

PBS-ECEC Policy and Strategy Toolkit

for Implementing a Program-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Approach in ECEC



[Project Number: 2021-1-PT01-KA220-SCH-000034367]

DECEMBER 2023



Co-funded by the European Union



STRATEGY AND POLICY TOOLKIT RECOMMENDATIONS



ID: STRATEGY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1

Title: Continuous professional development

Subtitle: To implement PW–PBS, it is fundamental to promote continuous professional development

Key Points: Continuous professional development (CPD), in addition to solid initial education and training, is essential for the successful implementation of Programme-Wide Positive Development Support (PW–PBS) in early childhood education and care (ECEC). CPD ensures high-quality education and support for children. As our understanding of child development evolves, ECEC professionals need to stay up-to-date on the latest research and best practices. CPD empowers ECEC professionals with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to adapt to diverse learning needs, establish positive relationships, use innovative pedagogical strategies, and create nurturing environments. Participation in CPD programmes keeps professionals informed about trends in research, allowing them to implement new strategies as well as the systems necessary to promote young children's socioemotional learning and to prevent and mitigate challenging behaviours (please see our <u>PBS–ECEC Key Resources</u>). An in-depth understanding of PW–PBS principles and strategies, a common understanding among the ECEC team members, and specific teaching skills are required to ensure the successful implementation of the PW–PBS approach with high fidelity. As a result, investing in CPD benefits the development of young children, thus ensuring a solid foundation for their wellbeing, growth, and success.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"I consider it crucial that education and training are the starting point for everything. Without trained personnel, it's challenging to implement any programme effectively, so it's naturally a very significant recommendation." (X., Cyprus)

"Nowadays, educators in ECEC face several complex challenges in their classrooms (...). These challenges require them to possess a diverse toolkit of strategies and methodologies to address them effectively. CPD and training in approaches such as PW–PBS support them to enhance their skills and provide them with the appropriate tools to address these challenges." (K., Greece)

"Training is fundamental (...), we must provide time for training, for professionals to have the opportunity to debate these issues and reach a common ideal (...), to satisfy the need to review, adjust strategies and share, at various times. Educators must feel secure in their pedagogical approaches, or these will not work. Ensuring that we are all (...) on the same page." (M., Portugal)

What can be done to make a difference?

Strategy: Promote and fund initial teacher education as well as accessible professional development opportunities focusing on socioemotional learning and managing challenging behaviours





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- Develop comprehensive national strategies that emphasise the importance of continuous learning and development, and support an effective training system for professionals.
- Ensure that pre-service teacher education includes core topics such as child development, SEL frameworks, and effective strategies for fostering children's socioemotional learning.
- Foster collaborative partnerships between organisations dedicated to teacher education and relevant professional groups and associations to align programmes with professional profiles and recent advancements in the relevant literature.
- Allocate resources for programmes focused on promoting SEL and PW–PBS, prioritising time for professional development and collaboration.
- Provide regular training on PW–PBS principles, systems, and practices to ensure that professionals remain skilled and knowledgeable in implementing the approach effectively and incorporate training sessions into work schedules or implement flexible hours to accommodate educators' participation.
- Emphasise the availability of online training courses and webinars and establish communication channels and guidelines to facilitate the sharing of information and resources. (Visit the <u>PBS-ECEC e-Learning course</u> for more information)

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Actions

Strategy: Support collaborative learning communities, valuing and promoting evidence-based practices that strengthen ECEC systems and settings as a whole

Actions

- Foster collaborative partnerships between educational institutions, organisations, and early childhood centres to facilitate the delivery of professional development programmes, workshops, or conferences in local communities, and evaluate the effectiveness of programmes.
- Provide funding for workshops, conferences, coaching, and mentoring opportunities, thus alleviating the financial burden of training.
- Encourage the use of diversified methodologies (e.g. observation and peer feedback) and promote the creation of spaces and opportunities for professionals to share experiences, best practices, and research-based strategies to enhance socioemotional development, facilitating ongoing dialogue and exchange of ideas.
- Invest in research and evaluation efforts to assess the impact of professional development programmes, as data-driven insights can inform the refinement of policies and practices in the future.
- Invest in the training of other community service professionals in the PW-PBS, promoting the dissemination of the approach, as well as the advantages and tools associated with its implementation. This training can also be directed at educational agents at other levels of schooling besides preschool, ensuring the sustainability and reinforcement of the skills acquired and built by the children.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

1. Investing in CPD enhances the quality of early childhood education by incorporating evidenceinformed practices, increasing professional competence and confidence among educators, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing, and ultimately improving child outcomes.







- 2. On-site training in PW–PBS provides a shared vision and purpose among professionals and helps develop strategies that need to be implemented as well **PBS-ECEC** as a common language in each centre, involving and empowering all professionals. It contributes to changing less-than-optimal language use, routines, and behaviours that persist in ECEC practices, as training favours innovation and motivates professionals to collaborate in team improvement efforts. Online training has the potential to include diverse professionals from different regions and services.
- 3. These policies contribute to the increase in ECEC professionals' job satisfaction and wellbeing and to the creation of better conditions for promoting children's SEL. By prioritising socioemotional development in ECEC, professionals can help children develop essential life skills, mental health, and overall wellbeing, thus playing a fundamental role in shaping their success in various life domains.
- 4. Beneficiaries of such policies include professionals, children, families, ECEC centres, and the education system as a whole. When PW–PBS is embraced at the municipality, region, or country level, it may demonstrate a commitment to fostering children's positive behaviour and socioemotional development across a broader educational landscape.

What practices show the way forward?

A bottom-up training programme for ECEC teachers

Before PBS–ECEC implementation, ECEC professionals had the opportunity to discuss with an external coach and internal trainer the needs regarding child behaviour and socioemotional development using a diagnostic questionnaire. This helped the leadership team to develop an action plan. The action plan was used for guiding activities in the centre, but also for prioritising professionals' needs regarding professional development and training in order to address such issues and promote children's SEL. The staff then received training and support to address daily challenges and make decisions based on the agreed practices and strategies. These efforts implied an investment in human resources by adapting the professional development programme of the PW–PBS approach to the specificities and challenges of each centre. This effort was made in collaboration with the staff, which helped them feel a sense of ownership and competence in the new approach, for which they were being trained.

