these centers caused a worsening in the conditions offered and a parallel increase in private supply²⁶.

While the State offers of places in kindergartens (4–5 years old) was scarce, it was even more scarce in nurseries, the so-called *escuelas maternas* or maternity schools (2–3 years old). For instance, in Spain, in 1955–1956, there were 287 maternity schools and 4302 kindergartens. 24 cities did not have any state maternity school and 22 cities only had one, whereas there were private ones in every city. Therefore, most maternity schools were private, as well as basically every institution or centre for children under 2. However, it is difficult to know the real number of places for early childhood education for these years, as official data from public primary education included preschool education until the late 1950s, and did not become reliable until the 1960s. Likewise, data about the number of private centres and youngest children are even harder to find, as only official data from the actual institutions are available and even so, should not be fully relied upon. Furthermore, the number of nurseries was unknown, as they were not part of the education system at the time.

The percentage of 2–5-year-old schoolchildren slowly progressed, reaching 25.23% in 1959–1960 and 27.17% in 1965–1966. In the 1966–1967 academic year, 1.8% of 2-year-olds were enrolled in schools and so were 9.4% of 3-year-olds, 40.4% of 4-year-olds and 57.4% of 5-year-olds²⁷. The State was not concerned about compulsory primary education, let alone about early childhood education. This situation began to change with the approval of the Spanish General Education Law (LGE in Spanish)²⁸ in 1970, which involved important changes in the education system and marked the beginning of its modernisation, although preschool education would not be fully addressed until a few years later. Preschool education was established as the first level of the education system (not as part of primary education). It was a non-compulsory level and divided into: nursery (2–3-year-olds) and kindergarten (4–5-year-olds).

²⁶ C.E. Núñez, *La fuente de la riqueza. Educación y desarrollo económico en la España contemporánea*, Madrid, Alianza Universidad, 1992, p. 295.

²⁷ Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, *La educación en España. Bases para una política educativa*, Madrid, Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1969, p. 43.

²⁸ Ley 14/1970, de 4 de agosto, General de Educación y Financiamiento de la Reforma Educativa, in «BOE», 187 (6 de agosto de 1970), pp. 12525 a 12546.

In addition, this law ended the subsidiarity of the State in the field of education, as it established that education was an essential duty of the State and a fundamental public service. However, the task to be carried out was enormous: it is estimated that, in 1968, there were still 414 000 students (6–14-year-olds) who were not receiving any formal education²⁹, so it was necessary to start with compulsory education.

Women's massive integration into the labour market, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, played an important role in the development of preschool education, as the need for new solutions became evident. The supply and demand of «preschool and extracurricular attention» increased and solutions arose from both the public and private sectors³⁰. The diversification of options became clear when it was a matter of urgency to offer solutions that went beyond school hours in the case of preschool children and attended to and educated 0–3-year-old children. In the case of the latter, the law was heterogeneous and scattered. Therefore, there were socio-economic rather than educational reasons that triggered the demand to which the private sector responded quickly, as the state was meanwhile trying to cover the demand for compulsory education. For the youngest children, thousands of “nurseries” emerged that were perceived as a social rather than an educational service, and did not depend on the Ministry of Education, a situation that changed after 1990.

2. *Education and Childcare for 0–3-Year-Old Children (1990–2020)*

2.1. *Educational Policy*

The Law of General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE in Spanish) introduced the first significant changes towards the recognition of the educational elements of early childhood education. It recognised the right to early childhood education from 48 months old (in other words, it established that 2 of the 3 years of the second stage had to be free) and promoted the schooling of 3-year-olds, as many families wanted to secure a place for their child in that same school.

²⁹ J. McNair, *Education in Spain, 1970–1980: the years of compulsory schooling*, in «Comparative Education», 17/1 (1981), p. 47.

³⁰ C. Valiente, *Child Care in Spain after 1975: The Educational Rationale, the Catholic Church, and Women in Civil Society*, in K. Scheiwe, H. Willekens (eds.), *Child Care and Preschool Development in Europe: Institutional Perspectives*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 72–87.

After the 1978 Constitution, Spain becomes a highly decentralised country, where the 17 autonomous regions have powers in education and count with their own regional Ministry of Education. The central government defines the framework for the educational policy to be followed, then each region is free to implement their own model and manage their funds. Decentralisation ends at that level, as every educational centre, from nurseries to high schools, has to adjust to what is established by their region, thus having little autonomy. The role played by regional governments, together with their demographic differences and different priorities in the distribution of their funds, created great contrasts among the regions, as we will see in the enrolment rates of 0–3-year-olds (enrolment is 100% in all regions in the second stage).

The decentralisation process was rather slow and ended in 1992 in terms of education. Thus, in the 1990s, the second stage was consolidated, however most children under 3 who were not looked after by their families remained outside the LOGSE.

The Law on the Quality of Education (LOCE)³¹ was approved by *Partido Popular* (right-wing party) in 2002 and planned to divide early childhood education into 2 levels: “educational assistance” for 0–3-year-old children and education for 3–6-year-old children. While the former never happened, the latter was free of charge. Shortly after, the Law on Education (LOE)³², approved by the *Partido Socialista* (socialist party) in 2006, returned to the LOGSE structure and urged the Public Administration to progressively increase the supply of state places in the first stage of early childhood education.

In the 21st century, all governments have agreed to develop policies to support families and facilitate their work-life balance, although the measures taken and their implementation have been different in each region. In fact, these issues have always made their way in every election manifesto. The 2006–2009 Strategic Plan for Children and Adolescents³³ was written for this purpose and opened the gateway to the Educa3 Plan, approved by Spanish regional ministries on August 29, 2008, to improve the education of 0–3-year-olds, promote employment and favour work-life balance poli-

³¹ Ley Orgánica 10/2002, de 23 de diciembre, de Calidad de la Educación. «BOE» núm. 307, de 24 de diciembre de 2002, páginas 45188 a 45220: <<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2002/12/23/10>>.

³² Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. «BOE» núm. 106, de 4 de mayo de 2006, páginas 17158 a 17207: <<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2006/05/03/2>>.

³³ There were another Plan, *II Plan Estratégico Nacional de Infancia y Adolescencia 2013–2016*, approved by the council of ministers on 5 April, 2013, but it just declared its intention to improve the enrolment rates in nurseries in order to support families and provide quality education, but without specifying anything else.

cies. The Spanish Ministry of Education and the regional governments were going to finance this programme at 50%, however, the 2008 Spanish credit crunch³⁴ forced education cuts. Of the 300,000 places planned for 2012, only 71,000 were created in 2011, and the plan had to be cancelled in 2012³⁵.

The last two laws, passed by different political parties, did not introduce great changes in early childhood education: Law 8/2013 of December 9, for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE)³⁶ and Law 3/2020 of December 29, which amends Law 2/2006 of May 3, on Education (LOMLOE)³⁷. In sum, there have been many laws but the first model designed by the LOGSE still remains. Schooling in early childhood education has increased significantly in the last 30 years, the second stage is finally free of charge and the first stage has experienced important progress, both in the supply of free places as well as in the quality of the service provided.

2.2. *Quantitative Evolution*

The evolution in the number of children enrolled in early childhood education reflects the results of the above-mentioned educational policies. These numbers must also be related to the rest of social policies³⁸, since there are two elements that determine the history of childhood education of 0–3-year-old children in Spain. On the one hand, the family-based culture in Southern Europe; and on the other, the scant support given to families with young children, such as social benefits, very limited maternity and paternity leaves and lack of affordable centres for childcare and education. In the last 30 years, the situation has changed more than ever before, although

³⁴ M. León, E. Pavolini, 'Social Investment' or Back to 'Familism': *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Family and Care Policies in Italy and Spain*, in «South European Society and Politics», 19-3 (2014), pp. 353-369.

³⁵ Z. Ibáñez, M. León, *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Spain*, in M. León (ed.), *The Transformation of Care in European Societies*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 276-300.

³⁶ Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa. «BOE» núm. 295, de 10 de diciembre de 2013.

³⁷ Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. «BOE» núm. 340, de 30 de diciembre de 2020, 122868-122953: «<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2020/12/29/3>».

³⁸ The Spanish social policies are a specific case of the Mediterranean model that combines «universalism, familiarism and the market under a system of central regulation, with shared financing and regional and local management». G. Rodríguez Cabrero, *Políticas sociales de atención a la dependencia en los Regímenes de Bienestar de la Unión Europea*, in «Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales», 29/1 (2011) p. 18.

inherent features remain, such as limited direct family support in the form of salary allowances. However, progress has been made in periods of paid leave for birth or adoption covering 100% of the salary. From 2021, paid leaves for birth or adoption can either be maternity or paternity leaves – to be used on a non-continuous basis – and an increase has been observed in paternity leave³⁹ applications. In the 1980s, these paid leaves were limited to 16 weeks for mothers and 2 days for fathers. The situation improved with Law 3/2007 of March 22⁴⁰, which established a 15-day paternity leave that has been gradually extended until reaching the current one. In countries where these permits are relatively long and paid, the use of services is reduced, without necessarily involving a supply problem⁴¹.

The integration of women into the labour market has been very rapid since 1990, reaching 61% in 2018⁴²; which has changed family structures and lifestyles, together with work-life balance policies and the expansion of early child education services. All of the above has eroded the Spanish family-based culture⁴³, giving rise to a contradictory scenario of familism and de-familiarisation. The unstable labour market, with high unemployment rates and low salaries, together with the combination of corporatism and familism by omission causes both men and women to increasingly depend on their participation in the labour market to survive and intensifies the inequalities among individuals and families based on the quality and intensity of their jobs⁴⁴.

After the LGE, schooling of 4–5-year-olds increased until reaching 63.5% in 1976–77; then 86% of 4-year-olds and 100% of 5-year-olds in

³⁹ A. Escobedo, K. Wall, *Leave policies in Southern Europe: continuities and changes*, in «Community, Work & Family», 18-2 (2015), pp. 218-235, p. 220.

⁴⁰ Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres. «BOE» núm. 71, de 23/03/2007.

⁴¹ J. Plantenga, Ch. Rémy, (2015) *Provision of Childcare Services: A Comparative Review of EU Member States*, CESifo DICE Report, CESifo Institut - Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung an der Universität München, München, 13-1 (2015), pp. 20-24.

⁴² Eurostats, cit.

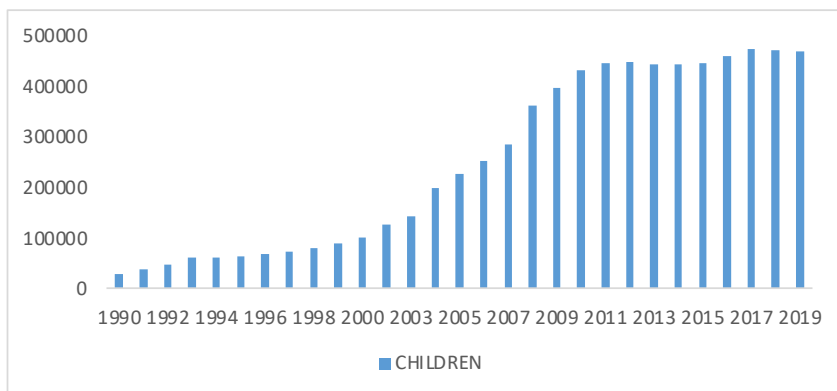
⁴³ See M. León, M. Migliavacca, *Italy and Spain: Still the Case of Familistic Welfare Models?*, in «Population Review», 52/1 (2013), pp. 25-42; M. León, J. Choi, J. Ahn, *When flexibility meets familism: Two tales of gendered labour markets in Spain and South Korea*, in «Journal of European Social Policy», 26/4 (2016), pp. 344-357, and L. Moreno, P. Mari-Klose, *Youth, family change and welfare arrangements. Is the South still so different?*, in «European Societies», 15/4 (2016), pp. 493-513.

