

LUXEMBOURG

Key contextual data

Compiled by

**Inge Schreyer, Pamela Oberhuemer,
and Claudine Kirsch**

Citation suggestion:

Schreyer, I., P. Oberhuemer, and C. Kirsch. 2024. "Luxembourg – Key contextual data". In *Early childhood workforce profiles across Europe. 33 country reports with key contextual data*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. Munich: State Institute for Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy. www.seepro.eu/English/Country-Reports.htm

Funded by:



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth



State Institute for Early Childhood
Research and Media Literacy



Contents

- Early childhood education and care (ECEC)3**
 - Historical milestones in ECEC in Luxembourg3
 - ECEC system type and auspices.....4
 - General objectives and legislative framework4
 - ECEC entitlement and compulsory attendance5
 - Main types of provision6
 - Provider structures7
 - Participation rates in regulated ECEC settings8
 - Financing and costs for parents10
 - Staff to child ratios and group size11
 - Curricular frameworks12
 - Digital education.....13
 - Monitoring – evaluation13
 - Inclusion agenda15
 - Children with special educational needs and disabilities*15
 - Children with a background of migration*.....16
 - Parental leave arrangements17
 - Current challenges for the ECEC system in Luxembourg (**Claudine Kirsch**)17

- Demographic data21**
 - Total population21
 - Total fertility rate.....21
 - Children under age 621
 - Single households with children under age 622
 - Employment rates of parents with children under 6 years of age22
 - Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion24

- References24**



Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Please note:

In alignment with country-specific terminology, this report refers to non-formal education settings for children under 4 in general as **ECEC services** (*services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants*). Specific setting types are described where relevant. For formal education settings the terms used are **early education group** (*éducation précoce*, 3 to under 4 years) and **pre-primary class** (*éducation préscolaire*, 4 to under 6 years)¹.

Historical milestones in ECEC in Luxembourg

Around 1850	First custodial institutions (<i>écoles gardiennes</i>) established through caritative foundations and commercial enterprises
Approx. 1860	First public kindergartens established
1963	First legislation on early childhood education (<i>jardins d'enfants</i> , later; <i>éducation préscolaire</i>), specifying the role of the communes
1976	Compulsory preschool enrolment (<i>éducation préscolaire</i>) for 5 year-olds
Early 1980s	First state subsidised centre-based childcare settings
1992	Compulsory preschool enrolment for 4 year-olds
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction of non-compulsory early education groups (<i>éducation précoce</i>) – ASFT Act comes into force, regulating the relationship between the state and private providers of educational and therapeutic services, and also the organisational and funding framework for childcare provision.
2005	The first <i>maisons relais pour enfants</i> (MREs) – children's centres – are established.
2007	Home-based childcare is regulated by law.
2008	Youth Act (<i>loi sur la jeunesse</i>) comes into force.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New Education Act and restructuring of the primary schooling system into cycles: <i>éducation préscolaire</i> is included in the 1st cycle. – Entitlement for 3 year-olds to a place in <i>éducation précoce</i> – The communes are required to provide outside-school-hours care (<i>encadrement périscolaire</i>) for school children. – Introduction of childcare service vouchers (<i>chèques-service accueil – CSA</i>)
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Ministry of Education, Children and Youth takes over responsibility from the Ministry of Family Affairs for all provision outside the school system as well as for formal education settings. – The SEA Regulation (implementation decree, ASFT Act 1988, amended 2012) introduces common requirements for all centre-based and home-based settings for children in the non-formal education sector (<i>services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants</i>). The Regulation specifies the criteria for the contractual agreements (<i>agrément</i>) – staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, maximum capacity, size, etc. – Framework plan for non-formal education for children and young people comes into force.

¹ **Editors' note:** International data sources use varying ways of presenting the age range of children enrolled in ECEC settings. We have chosen the following age-inclusive format for the SEEPRO3 reports: **0–2** years for children **up to** 3 years of age and **3–5** years for 3, 4 and 5 year-olds in countries with a primary school entry age of 6 years. In the case of Luxembourg, the formats may vary, depending on the kind of setting (non-formal or formal) in focus.