Supporting evidence and resources

Key Resources

Needs assessment in four countries

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Barros, S., Araújo, S., Santos, M., & Sousa, M. (2023). *PBS–ECEC transnational consolidated report: Research findings for developing the guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood education and care.* <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/PBS–</u> <u>ECEC_NeedsAssessment_Consolidated_report_EN.pdf</u>

A Guide for using PW-PBS in ECEC

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, S., Santos, M., Sousa, M., & Barros, S. (2023). *PBS–ECEC guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood and care in European countries*. <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/outputs/PBS–ECEC_Guide_EN.pdf</u>





Impact assessment study & recommendations



Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, A., Santos, M., Oliveira, V., Barros, S., Otero-Mayer, A., **PBS-ECEC** Michaelidou, V., Agathokleous, A., Krousorati, K., & Grammatikopoulos, V. (2023). *Report of the PBS-ECEC impact assessment study and practice recommendations. Result 3: Transnational Report.* <u>https://PBS-ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PBS-ECEC_R3_Consolidated-Report-Final.pdf</u>

Additional Resources

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Grammatikopoulos, V., Gregoriadis, A., & Zachopoulou, E. (2015). Evaluation of early childhood education environments and professional development: Current practices and implications. In O. N. Saracho (Ed.). *Contemporary perspectives on research in testing and evaluation in early childhood education* (pp. 153-169). Information Age Publishing.



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ID: STRATEGY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2



Title: Sustainable PW-PBS Implementation

Subtitle: As a whole-school approach, PW–PBS implementation requires a sustainable, long-term process

Key Point: Implementing Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) requires time to achieve a sustainable impact across various levels (children, families, professionals, ECEC settings, communities) and desired outcomes (socioemotional learning, health, learning, and positive school climate). The duration of implementation can vary depending on the specific needs and goals of each ECEC setting, but typically, over a year is required for full integration. Continuous evaluations, updates, and fidelity checks are necessary to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of PW–PBS systems and practices. Commitment from all stakeholders (administration, professionals, children, parents, and the wider community) creates a positive and supportive school culture for long-term success. Educational stakeholders must consider adequate and reasonable timelines and define policies that support long-term implementation. An extended timeframe enables professionals to learn and develop necessary skills, support each other in becoming proficient in the approach, and refine PW–PBS practices to adapt to children's evolving needs. Prolonged commitment allows interventions to become truly embedded in ECEC daily life, creating a positive and supportive environment with lasting effects on children's development and behaviour (please see our PBS–ECEC Key Resources below).

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"Directors must understand the time it will take to implement this approach; if professionals are given information and it is explained why this time is necessary for training, there will be less demotivation, and they will understand the time needed to acquire the skills". (P., Portugal).

"The programme is gradually integrated into our work (...). From my experience with the programme, I believe it is effective and should be introduced in schools." (P., Cyprus)

"Implementing PW–PBS requires the use of evidence-based assessment methods and appropriate tools for evaluating its effectiveness. This process may take time. However, PW–PBS is a flexible approach, allowing each preschool to implement it according to their specific needs and timeline." (K., Greece)

What can be done to make a difference?

Strategy: Promote on-site continuous and effective implementation (Visit <u>Impact Assessment</u> <u>Study and Practice Recommendations Report</u> to learn more)

Actions

- Promote planning, monitoring, and evaluation focused on quality and positive outcomes. PW– PBS requires adequate time for training staff in PW–PBS principles and strategies, to tailor interventions to individual children's needs, to consistently apply positive behaviour strategies, and to actively involve all ECEC professionals.
- Provide implementation guidelines that favour coherence through workforce stability and adequate training and integration of new staff members into PW–PBS practices.







- Encourage the use of evidence-based methods to assess implementation effectiveness at several points in time and monitor changes in children's long-term outcomes.
- Adopt a long-term perspective that enables better resource management; for example, allocate adequate funding and resources for sustained implementation of the PW–PBS framework, including professional development for staff and family engagement initiatives.

Strategy: Support a community-wide, long-term sustainability approach

Actions

- Foster collaboration between educational stakeholders and community organisations to support long-term outcomes in ECEC settings.
- Incentivise ECEC systems to collect data on positive child and school climate outcomes, which can inform future policy decisions to develop sustainability plans.
- Encourage critical reflection and the creation of reflexive communities of practice as sustainers of professional autonomy and learning.
- Foster a community of support and collaboration among ECEC centres that have successfully implemented PW–PBS (inter-peer training and sharing of best practices, strategies, and lessons learned), while introducing initiatives that acknowledge ECEC centres with successful long-term implementation of PW–PBS to motivate other centres to embrace the approach.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. By embedding PW–PBS principles and strategies into the ECEC setting's culture and practices over an extended period, both professionals and children can experience the full benefits.
- 2. With consistent implementation and ongoing professional development, professionals can effectively address challenging behaviours, promote positive social skills, and foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- 3. By mitigating time constraints, for example, through online training, professionals can engage in professional development at their own pace, foster a culture of lifelong learning, and develop a collaborative approach that encourages the exchange of perspectives, fosters innovation, and promotes evidence-based decision-making.
- 4. As PW–PBS becomes deeply ingrained in the ECEC centre, it creates a foundation for a lasting culture of respect. The long-term commitment to PW–PBS enables the continuous improvement and refinement of the approach based on the centre's evolving needs.
- 5. The importance of extending implementation lies in providing children with sufficient exposure to positive behavioural support strategies. This prolonged engagement allows the interventions to become embedded in ECEC centres' daily routines, leading to long-term positive outcomes, including:
 - positive changes in children's socioemotional development and behaviour;
 - enhanced professional expertise and commitment to evidence-based practice
 - strengthened partnerships between centres, families, and communities.
 - stronger caregiver-child relationships (trust, bonding);
 - positive culture change within the centre (nurturing and inclusive social climate);
 - continuous monitoring and adjustment of strategies for children with complex behavioural needs;







• data-driven decision making, which helps identify trends and patterns that inform optimal effectiveness.

What practices show the way forward?