⁴⁴ Campillo, *Políticas de conciliación de la vida laboral, personal y familiar en la Unión Europea*, cit., p. 115.

1986–87⁴⁵. Likewise, the preschool education model grew: first by adding classes for 5-year-olds, then for 4-year-olds, and finally creating spaces for 3-year-olds in kindergartens and primary schools in 1990. As a result, activities in preschool classrooms were, and often continue to be, quite similar to primary school practices, with a strong emphasis on individual seatwork rather than play-based activities.

Graph 1 shows that the evolution of student rates was slow in the 1990s: in 1990 there were 28,631 children enrolled, representing 3.3% of the age group (Graph 2), which tripled in the following decade. The evolution of age-specific enrolment rates was also significant, although it is not always possible to complete the series, as data provided by reports are not always broken down by age. Between 1970 and 1990, preschool education was the only option, thus including data from 2–5-year-old children. Table 1 shows that 1% of children under 1, less than 5% of 1-year-olds and around 12% of 2-year-olds were in school in 1996. Data from 3-year-old children have been included because they were not included in the second stage (4–5-year-olds) before LOGSE, so their enrolment rates were lower. For instance, in 1976–77, only 10.8% of 2 and 3-year-old children were in school⁴⁶ and there are no data under that age.

Graph 1. Number of Children aged 0–3 in nurseries (1990–2019).

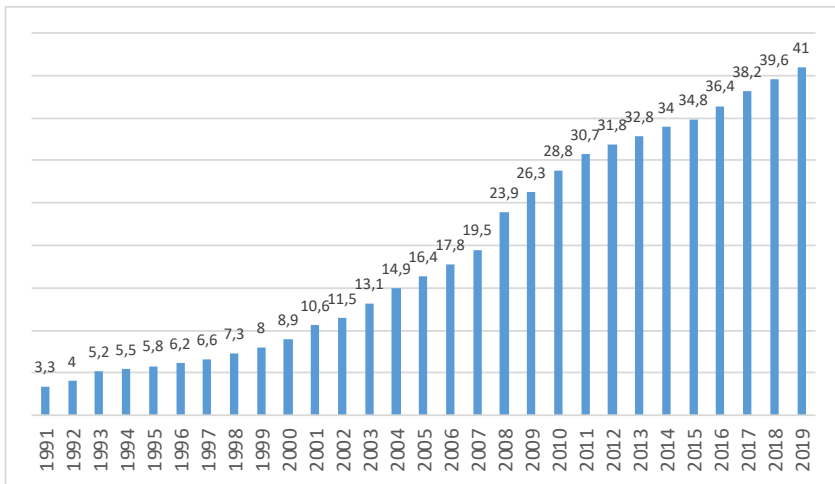


Source: Ministerio de Educación, EpData: «<https://www.epdata.es/datos/alumnos-matriculados-profesores-otros-datos-estadisticas-curso-escolar-1990-2019/437>».

⁴⁵ M. de Puelles Benítez, *Educación e ideología en la España contemporánea*, Barcelona, Labor, 1980, p. 448.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

Graph 2. Enrolment ratio of children aged 0–3 years in nurseries (1991–2019).



Source: Ministerio de Educación, EpData: «<https://www.epdata.es/datos/alumnos-matriculados-profesores-otros-datos-estadisticas-curso-escolar-1990-2019/437>».

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As mentioned earlier, there are 17 autonomous regions in Spain and each of them has their own educational policy. Graph 4 shows enrolment rates at the first stage in 2018. It is striking to see great differences within the same country. There are four regions exceeding the average net rate of 39.6%: Basque Country, Madrid, Galicia and Andalusia. While Catalonia is in the middle, Ceuta, Murcia and the Canary Islands are at the opposite edge. Schooling increases as children's ages increase in all regions (Table 2). It is worth studying the differences, not only among regions, but also between regions and age of schoolchildren, as shown in Table 2; huge contrasts that are not always easy to interpret. For instance, considering two

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

nearby regions like Asturias and Cantabria, Asturias starts with a percentage that almost triples that of Cantabria; but when it comes to 2-year-old children, the Cantabrian rate doubles that of Asturias.

Table 1. Enrolment ratio of children aged 0–3 years in nurseries, by age (1996–2019).

ACADEMIC YEAR	1996–1997	1997–1998	1998–1999	2003–2004	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2017–2018	2019–2020
	AGE											
< 1 year	1,1	1,1	1,3	3	5,6	6,7	7,8	9,8	10	9,7	12,3	13,1
1 year	4,6	5,1	6	12,1	19,8	25,4	26,5	32,6	34,1	35,6	40,2	43,9
2 year	12,3	12,6	14,6	24,8	35	41,5	44,3	51,8	52,1	55,4	60	63,1
3 year ⁴⁸	67	72	80,3	95,9	97,5	96,3	95,6	95,6	95,9	94,9	96,5	96,1

Source: Own elaboration based on Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, *Datos y cifras Curso escolar 2019/2020 y 2020/2021*, Madrid, MEFP, 2019 y 2020, p. 18; Id., *Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educación 2000-2020*: «<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/inee/indicadores/sistema-estatal/mapa-indicadores.html>».