2016	Amendments to the Youth Act, regulating among other things quality assurance in all non-formal education settings
2017	Renewed amendment of the Youth Act and introduction of multilingual early education (<i>éducation plurilingue</i>) for 1 to 4 year-old children in SEA facilities
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Subsidising childcare costs through vouchers is regulated by law. – Introduction of <i>mini-crèches</i> as a new form of childcare

Sources: Honig 2015; Honig und Bock 2018; University of Luxembourg 2018, 20; Eurydice 2023, 3.1

ECEC system type and auspices²

Until the end of 2013, early childhood education and care in Luxembourg was organised on a bi-sectoral basis, with separate ministerial responsibilities for ECEC and out-of-school services (Ministry of Family Affairs) and pre-primary education (Ministry of Education). Since 2013, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse, MENJE*) has overall responsibility for all forms of provision for children up to primary school.

ECEC services are now formally understood as settings with an educational mandate. Accordingly, a distinction is made between a non-formal and a formal education sector.

The **non-formal sector** includes (1) publicly subsidised, non-profit education and care services as well as private-commercial settings for children under 4 years of age; (2) out-of-school forms of provision for 4 to 12 year-olds; and (3) home-based childcare services.

The **formal sector** in this report refers to the compulsory classes for 4 and 5-year olds in primary schools (*éducation préscolaire*) as well as the non-compulsory school classes for 3 year-olds (*éducation précoce*).

The state has implementation responsibility for the formal sector and guarantee responsibility for the non-formal sector; it exercises this responsibility by issuing operating licences (*agrément*s) and through service agreements (*convention*s) with private providers. The Ministry of Education is responsible for legislation in the field of education, the provision of educational opportunities in the formal and non-formal sector, as well as for curricula and personnel. Municipalities must ensure the necessary infrastructure and equipment. Management is the responsibility of 15 regional directorates of the Ministry of Education and the local school committees. In addition, each institution has a school committee elected for five years, which makes proposals regarding organisation and financial budgets (University of Luxembourg 2018).

The divide between the non-formal/formal and the private/public education sectors means that Luxembourg can be described as a part-integrated ECEC system: while governance has been unified, sectors and setting types remain split.

General objectives and legislative framework

The system of early childhood education and care in Luxembourg is oriented towards family and social policy goals. These include supporting parents' participation in the labour market, gender equality and work-life balance. The provision of flexible, high-quality and affordable childcare services is given high priority, e.g. through benefits such as free childcare service vouchers or low fees for low-income families.

² The Eurydice country report on ECEC in Luxembourg provided orientation for legal and regulatory aspects. All other sources are clearly indicated within the text and in the references section.

Another general objective is the promotion of children's development according to each child's potential. The Coalition Agreement of 2018–2023 sets out a holistic approach to the education of children and young people, providing equal access to educational opportunities for all, taking into account growing diversity and putting the child at the centre.

With regard to its educational policy objectives, the Luxembourg government considers the non-formal and the formal ECEC sectors as complementary. Overarching goals or principles in the **non-formal sector** are: To perceive children as competent persons, each with an individual biography, who learn in interaction with and from others and are to be seen as members of society with their own rights.

The ASFT Act of 1998 (*Loi du 8 septembre 1998 réglant les relations entre l'Etat et les organismes oeuvrant dans les domaines social, familial et thérapeutique*, modified on 28 July 2011) regulates the relationship between the state and non-state providers. An implementing regulation (2013) of the ASFT Act, the so-called SEA regulation (*services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants*, SEA), sets out the framework for the non-formal sector.

The modifications of the Youth Act 2016/17 and the corresponding law for home-based child-care services set out pedagogical measures as well as a national framework plan for the non-formal sector (University of Luxembourg 2018, 19).

In the **formal sector**, the 2009 Education Act (*Loi du 06.02.2009 portant organisation de l'enseignement fondamental with modifications*) restructured the Luxembourg school system. Since then, the 9-year basic/primary school (*enseignement fondamental*) has been organised in four cycles. The first cycle includes *éducation précoce* (for 3 year-olds) and *éducation préscolaire* (for 4 and 5 year-olds). The Education Act refers exclusively to formal education. At the same time, it contains a mandate for the municipalities to provide out-of-school services for children of school age (*encadrement périscolaire*). In order to further promote cooperation between schools and out-of-school education and care services, since 2012 every municipality has had to draw up a so-called out-of-school care plan (*Plan d'encadrement périscolaire*, PEP).