PBS-ECEC online training course

The PBS–ECEC project participants received blended, asynchronous training within a train the trainers' approach and were given access to online learning resources. The training, conducted online, has provided a valuable opportunity for greater time flexibility. Professionals could engage in training sessions at their own pace and convenience, allowing them to balance their professional responsibilities with their personal commitments. This flexibility has enabled them to allocate time specifically for training and implementation while also supporting their colleagues in finding suitable time slots to participate. By embracing online training, participants demonstrated willingness to invest in their professional growth, overcome time constraints, and actively collaborated to create a positive and supportive learning environment for children.

Supporting evidence and resources

Key Resources

Needs assessment in four countries

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Barros, S., Araújo, S., Santos, M., & Sousa, M. (2023). *PBS–ECEC transnational consolidated report: Research findings for developing the guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood education and care.* <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/PBS–</u> <u>ECEC_NeedsAssessment_Consolidated_report_EN.pdf</u>

A Guide for using PW-PBS in ECEC

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, S., Santos, M., Sousa, M., & Barros, S. (2023). *PBS–ECEC guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood and care in European countries*. <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-</u> content/uploads/outputs/PBS–ECEC_Guide_EN.pdf

PBS-ECEC online modules

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Impact assessment study & recommendations

Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, A., Santos, M., Oliveira, V., Barros, S., Otero-Mayer, A., Michaelidou, V., Agathokleous, A., Krousorati, K., & Grammatikopoulos, V. (2023). *Report of the PBS–ECEC impact assessment study and practice recommendations. Result 3: Transnational Report.* <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PBS–ECEC_R3_Consolidated-Report-Final.pdf</u>

Additional Resources

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ID: STRATEGY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3



Title: Family Engagement

Subtitle: Implementing PW–PBS in ECEC settings requires involving parents as part of the educational team

Key Points: Children's socioemotional learning (SEL) and the prevention of challenging behaviours can be optimised through positive family–ECEC partnerships. Parents significantly influence child development, and their insights during Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) implementation enable tailored approaches to meet each child's needs. Working in partnerships with families at all tiers of the intervention is central to PW–PBS, ensuring continuity and consistency across contexts. Professionals are invited to cultivate skills that help enhance family engagement and create genuine positive partnerships. Collaborative efforts between parents and professionals create a holistic approach to the prevention of socioemotional challenges and promotion of SEL. Moreover, by providing parents with PW–PBS training and resources, the family–ECEC synergies can be strengthened, promoting consistent, positive approaches that benefit children's development and empower families as part of the educational team.

It is expected that the impact of the PW–PBS approach can be magnified by positive parental involvement and by building ECEC staff capacity to establish successful partnerships, which reflects high-quality early education. Therefore, educational stakeholders should support a culture of participation by developing policies related to family participation and engagement which are fully integrated into the educational system and promote cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. This will help develop positive attitudes that favour participation in ECEC.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"I think the best way forward would be if (...) a sort of mentorship could be established, which would oversee, maybe, you know, getting heads together. Because that is the hardest part. When I do early intervention in preschools, the hardest part is to get the parents and the preschool teachers and the managers to all, you know, sort of be singing off the same hymn sheet. So that is a challenge. So, I think one person is needed to gather those people up, if that's the right way to say it, just one point of contact." (L., Ireland)

"Parents are constantly informed in all aspects. During the PW–PBS implementation, they were informed about the educational practices and understood the intentions behind them. Parents were also asked for their input. (...) We use a platform to share with parents all the activities that are being carried out in the centre." (M., Portugal)

"I think the school has to think about how to promote their involvement. If some families usually enjoy participating, others don't feel comfortable, they often avoid this involvement. It requires diversification." (C., Portugal)

"This is valuable input and one of the most challenging to implement because it falls outside the scope of the school's jurisdiction in a way. Typically, parents who participate in training and programmes are those who are already interested in making a change. It requires a lot of effort to be put into practice." (X., Cyprus)



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What can be done to make a difference?



Strategy: Build ECEC team's capacity for positive and effective family partnerships

Actions

- Invest in ongoing professional training for ECEC professionals in building partnerships with families.
- Create a system with organisational conditions (resources, infrastructure, and procedures) to build, enhance, and sustain a team's capacity for partnerships.
- Create open, flexible, and accessible communication channels for families and staff that facilitate dialogue (e.g. virtual meetings and evening social events). For example, ECEC teams should be provided with resources and materials, including plurilingual communication tools, informative brochures, and interactive platforms/apps that keep families informed about their children's progress, upcoming activities, and ways to get involved in their children's education.
- Foster collaborative partnership between home and ECEC centres to help families build a supportive home-learning environment. Create a positive and non-judgmental environment where parents feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and concerns, and are acknowledged by their efforts to promote PW–PBS at home.
- Clearly define the roles of all stakeholders and consider opening new roles for parents (e.g. advocates, supporters, organisers).
- Offer incentives and recognition programmes for ECEC centres that demonstrate exemplary family engagement practices; recognising and celebrating successful family partnerships can motivate other centres to improve their approach.
- Diversify strategies to engage families and support initiatives that are inclusive and consider the diverse and unique needs and circumstances of families, such as those with special needs from low-income backgrounds and/or different cultures.

Strategy: Provide services, activities and resources that facilitate and support family engagement throughout PW–PBS implementation

Actions

- Invest in a more systemic approach that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders. Involve parents' associations and collaborate with community organisations and local agencies to establish strong networks of support for families.
- Develop policies that provide guidance related to family participation and engagement fully integrated into the school system. These policies should promote cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in all aspects of ECEC, recognising and valuing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of families.
- Allocate adequate funding and resources to implement these actions effectively, prioritising family engagement initiatives in ECEC systems and settings.
- Invest in research initiatives that explore effective family engagement practices and evaluate their impact on children's development; for example, conduct parent surveys to gather feedback on the effectiveness of PW–PBS initiatives and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop comprehensive online learning platforms where parents can access PW–PBS training modules, videos, and resources while also providing other useful materials and workshops to support parental engagement in their children's SEL. Additionally, the development and







distribution of parental handbooks or leaflets that outline PW–PBS concepts, approaches, and resources for the practical application of PW–PBS in their daily interactions with their children.