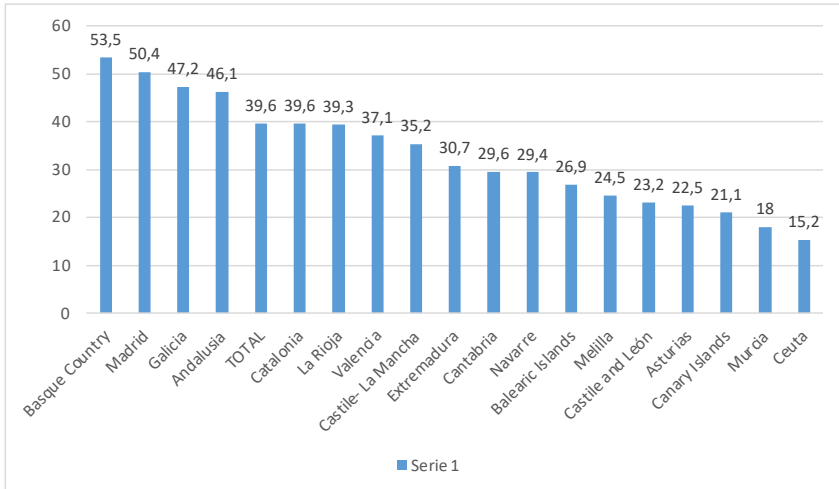
The enrolment rate at the first stage of early childhood education in Spain was 36.4% in 2018, very similar to the OECD average (36.3%) and the EU23 average (35.6%). The Netherlands (59.3%) and Norway (56.3%) are the countries with the highest enrolment rate at the first stage⁴⁹. However, data on enrolled children hide enormous inter and intra-countries differences, depending on the services offered and the number of hours used. In general terms, children's first stage centres are open from 7.30am to 8pm. However, no child is allowed to stay there for more than 8 hours per day, except in exceptional circumstances that must be approved by the administration. They are also open all year, from Monday to Friday, except for one month. Second stage centres open during school hours, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., but many of them offer morning classrooms, school canteen service and extracurricular activities, so that they are open from 7.30 a.m. to 5 or 6

⁴⁸ The rate of 3 years old children enrolled in nurseries was 17% in 1986-87, and 39% in 1991-1992. Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, *Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educación, 2002*, Madrid, MEC, 2002, p. 81.

⁴⁹ Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, *Panorama de la educación. Indicadores de la OCDE 2019. Informe español*, Madrid, MEFP, 2019, p. 15.

p.m. Their opening hours are therefore the same as those of primary school and they have long holidays, so that they do not really adapt to parents' needs.

Graph 3. Enrolment ratio of children aged 0–3 years in nurseries, by Autonomous Communities, 2018–2019.



Source: Ministerio de Educación, EpData: «<https://www.epdata.es/datos/alumnos-matriculados-profesores-otros-datos-estadisticas-curso-escolar-1990-2019/437>».

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⁵⁰ Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, *Panorama de la educación. Indicadores de la OCDE 2019. Informe español*, Madrid, MEFP, 2019, p. 15.

as those of primary school and they have long holidays, so that they do not really adapt to parents' needs.

Table 2. School enrolment rates by age and autonomous region, 2017–18 academic year.

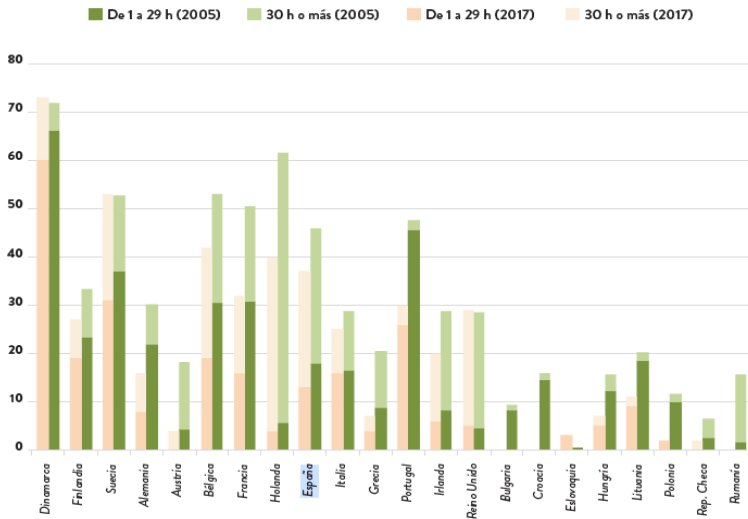
	< 1 YEAR	1 YEAR	2 YEAR	3 YEAR	4 YEAR	5 YEAR
SPAIN	12.3	40.2	60.0	96.5	97.6	98.4
Andalusia	14.0	48.7	67.7	97.4	98.0	98.6
Aragón	11.1	38.2	58.0	97.6	98.0	100.0
Asturias, Principality of	8.9	21.4	33.4	96.9	98.4	98.6
Balearic Islands	7.8	27.8	39.5	94.5	94.5	94.4
Canary Islands	7.7	20.4	32.6	93.3	95.9	97.7
Cantabria	3.0	8.3	71.6	97.3	97.8	97.3
Castile and y León	6.2	23.6	35.5	97.1	98.7	98.4
Castilla-La Mancha	9.1	35.6	55.8	96.9	97.7	97.6
Catalonia	10.4	42	60.9	95.9	97.6	97.9
Valencian Community	10.4	34.7	54.2	95.7	96.3	96.7
Extremadura	8.5	31.5	46.7	98.8	99.8	100.0
Galicia	19.2	47.3	69.4	97.4	98.2	98.1
Madrid, Community of	18.8	52.9	72.5	96.0	97.0	99.2
Murcia, Community of	3.9	19.3	32.2	97.9	99.1	100.0
Navarra, Chartered Community of	6.7	31.7	45.0	97.4	99.1	99.1
Basque Country	18.8	45.5	93.1	98.7	98.9	99.2
Rioja, La	13.7	38.5	59.4	96.7	98.2	98.7
Ceuta	1.6	9.1	28.4	100.0	100.0	100.0
Melilla	5.3	20.1	40.4	80.0	90.5	91.3

Source: Ministerio de Educación y Formación profesional, *Sistema estatal de Indicadores de educación 2020*. Madrid, 2020, p. 14.