- Establish parent support groups focused on PW–PBS, where parents can share experiences, seek advice, and learn from each other, helping build positive beliefs, attitudes, and competencies that favour parental participation and inclusion.
- Create opportunities for families to actively participate (e.g., empowerment programmes, workshops, decision-making processes). Additionally, recruit and prepare parent ambassadors who have experience with PW–PBS and can serve as advocates; ambassadors can share their success stories and encourage other parents to get involved.
- Build collaborative teams to effectively support individual children with specific behavioural and socioemotional needs and involve families at all stages.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. Parents and professionals can create a collaborative partnership that benefits children's socioemotional development. This partnership creates a nurturing environment for children's wellbeing and a lifelong path to success. Effective family–ECEC partnerships work bidirectionally: ECEC settings and parents can share valuable resources, information, and strategies.
- 2. Parents' active involvement is indispensable for supporting and fostering children's socioemotional development, as their guidance, positive role modelling, and emotional support create an environment that helps children navigate social interactions, develop resilience, and build essential life skills.
- 3. Children's growth benefits from enhancing family and ECEC centres' concerted inputs the capacity to create an inclusive learning environment in ECEC settings can be significantly increased and parents can complement (at home or in other social contexts) the efforts put in place by ECEC centres in the implementation of PW–PBS and the promotion of SEL.
- 4. ECEC teams can build their capacity for effective family partnerships, leading to improved child outcomes, enhanced parental involvement, and robust implementation of PW–PBS. This results in (a) stronger partnerships between ECEC settings and families, which enhances the consistency of PW–PBS implementation across environments; (b) better parental support and understanding of socioemotional development and other educational processes and resources, enabling informed decisions about their child's education; (c) tailored PW–PBS initiatives that better meet the needs of children/families; and (d) the development of a group of informed and engaged parents, contributing to a positive school climate that emphasises collaboration.

What practices show the way forward?

Diary app

In a preschool in Portugal, an effective communication strategy with families was established using a diary app, resulting in communication efficacy and parental satisfaction. This app is used by parents and professionals as a two-way communication tool to share information about the child's behaviour and wellbeing, the activities the child participates in, share practices and strategies that can be replicated at home, as well as programmes and activities being developed at school, among others. The leadership team uses this tool as a basis for the involvement of parents in the implementation of PW–PBS (e.g., sharing desired behaviours, and activities implemented to teach specific socioemotional skills). Professionals need to guide and encourage parents to establish clear expectations and rules for



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positive behaviours at home. Consistency between ECEC setting and home practices helps children understand behavioural expectations across different environments.

Coffee with parents

The monthly activity "Coffee with Parents" was developed in one ECEC setting in Portugal, which helped the implementation of the PW–PBS approach. The leadership team of this ECEC centre asks parents about their preferred themes on early childhood education and care, which serve as a motif for the monthly gathering of staff/teachers and parents (sometimes with a guest which can be a specialist in a specific area). These gatherings focus on a specific theme that can be related to SEL, child health and behaviour, pedagogical practices/programmes being implemented at the school, among others. These moments help participants share relevant information, build a sense of belonging and community, empower families to provide better care, and inform pedagogical strategies and choices of professionals. Additionally, this activity helps the leadership/staff engage parents and align parental behaviour with PW–PBS practices. This is very useful to support parents in, for example, displaying positive social and emotional behaviours, encouraging open communication, developing problemsolving skills to handle challenging situations, focusing on constructive feedback to their children's behaviours, and in using positive language while avoiding using negative labels or punitive expressions when addressing behavioural issues.

Supporting evidence and resources

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Title: Collaborative Practices and Partnerships

Subtitle: The implementation of PW–PBS is based on the development of collaborative practices and partnerships, at multiple levels, among educational stakeholders

Key Points: For a successful and enduring Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) implementation, collaborative efforts involving stakeholders at all levels, from classrooms to the community, are crucial. An engaged, collaborative workforce forms the foundation of the PW–PBS approach. In ECEC settings, effective communication, collaborative atmosphere, and democratic leadership promote consistency in pedagogical strategies and practices. Engagement and consistency stem from shared visions and goals regarding the support of socioemotional development for both children and professionals (please see our PBS–ECEC Key Resources section). Therefore, all PW–PBS phases – assessment, training, and implementation – should involve all professionals and families.

Recognising the interconnectedness of children's socioemotional learning (SEL) with their overall development and learning, it is paramount for ECEC settings to proactively seek community partnerships and foster sustainable connections with families, academic experts, researchers, other specialists/therapists, and policymakers. ECEC practitioners and specialists may conduct detailed assessments to enhance professionals' and families' understanding of each child's strengths and needs to integrate tailored strategies into daily routines. Further, partnerships facilitate professional development opportunities for ECEC professionals. Long-term, multi-system collaborations at several ecological levels throughout children's educational pathways ensure efficient resource organisation, equity, consistency, and educational continuity.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"(...) no matter how demanding the programme and working conditions are, it is through communication and cooperation between educators that the PW–PBS programme can be implemented. In our preschool, the collaboration was so important that became the common vision for our preschool. "Together we become better", was the slogan (...). Good collaboration between educators helps each individual become a better professional and then this is passed on to the children." (S., Greece)

"If we don't have good leadership in earlier settings, then none of all these collaborative practices happen." (K., Ireland)

What can be done to make a difference?

Strategy: Foster a collaborative approach in ECEC settings

• Encourage open communication and collaboration among stakeholders. Professional preparation on teamwork, assertive communication, and problem-solving skills can facilitate cooperation. In addition, open channels ensure ongoing communication between professionals in ECEC settings.



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- Effective leadership practices involving regular and constructive information sharing, discussion of common philosophy and purpose, creation of shared goals and values, establishment of clear roles and expectations, and discussion of strategies and progress updates to ensure a consistent approach. Additionally, acknowledge successes, identify challenges collaboratively, and discuss appropriate strategies for effective interventions; then, evaluate practices and set new goals.
- *Promote collaborative problem-solving and the sharing of resources and expertise that results in a more cohesive and unified approach to behaviour support in ECEC settings and systems.*
- Allocate resources for joint professional development opportunities that focus on enhancing collaboration skills and understanding each other's roles and expertise. In addition, there are opportunities for professionals to be actively involved in training and receive guidance from experts in PW–PBS through a collaborative and reflexive approach to professional development.
- Include children's perspectives throughout PW-PBS intervention, promoting spaces and instruments that allow us to hear their voices, welcome their contributions and organise practices according to the strategies/activities that are most meaningful and valued by the children.