Graph 4 shows that, from 2005 to 2017, the number of service hours at the first stage of early childhood education has decreased in most countries. In Spain this can be interpreted as a result of the financial crisis. Most children enrolled in Spain use nursery schools on a full-time basis, unlike countries like Denmark, where, despite having higher coverage, children use these services for less than 29 hours a week. This has to do with the length of the workday, as full-time working days are most common in Spain

and most Spaniards working part-time do not do so by choice, but because it was the job that was on offer.

Graph 4. Coverage of Education and Care services for children aged 0 to 3.



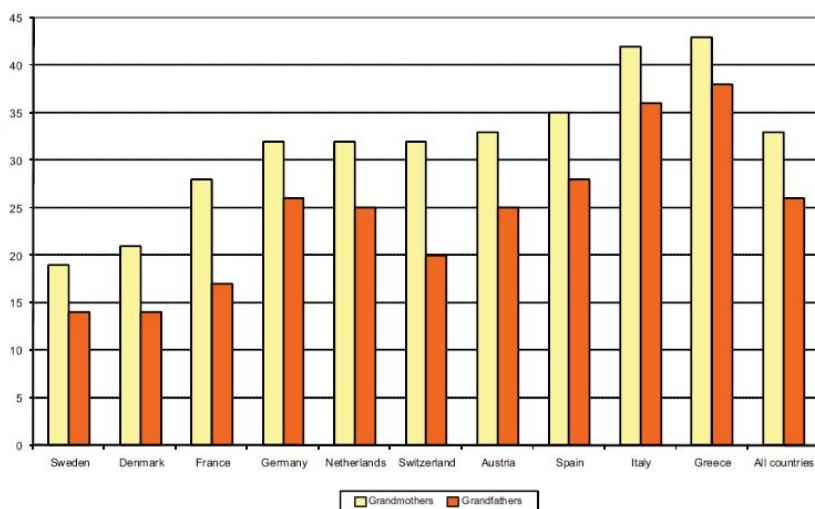
Source: Campillo, *Políticas de conciliación de la vida laboral, personal y familiar en la Unión Europea*, cit., p. 85.

[Translator’s Note: From 1 to 29 h (2005) / 30 h or more / From 1 to 29 h (2017) / 30 h or more / Denmark / Finland / Sweden / Germany / Austria / Belgium / France / The Netherlands / Spain / Italy / Greece / Portugal / Ireland / UK / Bulgaria / Croatia / Slovakia / Hungary / Lithuania / Poland / Czech Republic / Romania].

In addition to asking ourselves about the childcare and education that schoolchildren receive, we should also question why 63.6% of Spanish children do not attend any educational institution before they are 3. It is obvious that most of them are raised and looked after by their parents, who are the ones holding that responsibility. However, an important element in relation to raising children under 3 is the role played by grandparents. Although Spain is considered as a family-oriented country, it is not among the countries with the highest percentage of grandparents looking after their grandchildren: just over 50% of grandmothers and only slightly over 40% of grandfathers look after their grandchildren in Spain, whereas the highest prevalence of care is observed in the Netherlands and Denmark. However, in countries where more than 50% of grandparents took care of their grandchildren in 2004, only 2%

did so on a daily basis; whereas in Spain, 39% of grandparents looked after their grandchildren, but only 17% of them did so on a full-time basis⁵¹. This situation illustrates how, in countries with broad state support, grandparents act as a complementary resort for a few days and a few hours. In Spain, a country with little part-time work, fewer and less accessible nurseries, half of all mothers of young children work, mostly full-time; and this is only possible because of the help they receive from their families⁵².

Graph 5. Grandfathers and Grandmothers Who Provided Child Care Almost Weekly or More Often in the Past 12 Months (in percentages), 2004.



Source: K. Hank, I. Buber, *Grandparents Caring for Their Grandchildren. Findings From the 2004 Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe*, in «Journal of Family Issues» 30/1 (2009), p. 63.

⁵¹ K. Hank, I. Buber, *Grandparents Caring for Their Grandchildren. Findings From the 2004 Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe*, in «Journal of Family Issues» 30/1 (2009), pp. 61-64.

⁵² B. Janta, *Caring for children in Europe. How childcare, parental leave and flexible working arrangements interact in Europe*, RAND Europe, 2014, p. 11: «https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR554.html».

Ownership of centres also involves some differences between the two stages, as seen in Table 3. The Spanish educational system includes public schools, state-subsidised schools (privately-owned but publicly-funded) and private schools. Most of state-subsidised schools belong to the Catholic Church. The percentage of private education (not publicly-funded) is 3.9% at the second stage and 33.1% at the first stage, so the decision to enroll children under 3 is conditioned by the places that are available and families' work or financial situation, rather than their desire to educate and care for their children. That is to say, the main reason for parents to school 3-year-olds, is not the need for childcare but a desire to give their children socialisation and learning opportunities⁵³. It is worth adding, although they do not always admit it, that also because it is free of charge.

Across Spain, most 0–3-year-old early childhood education institutions are either fully private or public but privately managed. Fully private nursery schools for children under 3 represent more than 50% of total institutions. The cost of a place in a public centre is borne by autonomous regions, local authorities, and families, to different extents. The amount paid by families sometimes depends on their income and some regions offer vouchers or help pay for places in private centres; which generates inequality of opportunities among children of different family backgrounds. In most regions, priority is given to families where both parents are in paid jobs, and rich regions with high female labour force (Madrid, Basque Country, and Catalonia) have higher enrolment rates⁵⁴.

Table 3. Funding of Early Childhood Education (2018–2019). Financiación de la educación infantil. Academic year 2018–2019.

2018–2019	FUNDING / PROVISION		
	Public	Private, publicly subsidised (<i>concerdada</i>)	Private, non-publicly subsidised
Early Childhood Education	63	25,3	11,7
0–3	51	16,0	33,1
3–6	67,4	28,8	3,9

Source: Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, Datos y cifras. Curso escolar 2019/2020, Madrid, MEFP, 2019, p. 4.

⁵³ H. Sandstrom, *The characteristics and quality of pre-school education in Spain*, in «International Journal of Early Years Education» (2012), p. 2.

⁵⁴ L. Ibáñez, *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Spain*, in *The Transformation of Care in European Societies*, cit., p. 282.

Another element to consider is the differences between the staff working at the two stages of early childhood education⁵⁵. In centres for 0–3-year-old children, two job profiles coexist (Table 5): teachers in early childhood education and educators. The initial training of teachers consisted of a three-year university course until 2008–2009, when it became a full four-year degree⁵⁶. The training of educators, who are about 75% of the first stage staff, is called Advanced Technician of Pre-Primary Education (0–3 years old, first stage) and consists of a two-year course. Salaries are very different between the two jobs, but the main difference is the type of school (private or state) involved. The highest salaries are offered by state schools and the lowest by private schools or state schools with private management. Differences between state and private schools and among the different types are worsening with time, since public sector employees get higher seniority premium⁵⁷.

Legislation has contributed to the specialisation of these professionals more than lifestyle changes have. The merging of qualifications in nursery schools, many of which were transformed into first stage nurseries (graduates, higher-level technicians, qualified staff), allow for different professional profiles to work in similar positions. Likewise, companies tend to hire higher-level graduates for lower-paid jobs⁵⁸, so it is easy to find teachers working as senior technicians and senior technicians working as assistants or caregivers.

Table 4. Initial Training and tours per week of ECEC workers.

TYPE OF PROVISION	STAFF AND WORKING HOURS PER WEEK	
	0–3	3–6
Public sector with Public management	<i>Teacher</i> (University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) 30 hours per week <i>Educator</i> : (Advanced vocational training). 35 hours per week	<i>Teacher</i> (University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) 30 hours per week

⁵⁵ P. Moss, *Training of early childhood education and care staff*, in «International Journal of Educational Research», 33 (2000), pp. 31-53.

⁵⁶ M.L. Mir Pozo, M. Ferrer Ribot, *Aproximación a la situación actual de la formación del profesorado de educación infantil*, in «Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado», 17/2, (2014), pp. 235-255.

⁵⁷ *Ivi*, pp. 288-289.

⁵⁸ C. Diego, M. González, *La especialización del personal de los centros de educación infantil*, in C. Sanchidrián, J. Ruiz Berrio (eds.), *La educación infantil en los sistemas educativos*, Barcelona, Graó, 2011, p. 368.

TYPE OF PROVISION	STAFF AND WORKING HOURS PER WEEK	
	0–3	3–6
Private sector (state controlled and publicly subsidised)	<p><i>Teacher</i> (University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) 32 hours per week</p> <p><i>Educator</i>: (Advanced vocational training) 38 hours per week</p> <p>Other employees (assistants, kitchen and cleaning staff) 39-40 hours per week</p>	<p><i>Teacher</i> (University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) Between 30-35 hours per week</p>
Private sector (without public subsidy) and Public sector with private management	<p><i>Teacher</i> (University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) 32 hours per week</p> <p><i>Educator</i>: (Advanced vocational training) 38 hours per week</p> <p>Close to 75% of teaching staff in ECEC 0–3</p> <p>Other employees (assistants, kitchen and cleaning staff) 39-40 hours per week</p>	<p>(University Bachelor in Early Childhood education) 35 hours per week</p>

Source: L. Ibáñez, *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Spain*, in *The Transformation of Care in European Societies*, cit, p. 285.

In sum, schooling rates in Spain are currently similar to the European average rate, although these percentages often hide significant differences in institutional designs (public or private school, access, ratios, costs, service quality, staff training), as well as in the number of hours covered by these services, all of which has consequences for family work-life balance strategies and for childcare and education.

3. *Towards an Early Childhood Pedagogy*

The curriculum for early childhood education in Spain provides a guiding framework, as it is not a compulsory stage in the education system and is organised around three fields with different blocks (Table 6).

Each autonomous region develops their goals, content, and methodological guidelines⁵⁹ and each centre can elaborate their own pedagogical or

⁵⁹ For example, see Consejería de Educación. Orden de 5 de agosto de 2008, por la que se desarrolla el Currículo correspondiente a la Educación Infantil en Andalucía,

educational proposals, taking into account their children's diversity and different learning paces when catering for the development of their autonomy. It is important to insist on the need for early childhood education professionals to start from children's previous knowledge, needs and motivations to promote active participation, encourage contributions, stimulate skill development and facilitate interaction with peers, adults and the environment.

Table 5. Curriculum in Early Childhood Education.