Strategy: Develop policies for ECEC settings that support collaborative practices and partnerships

Actions

- Produce policy documents (e.g., curricula, curriculum guidelines, other legislation) that explicitly recognise the importance of team collaboration and institutional partnerships in the implementation of positive behaviour support and SEL.
- Create mechanisms to promote collaboration among policymakers, researchers, administrators, professionals, and families. Additionally, encourage systematic discussions and exchange of perspectives and foster participation in decision-making processes to ensure alignment between policies, current research, and best practices.
- Foster, encourage, and acknowledge ECEC centres and professionals who demonstrate effective collaboration in addressing socioemotional needs, including awards, grants, or professional development opportunities.
- Use a data-driven approach (data sharing and analysis) that allows stakeholders to make informed decisions about strategies, interventions, and improvements in child development and behaviour management; standardised data collection tools and evaluation measures assess the effectiveness of collaborative interventions.
- Explore co-location of mental health services within or near ECEC centres, enhancing communication and collaboration, while also incentivising resource sharing and professional consultation to address challenging behaviours and complex socioemotional issues.
- Support working conditions that foster teamwork, staff wellbeing, and professional development opportunities.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. Aligned strategies among educational stakeholders lead to improved quality in ECEC settings; well-structured collaboration practices align with broader educational goals related to wellbeing and holistic development.
- 2. Collaboration among ECEC staff, mental health professionals, and other specialists creates a comprehensive and supportive approach to promote children's socioemotional development,



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which addresses the whole child, ensures early intervention when needed, and lays the foundation for wellbeing and future success in school and life.

- 3. Professionals benefit from increased commitment, improved wellbeing, and job satisfaction.
- 4. A democratic leadership style, promoting open participation and mutual support within the team, has the potential to strengthen teamwork, and the involvement of the entire team results in better outcomes regarding SEL and prevention of behaviour challenges.
- 5. A structured, collaborative training approach can encourage educators to adopt best practices in implementing PW–PBS, thus reducing the risk of misinterpretation or superficial implementation.
- 6. Collaboration and shared learning among educators can lead to a supportive professional community dedicated to successful SEL initiatives: defining common guidelines and implementing real-world experimentation of strategies/practices. The experience gained from a shared collaborative approach can serve as a model for adapting initiatives to other educational contexts or for addressing different aspects of child development.

What practices show the way forward?

Shared purpose

In a large ECEC setting in Portugal, the leadership team, guided by clear institutional goals, systematically involved all professionals from the beginning of PW–PBS implementation, regardless of their different roles, in identifying a shared purpose. This concerted effort was built on open communication. For example, the leadership team started the process by involving the staff in the definition of their guiding values and desired behaviours. They also adapted training materials to effectively include, engage, and empower all staff members during training sessions. Furthermore, they collectively identified the necessary pedagogical strategies for achieving their pedagogical goals and the individual contributions of each professional to their daily tasks and activities. Staff members also received training on how to document and discuss daily challenges with their colleagues and make decisions based on agreed-upon practices and strategies. This fostered a sense of belonging and a collective direction that facilitated the implementation of PW–PBS strategies and helped create a positive school culture. These efforts required an investment in time for team meetings and tasks, as well as in improving communication skills and strategies among staff members.

Co-consultation model

A promising practice for promoting collaboration between ECEC staff and mental health professionals is the Co-Consultation Model. This approach encourages regular communication and collaboration between the two groups, enabling them to share expertise and work together to effectively support children's socioemotional development. A co-consultation model includes: appointing a designated liaison within the ECEC centre; organising scheduled meetings between ECEC educators and mental health professionals; establishing specific goals and objectives for children's socioemotional development and creating personalised action plans; sharing information (i.e., observations, concerns, and strategies); collaboratively addressing challenging behaviours or socioemotional issues; offering joint professional development opportunities; involving parents in the collaborative process; collecting data on the effectiveness of strategies and interventions; emphasising an inclusive approach that considers the diverse needs of all children; and fostering a culture of mutual respect. By working together, these professionals can create a comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting children's socioemotional development, leading to improved outcomes for all children in ECEC centres.



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Supporting evidence and resources

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ID: STRATEGY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION 5



Title: Inclusive Education

Subtitle: Promote an inclusive approach based on multi-tiered systems of support at all levels (centre-level, local, national)

Key Points: Every school should address the diverse needs of all children with a positive approach, encompassing multiple developmental dimensions (e.g., cognitive, psychomotor, and socioemotional). This involves implementing a school-wide multi-tiered support system and shifting from a remedial to a preventive approach. Inclusive educational systems support all children regardless of abilities or backgrounds, promoting participation, fostering accessible learning environments, and providing the necessary resources for success. A multi-tiered support system promotes inclusive environments, organising supports equitably. This includes a universal level of support, addressing all children, a selective level of support to complement the previous, for a limited number of children, and an additional support level for children with significant and persistent difficulties requiring individualised intervention. This system can be legislated nationally, recommended by local policymakers, or implemented at the ECEC setting level.

Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) adopts a multi-tiered support system framework to promote children's socioemotional development, establish a positive culture, and create an inclusive environment. The pyramid model is a well-established example of PW–PBS in ECEC (please see our PBS–ECEC Key Resources). ECEC centres implementing PW–PBS establish assessment and data collection procedures focusing on children's behaviour and socioemotional competencies to sustain data-driven decisions. They also promote collaborative partnerships between staff, families, and mental health professionals to address children's developmental needs.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"Socioemotional learning is promoted when all children participate in the activities without exclusion, finding meaning and joy in participation. This is what we seek to achieve in our preschool" (S., Greece)

"The multi-tiered approach is very useful in guiding action" (L., Portugal)

"In our preschool we follow an inclusive approach in which the activities are tailored to each child's needs. Even in challenging cases, we have successfully integrated and involved all children to the best of their abilities" (A., Greece)

"I advocate for the integration of PBS into the broader educational system as a method for advancing positive behaviour and as a comprehensive approach" (M., Cyprus)

"I would highlight the coherence between this model [PW–PBS] and the current framework of inclusive education in Portugal, which facilitates its implementation" (C., Portugal)

What can be done to make a difference?



Strategy: Promote an inclusive approach, based on a multi-tiered system, at ECEC centres



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- Support ECEC centres in the organisation and implementation of a multi-tiered approach; the implementation depends on the ability to organise the available supports into a multi-tiered system, addressing several competencies and needs.
- Provide ongoing professional development and training to all professionals in the ECEC centre to understand the meaning of an inclusive approach and the practical processes and procedures to implement it, involving experts/practitioners as trainers.
- Favour a gradual implementation: start with small steps to allow a more manageable implementation of the multitiered support system. In this way, staff can avoid feeling overwhelmed and focus better on effectively integrating each tier. In addition, feedback can be incorporated into subsequent phases, leading to continuous improvements.
- Establish a collaborative approach involving ECEC teams, families, specialists, mental health services, community agencies, and decision makers in the design and implementation of a multi-tiered support system.

Actions

Strategy: Develop and implement inclusive policies based on a multi-tiered approach

Actions

- Ensure that policies are informed by research, best practices, and evidence-based strategies in early childhood education.
- Implement a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of inclusive policies and regularly update them to ensure that they remain effective.
- Provide funding to support the implementation of multitiered systems across children's educational trajectories.
- Ensure that ECEC centres and school systems adapt the multi-tiered support system to their unique environments, ensuring that they fit within their existing structures and processes; for example, ECEC settings should have the opportunity to prioritise aspects that align with their specific needs and circumstances.
- Understand that gradual, consistent, and in-depth implementation increases the likelihood of the multi-tiered system's sustainability within the educational institution or system.
- Involve school psychologists and other specialists working directly with ECEC teachers and other professionals towards equity.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. Children are the most benefitted through the creation of positive contexts, where high-quality educational practices are implemented and support is available to address their needs. The potential positive outcomes stem from addressing social, behavioural, and emotional disparities among children by ensuring that all of them, regardless of their background, receive appropriate support.
- 2. Creating a more positive school culture can lead to increased teacher satisfaction, improved children's wellbeing, a more cohesive school community, and a more inclusive society.
- 3. Multi-tiered support ensures that behavioural expectations are clear and consistent across the early years' settings, promoting a positive and predictable environment.
- 4. The whole ECEC centre benefits from a clear organisation of activities, tasks, and responsibilities in addressing developmental needs and challenging behaviours.



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- 5. The high-quality educational support provided to the universal tier tends to reduce the number of children requiring additional support.
- 6. The pyramid model, guiding teams' efforts and actions to address children's needs, allows for better organisation and management of available resources. The integration of services allows for a more comprehensive approach that benefits children, professionals, and families. There is high potential for improved learning outcomes and a more supportive educational environment.
- 7. The assessment and data-driven decision processes help monitor what is happening within ECEC centres and systems, their needs and difficulties, and their successes.

What practices show the way forward?

Inclusion involves the whole school

The leadership team from a ECEC setting organised all the support needed, using an inclusive multitiered systems approach, for a child with autism spectrum disorder attending one of its classrooms. The child participated in all classroom activities, in which she had the opportunity to learn new skills and interact with peers. These activities involved everyday activities such as play, storytelling, and painting, as well as those related specifically to socioemotional learning and the implementation of PW-PBS (e.g., training a new skill such as controlling the tone of voice and using sign language to convey ideas among children and adults). Because some PW–PBS practices include the use of visual information (pictures, gestures, drawings, signs, objects/toys), this also contributes to the child feeling secure and included in the daily life of the ECEC setting, a practice that benefits all children. In addition, a very careful preparation of the routines and transitions within the group of children was helpful in handling any anxiety or frustration that could arise. All professionals in the ECEC setting received training or were briefed on the best ways to include the child in the ECEC setting routines. Additionally, one adult constantly monitored the behaviour of the child and provided the cues needed to guide the child's participation in the activities. Everyone in the classroom (both teachers and children) already knew the signs that indicated when the child was feeling anxious or frustrated, and they had strategies to help her cope with her feelings in those moments (e.g., play with her favourite toy). The child received additional support from specialised professionals, which also guided the intervention of teachers and auxiliary staff in the ECEC setting, as well as parents at home. The flow of information between the family and school was very effective and was based on trust. These systems put in place were managed by the pedagogical director, who made sure that they complemented each other and that the whole school was working for the inclusive education of the child, as well as her peers.

Policies towards inclusion

The construction of an inclusive educational system implies the organisation of equitable supports. Several countries have been applying, nationally or regionally, the general principles of the multi-tiered systems of support (e.g., United States of America, Canada, Finland, and others). In 2018, the Portuguese government mandated the implementation of multi-tiered systems of supports in all public schools. A formal mandate to implement such practices in all schools with adequate support and funding favours the construction of educational systems that effectively answer the needs of all children. In the absence of a formal mandate to incorporate such multi-tiered systems, educational centres should consider the organisation of the available supports in a multi-tiered format. In the case of ECEC settings, the PW–PBS approach is of particular importance, due to the centrality of the Pyramid Model and equity in the promotion of children's socioemotional development.





Supporting evidence and resources



Key Resources

Needs assessment in four countries

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Title: Leadership: a catalyst for change

Subtitle: Leadership teams play a central role in coordinating, guiding and supporting the ECEC setting teams throughout all phases of the PW–PBS implementation

Key Points: The implementation of Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) is led by a leadership team, comprising various professionals, in each ECEC centre. This team organises, integrates, and coordinates the implementation of effective strategies and practices. Well-prepared, highly engaged, and supportive leadership promotes common ground at the level of vision (beliefs and values), theoretical underpinnings, and pedagogical practices. Leadership teams are also responsible for facilitating communication and providing ongoing professional development and resources to professionals, guaranteeing spaces for reflecting and debating the progress and challenges encountered. Ultimately, knowledgeable and committed leadership promotes professionals' autonomy and participation, which accounts for the sustainability of outputs for both professionals and children (please see our <u>PBS–ECEC Key Resources</u> section). The preparation and support for leadership in ECEC settings are central to providing the conditions for the successful implementation of PW–PBS. The preparation of leaders is intended to help sustain a highly informed and intentional exercise of pedagogical leadership focused on promoting the learning and well-being of children and professionals.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"It is essential to teach and train in the area of leadership and provide incentives" (C., Portugal).