FIELDS	BLOCKS	
	0–3 YEARS OLD	3–6 YEARS OLD
Self-knowledge and personal autonomy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of personal identity 2. Well-being and everyday life 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body and self-image 2. Play and movement 3. Activity and everyday life 4. Personal and health care
Knowledge of the environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interaction with the physical and natural environment 2. Life with others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical mean: Elements, relationships and measurements 2. Approach to Nature 3. Culture and social life
Languages: communication and representation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal communication 2. Forms of communication: plastic arts, music and body. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Listen, speak, and talk – Approach to written language – Approach to literature 2. Audiovisual language and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) 3. Artistic language 4. Body language

Source: Own elaboration based on ORDEN ECI/3960/2007, de 19 de diciembre, por la que se establece el currículo y se regula la ordenación de la educación infantil. «BOE», 5 enero 2008, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2008/BOE-A-2008-222-consolidado.pdf>

The aim of ECEC, in accordance with the Education Act of 2006, is to contribute to the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children in close cooperation with families. The two cycles of the stage should progressively pay attention to emotional development, body movement and control, communication and verbal expression, basic guidelines of coexistence and social relations, as well as discovery of the physical and

social characteristics of the environment. The development of a positive and balanced image of themselves and the acquisition of personal autonomy should also be encouraged.

The general objectives of this stage (art. 13) are the following:

- know their own and others' bodies, its capacities, and learn to respect differences
- observe and explore their family, natural and social environment
- acquire progressive autonomy in their regular activities
- develop their emotional abilities
- socialise with others and progressively acquire the basic guidelines of coexistence and social relations, as well as practise the peaceful resolution of conflicts
- develop communicative skills in different languages and types of expression
- begin developing logical-mathematical abilities, reading and writing, as well as movement, gesture and rhythm.
- promote, apply and develop social norms that promote equality.

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Many models can be implemented in childhood education, thanks to which educators now have many options to be used with each child. However, not all of these models count with an explicit theoretical framework, many are based on repeated practice that has been barely assessed. This makes it impossible to explain and justify their practice, which is something essential for educators to be able to do. No educational model can ever bring together the pedagogical proposals derived from the progress achieved in pedagogy, learning theories and psychological theories since the beginning of the 20th century. Daily practice is gradually moving away from traditional passive methods (such as coloring templates and following instructions) and the teaching proposals of each centre reflect some of this progress.

The mainstream models of early childhood education in 0–3-year-old children reflect features of the 20th century psychological theories, although many are scarcely mentioned, such as psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis changed the way to approach children's education, although it arrived rather late in Spain through the translations of the main works of authors, most of

⁶⁰ Ley Orgánica 2/2006, cit., art. 14.3, p. 22.

which were done in Argentina. The ideas about children's upbringing were changing, based on the importance of bonding in child development, introduced by psychoanalysts such as Spitz⁶¹ (1887–1974) or Gesell⁶² (1880–1961), along with Bowlby's⁶³ attachment theory (1907–1990) and Pikler's⁶⁴ theories (1902–1984), who defended children's free movement and the importance of respect and attachment in childcare. These are common theories in psychology, but not so common in education, despite having contrib-

⁶¹ R.A. Spitz, *El primer año de vida del niño*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1969 (ed. or., *The first Year of Life*, New York, International Universities Press, 1965); Id., *No y sí: sobre la génesis de la comunicación humana*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2001 (ed. or., *No And Yes: On the Genesis Of Human Communication*, New York, International Universities Press, M.D. Inc., 1957); Id., *Una teoría genética de campo sobre la formación del yo: sus implicaciones en la patología*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985 (ed. or., *A Genetic Field Theory of Ego Formation. Its Implications for Pathology*, Editorial The New York Psychoanalytic Institute, New York, 1959).

⁶² A. Gesell, *El niño de uno a cuatro años*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1982 (ed. or., *The First Five Years of Live. A Guide to the Study of the Preschool Child*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1940); A. Gesell, C. Amatruda, *Diagnóstico del desarrollo normal y anormal del niño. Métodos clínicos y aplicaciones prácticas*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1966 (ed. or., *Developmental Diagnosis: Normal and Abnormal Child Development, Clinical methods and Pediatric Applications*, New York and London, Paul B. Hoeber, 1947, 2nd ed.); A. Gesell, F. Ilg, L. Ames, J. Rodell, *La educación del niño en la cultura moderna: conducta y personalidad en las diversas etapas de su desarrollo: técnica y guía para su cuidado físico y psicológico en el hogar y en la escuela recreativa*, Buenos Aires, Nova, 1948 (ed. or., *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today: The Guidance of Development in Home and Nursery School*, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1943).

⁶³ J. Bowlby, *Los cuidados maternos y la salud mental*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1953 (ed. or., *Maternal care and mental health*, Ginebra, World Health Organization, 1951); Id., *Cuidado maternal y amor*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1979 (reimpresa edición) (ed. or., *Maternal care and mental health. A report prepared on behalf of the World Health Organization as a contribution to the United Nations programme for the welfare of homeless children*, Ginebra, World Health Organization Monograph Series, 1951); Id., *El apego (El apego y la pérdida I)*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1976 (ed. or., *Attachment and Loss. Volume 1: Attachment*, Londres, Hogarth Press, 1969); Id., *La separación (El apego y la pérdida II)*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1976 (ed. or., *Attachment and Loss. Volume 2: Separation: Anxiety and Anger*, London, Hogarth Press, 1973); Id., *La pérdida (El apego y la pérdida III)*, Barcelona, Paidós Ibérica, 1983 (ed. or., *Attachment and Loss. Volume 3: Loss: Sadness and Depression*, London, Hogarth Press, 1980).

⁶⁴ E. Pikler, *Moverse en libertad: desarrollo de la motricidad global*, Madrid, Ed. Narcea, 1984 (ed. or., *Se mouvoir en liberté dès le premier âge*, Paris, PUF, 1979).

uted to change educational practices. In the field of childhood education in the family, in the second half of the 20th century, «The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care» by American pediatrician Benjamin Spock (1903–1998) had an enormous impact, with more than 50 million copies sold worldwide in 1998. His book defends common sense and the non-authoritarian upbringing of children⁶⁵.