"Everyone on the leadership team has to believe that it will work. They must provide the impetus for continuity" (M., Portugal).

What can be done to make a difference?

Strategy: Create a leadership team to guide the successful implementation and sustainability of PW-PBS

Actions

- Ensure that the leadership team is empowered to guide and support professionals and collaboratively develop policies, strategies, and procedures that facilitate the integration of PW– PBS into daily practice. Invest in specialised high-quality training in leadership skills (e.g., through professional associations or training centres located in school systems).
- Ensure that leaders have the resources needed to facilitate communication among team members, guaranteeing spaces for debating the progress, challenges, and tensions encountered by professionals; the promotion of processes of critical reflection focused on vision, theory, and practices is essential for successful PW-PBS implementation.
- Build a shared commitment among stakeholders, including administrators, professionals, and families, to provide support to emerging leaders and allocate dedicated time for leadership activities. This means acknowledging leadership as a



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driving force of change and transformation and creating working conditions for leaders to fully develop their pedagogical role and functions

- Create adequate conditions and incentives for a motivated and highly engaged leadership team. Their role involves guaranteeing the training of all professionals, setting goals, managing resources, overcoming barriers, conducting intersectoral work, and making PW–PBS implementation sustainable. Additionally, involve younger professionals in leadership roles to help build crucial skills early in their careers.
- Ensure the availability of quality assessment tools aligned with the PW–PBS framework to sustain data-driven decisions by leadership. (Visit <u>PBS-ECEC e-Learning course</u> (Module 5) to learn more)
- Decrease the burden of the bureaucratic role and invest in the pedagogical role; leaders should be mobilisers of change and creators of new solutions to the challenges faced by ECEC teams.
- The leadership team effectively guides professionals and stakeholders throughout PW-PBS implementation and assessment
- Support trusting, non-judgmental, and collaborative ethos among all professionals.
- Guarantee the participation of all team members, irrespective of their roles.
- Provide ongoing professional development, training, and resources to professionals, fostering a shared understanding of PW–PBS principles, strategies, and practices.
- Allow flexibility in determining the composition of leadership teams (particularly in small-scale ECEC centres) and be open to alternative, smaller leadership structures.
- Develop strategies such as mentorship programmes, targeted professional development opportunities, and collaborative decision-making processes that can further promote the cultivation of leadership skills within ECEC settings.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. Leadership teams serve as an important bridge between stakeholders, ensuring that everyone involved in the ECEC community is aligned in nurturing socioemotional growth and fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Leaders influence pedagogical practices and focus on children's positive outcomes concerning socioemotional learning and the prevention of challenging behaviours.
- 2. Effective leadership helps create an environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically, implying the purposive development of a shared vision among key stakeholders in the implementation of PW–PBS.
- 3. Leaders create a positive organisational climate, support and motivate all professionals, and cocreate collaborative mechanisms to involve families and the community.
- 4. Leaders provide context-specific guidance and continuous evaluation of PW–PBS implementation. This promotes realistic and feasible implementation, leading to increased programme effectiveness and positive behavioural outcomes for children.
- 5. Effective leaders allow the sharing of resources, best practices, and support, ultimately leading to a more sustainable implementation of PW–PBS programmes.

What practices show the way forward?

Data-based leadership (Visit Impact Assessment Study and Practice Recommendations Report to learn more)



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As a result of PBS-ECEC training and the implementation of the PW-PBS component

related to data-driven decision-making, the leadership team in a participating ECEC **PBS-ECEC** setting in Portugal developed a shared tool for the staff to report incidents. This tool was deemed necessary because professionals usually commented on the incidents but rarely recorded them. This instrument comprises elements such as date/hour, description of incident, location, involved parties, professional responsible for handling the situation, and other observations. All professionals could use this tool to report everyday events that were problematic, challenging, or somewhat disruptive to their normal routine. Looking at the data provided by this new tool, the leadership discussed with the professionals the patterns that emerged and became clear: most of the difficulties experienced and the problems reported were in the transition periods. The clarity provided by the leadership team. Later, the leadership team assessed the effectiveness of the strategies and made the necessary adjustments in collaboration with the whole team to achieve the goals and reduce the incidence of challenging behaviours occurring during the transition periods.

Mitigating barriers

In Ireland, during PBS–ECEC implementation, leadership teams were made up of a small number of staff members. In some instances, only one staff member (usually the ECEC setting owner or manager), became the "leadership team" on behalf of the ECEC setting. While staff shortages in ECEC in Ireland are an issue, some ECEC setting settings operate on a very small scale, so, to adapt accordingly, some ECEC settings chose smaller leadership teams.

Supporting evidence and resources

Key Resources

Needs assessment in four countries

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Barros, S., Araújo, S., Santos, M., & Sousa, M. (2023). *PBS–ECEC transnational consolidated report: Research findings for developing the guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood education and care*. <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/PBS–</u> <u>ECEC_NeedsAssessment_Consolidated_report_EN.pdf</u>

A Guide for using PW-PBS in ECEC

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, S., Santos, M., Sousa, M., & Barros, S. (2023). *PBS–ECEC guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood and care in European countries*. <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/outputs/PBS–ECEC_Guide_EN.pdf</u>

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Impact assessment study & recommendations

Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Araújo, A., Santos, M., Oliveira, V., Barros, S., Otero-Mayer, A., Michaelidou, V., Agathokleous, A., Krousorati, K., & Grammatikopoulos, V. (2023). *Report of the PBS–ECEC impact assessment study and practice recommendations. Result 3: Transnational Report.* <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/PBS–ECEC_R3_Consolidated-Report-Final.pdf</u>





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ID: STRATEGY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION 7



Title: Practices, Cultures, and Policies Aligned with SEL

Subtitle: The promotion of children's SEL should be clearly emphasised in ECEC national curricula and guidelines, as well as ECEC centres' educational projects

Key Points: The promotion of children's socioemotional learning (SEL) should be clearly emphasised in ECEC national curricula and guidelines, in line with European policies and frameworks that stress the core relevance of key personal, social, and emotional competencies. This entails defining national policy frameworks that clearly acknowledge a holistic understanding of children's learning and development, and an integrated approach to professional action in ECEC settings. Additionally, the successful implementation of Programme–Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW–PBS) encompasses the definition of a common philosophy that should be clearly stated in the educational projects of ECEC institutions. Explicit written guidelines create a common vision and coherence throughout all phases and processes of the implementation of PW–PBS in ECEC centres and school systems (please see our PBS–ECEC Key Resources, below). Policy recommendations at the national, local, and central levels guide these phases and processes and facilitate their transformation into consistent and effective daily practices.

Voices of professionals and educational stakeholders from PBS-ECEC

"Guidelines and pedagogical practices should be created including how they would be taught in a wider range of academic subjects." (M., Cyprus)

"I think we need to remind ourselves as early years educators that we are in the social and emotional business. (...) Let's move away from trying to prepare them for school, you know, with the ABCs, and try to prepare them emotionally and socially." (P., Ireland)

"Promoting socioemotional learning requires time, infrastructure, resources and personnel." (A., Greece)

What can be done to make a difference?

Strategy: Develop and implement national and regional strategies for the promotion of SEL

- Actions
- Incorporate comprehensive guidelines in national or regional policies that underscore the significance of fostering socioemotional development and self-regulation skills in the early years. Additionally, curriculum frameworks and guidelines are reviewed and updated to emphasise comprehensive orientations on pedagogical practices focused on SEL and behavioural management, and to reflect the evolving needs and priorities of ECEC.
- Ensure that regulations for the initial and continuous training of professionals focus on SEL and the prevention of challenging behaviours using an applied approach.
- Contribute to changing mindsets in the professional development system by enhancing trainers' training to better support professionals' practices towards the promotion of positive behaviours. Professionals must feel confident in implementing evidence-based strategies and practices.
- Sustain the integration of SEL across a broad range of academic areas and support long-term commitment from educational institutions and policymakers.







 Encourage collaboration among ECEC settings, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organisations to share best practices related to PW–PBS; start pilot programmes in selected ECEC settings to test the effectiveness of PW–PBS.

Strategy: Develop and implement local ECEC centres/systems strategies for the promotion of SEL Actions

- Train and encourage ECEC professionals to create supportive and nurturing environments that value children's socioemotional development, following improvements in national curriculum guidelines.
- Create written guidelines through a participatory approach for each ECEC centre that expresses its core values, encouraging professionals' reflexive processes in support of a growing coherence between the written vision and daily pedagogical practices.
- Allocate time and resources for professionals to collaboratively design and implement learning activities that ensure that SEL is integrated into daily routines and practices.
- Engage in regular assessment and evaluation of the impact of practices on children's outcomes.
- Contribute to changing the mindset from a focus on problem behaviours to a shift towards the promotion of socioemotional competence.
- Define measurable objectives in relation to the development of socioemotional skills what children are expected to learn and develop and evaluate the results of the strategies implemented. For example, facilitate studies using longitudinal data collection methods.
- Explore the possibility of integrating PW-PBS into local and/or national bullying and school violence prevention programmes, highlighting the programme's valuable short-, medium- and long-term contributions to emotional skills, social relationships and overall wellbeing in the school community.

What are the expected benefits and impact?

- 1. The inclusion of SEL in national curricula and guidelines encourages more coordinated action at this level, as well as having the potential to raise awareness of its importance in society.
- 2. Implementing SEL in ECEC helps establish a foundation for positive behaviours; this emphasis can lead to improved interpersonal relationships and emotional wellbeing among children and staff, contributing to a more positive and inclusive social and pedagogical environment.
- 3. SEL prepares children with essential life skills beyond the classroom, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication skills.
- 4. Children with a strong foundation in SEL are better prepared for future challenges and tend to have better mental health and overall wellbeing in adulthood.
- 5. The adoption of guidelines can extend beyond ECEC settings and to other educational levels, promoting a consistent approach to SEL throughout children's academic journeys.

What practices show the way forward?

Curricula that promote SEL

In 2014, the Greek Ministry of Education's curriculum for kindergarten introduced a section on personal and social development as a separate learning area of the programme, emphasising the development of children's social competencies. Some of the basic



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principles of the Greek national curriculum regarding socioemotional development in

ECEC settings include conflict resolution, following rules, autonomy, and self-regulation. **PBS-ECEC** In February 2023, the newly developed kindergarten curriculum was introduced in the Greek educational system. In line with the previous curriculum, the promotion of children's socioemotional development remains at the core of the new curriculum. However, the novelty lies in the explicit reference to the need to promote positive behaviours in ECEC settings, a concept that was previously implied, but not explicitly stated. For instance, one of the foundational principles on which the curriculum is grounded is that the child learns to develop as he/she encounters the environment, objects, and everyday situations by interacting with significant others. Positive and supportive relationships are the key elements of this process, as the social nature of learning is recognised. This revised curriculum reflects a more explicit and intentional focus on fostering positive behaviours and socioemotional development, thereby reinforcing the importance of nurturing supportive learning environments for young children. This also demonstrates a close alignment with the objectives set forth by the PBS-ECEC project, which aims to support ECEC professionals in promoting socioemotional development and positive behaviours in ECEC settings.

Promoting Positive Behaviour in ECEC

With the support of EU Funds, Cyprus has started implementing targeted and innovative programmes in education, through which multilevel support is provided to students and their families. In Cyprus, the implementation of the PW–PBS system is fairly new. However, during the last decade, there have been several interventions led by various research groups to support ECEC setting and primary schools to implement PW–PBS.

Supporting evidence and resources

Key Resources

Needs assessment in four countries

Krousorati, K., Grammatikopoulos, V., Agathokleous, A., Michaelidou, V., Szproch, A., O'Brien, M., Barros, S., Araújo, S., Santos, M., & Sousa, M. (2023). *PBS–ECEC transnational consolidated report: Research findings for developing the guide on Positive Behaviour Support in early childhood education and care.* <u>https://PBS–ECEC.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/PBS–</u> <u>ECEC NeedsAssessment Consolidated report EN.pdf</u>

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Implementing Positive Behaviour Support in Early Childhood Education and Care