The learning theories of Piaget⁶⁶ (1896–1980), Vygotsky⁶⁷ (1896–1934) and Bruner⁶⁸ (1915–2016) also had a great boom in the 1970s and continue to be the foundation of many of the most widely used models in early childhood education. Although in the 70s and 80s the focus remained on individualism, one of the main features of 21st century children education is acknowledging that childhood is socially constructed, which leads to raising awareness of the social context in which psychological-educational processes take place. In the last decades, some nurseries claim to follow Montessori, Waldorf or Reggio Emilia's theories⁶⁹, which are considered “alternative” and “progressive” theories, despite some of them being more than a hundred years old. However, a detailed study would be needed to find out to what extent these educational theories are followed in each centre. They seem to be rather eclectic centres in some cases, mixing external aspects of the method with elements that are well-accepted by families, such as bilingualism. Also since the 1990s, the Donan or High Scope method has been used as the basis for early childhood education programs in some schools.

⁶⁵ B. Spock, *Tu hijo*, Madrid, Daimon, 1963 (ed. or., *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946).

⁶⁶ Jean Piaget is known for his work on child development and his “genetic epistemologie”. See J. Piaget, *Introducción a la epistemología genética*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 3 vols., 1970 (ed. or., *Introduction à l'épistémologie génétique*, 3 vols., Paris, PUF, 1950); Id., *La psicología de la inteligencia*, Barcelona, Crítica, 1983 (ed. or., *La psychologie de l'intelligence*, Paris, A. Colin, 1947).

⁶⁷ L. Vygotsky, *Mind and society: the development of higher mental processes*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1978; L.E. Berk, A. Winsler, *Scaffolding children's learning: Vygotsky and early childhood education*, Washington, DC, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995.

⁶⁸ J.S. Bruner, *Hacia una teoría de la instrucción*, Barcelona, Unión Tipográfica Editorial Hispano Americana, 1972 (ed. or., *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1966); Id., *La importancia de la educación*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1987 (ed. or., *The relevance of Education*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1971).

⁶⁹ See L. Malaguzzi, *La educación infantil en Reggio Emilia*, Barcelona, Octaedro, 2015, 3^a ed.; A. Hoyuelos Planillo, *Loris Malaguzzi. Una biografía pedagógica*, Madrid, Morata, 2020.

But there is not one model of early childhood education to follow. Educational centres for 0–3-year-old children differ in the services they provide, although, in general terms, they tend to link education with school and provide a comprehensive service for families and children⁷⁰. We have gathered more knowledge about them in recent years, although the information about the quality of the services they provide and their educational programmes is still scarce⁷¹.

4. Conclusions

A recent OECD report describes two trends in early childhood educational policies for children under 3⁷². Firstly, the Nordic trend, based on a socio-educational approach: centres often called nurseries or crèches, offered by social services on a part-time basis. Secondly, the trend supported by France, the UK⁷³, and Spain, among other countries, with centres dependent on the Ministry of Education and based on a school-oriented approach. In recent decades, Spain has been focusing on developing early childhood education centres in line with supranational policies, which were committed to improve these centres as a global objective.

While there are obvious advantages in the model where children are in the same educational centre until they are 6, Spain has not traditionally supported this model, so there are very few centres that offer the two stages of early childhood education. The fact that these stages are almost always taught in different centres, by professionals with different qualifications and

⁷⁰ A. Ancheta Arrabal, *La educación y Atención de la primera Infancia en la Unión Europea. Un estudio comparado entre los sistemas de Suecia, Inglaterra y España*, València, Universitat de València, 2012, p. 148.

⁷¹ OECD, *Starting Strong III*, cit.; C. Dalli, E.J. White, J. Rockel, I. Duhn, *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like? A literature review*, Wellington, Ministry of Education, 2011; J. Paz-Albo Prieto, *Enhancing the quality of early childhood education and care: ECEC tutors' perspectives of family engagement in Spain*, in «Early Child Development and Care», 188:5 (2018), pp. 613-623; S. Rivas, Á. Sobrino, *Determining quality of early childhood education programmes in Spain: a case study*, in «Revista de Educación», 355 (2011), pp. 257-283.

⁷² OECD, *How can the comparability of early childhood education and care statistics be improved?*, in «Education Indicators in Focus», 70 (2019). p. 2.

⁷³ D. Boyd, N. Hirst, *Understanding Early Years Education across the UK: Comparing practice in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*, London, Routledge, 2015; B. Cohen, P. Moss, P. Petrie, J. Wallace, *A New Deal for Children?: Re-forming Education and Care in England, Scotland and Sweden*, Bristol, Bristol University Press, 2007.

different pay and recognition, does not help to perceive early childhood education as a united educational level, either. While the second stage for 3–5-year-old children is usually part of primary education schools (where every child from 3 to 12 years old is enrolled), the first stage for 0–3-year-old children is taught in very diverse centres dependent on different administrations (public, private, local, working or state-subsidised centres).

In Spain, the increase in childcare and education services has been strongly aimed at facilitating women's labour integration and, only recently, promote child welfare and equal opportunities. By comparing the first stage of early childhood education to the second stage it is possible to assess the attention that has been given to both. Spain is currently one of the leading countries in preschool education with 100% schooling in the second stage and a percentage above the European average in the first stage of early childhood education.

However, pending goals should include, on the one hand, quantitative goals: access to the first stage should not depend on parents' working or financial situation. It should be an option for families since they are responsible for the childcare and education of their children. On the other hand, qualitative goals: the programmes on offer should be evaluated and a debate opened in Spain on how early childhood education should be in order to promote children's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. The improvement of the quality of services provided should be now the top priority. In sum, the difference between educating children – a recognised right – and schooling children should be more evident than it seems, to both families and public authorities.

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