ECEC entitlement and compulsory attendance

For under 3 year-olds, there is no legal entitlement to a place in an ECEC setting in the **non-formal sector**. For children between 3 and 4 years of age, attendance is voluntary; however, if enrolled, regular attendance is expected. All municipalities must ensure that children in their catchment area are offered a place.

Legal rights or obligations exist only in the **formal sector**. Since 2009, children between 3 and 4 years of age have been entitled to a free place in the first cycle of the primary sector for 36 weeks a year (*éducation précoce*). Compulsory education in pre-primary classes (*éducation préscolaire*) begins when a child has turned 4 by 1st September and is compulsory for 26 hours per week (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 48, 67).

After two years of *éducation préscolaire*, mainstream schooling begins at age 6 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 182).

Main types of provision

Non-formal education and care sector

The non-formal sector includes various types of **ECEC services** and after-school services. These fall under the SEA regulations (*Services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants*) and follow its provisions. They include *maisons relais*, *crèches*, and *foyers scolaires* (University of Luxembourg 2018, 19). ECEC settings are required to have an operating licence (*agrément*) under the ASFT law. Some (the majority of services for 4 to 12 year-olds) conclude a service agreement (*convention*) with the state. However, these service agreements are not obligatory. It is also possible that facilities are run only on the basis of an operating licence.

Children's houses: The *maisons relais pour enfants* for 4 to 12 year-olds, sometimes also for under 3 year-olds, were introduced in 2005 as a link between family, school and community and offer services for children during non-school hours and over lunch. The predecessors of the *maisons relais* are the *foyers de jour pour enfants*, which offer school children lunch and homework supervision. However, the range of services offered by the *maisons relais* is much broader; they are also aimed at children who are not yet of school age. Accordingly, their pedagogical goals are very broad in the sense of non-formal education, linking socio-pedagogical activities and the promotion of education.

Nurseries (*crèches*) usually cater for children up to 4 years of age.

Mini-crèches became legal in 2018 and came into force as a new childcare model from January 2019 (MENJE 2023b, 19). In these *mini-crèches*, children up to 12 years of age are catered for in a small setting by two social pedagogy professionals. They are mainly offered in less populated areas and have very flexible opening hours adapted to the needs of parents. The facilities must be accredited and offer multilingual education for 1 to 4 year-olds; they are therefore eligible for the state-funded CSA voucher scheme (see below), which provides 20 hours of free childcare. This was a significant reason for the doubling of available places in the non-formal sector in the last ten years (SNJ 2020).

ECEC services for under 4 year-olds are required to be open for at least 46 weeks a year; the exact opening hours are determined by the provider of the facilities (between 5:00 and 23:00). In addition, under 3 year-olds can also be cared for by self-employed **home-based childcare workers** (*assistance parentale*) in their homes.

From the age of 3, children can either remain in the existing facilities or attend an optional year in primary school (*éducation précoce*, ISCED 02).

Formal education sector

The voluntary **early education groups** for 3 to 4 year-olds (*éducation précoce*) and the compulsory **pre-primary classes** for 4 and 5 year-olds are part of the first cycle in the school system. They are open 36 weeks a year, each with 26 hours of educational activities per week. They are usually open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 to 12:00 and from 14:00 to 16:00, Tuesday and Thursday mornings only. They are closed during school holidays. During this time, the extracurricular SEA settings provide non-formal education services. In the first year of the 1st cycle, children spend a minimum of three and a maximum of eight half days in the institution. The two pre-primary years for 4 and 5 year-olds are organised according to the primary school timetables.

For the 1st cycle, there are also alternative types of provision such as *Eis Schoul* or the *École Jean Jaurès* with a focus on inclusion, or all-day schools. For 4 and 5 year-olds there is also the option of attending an international school with different languages of instruction or private-commercial schools.

On 1 September 2023, there were 165 public institutions offering 1st cycle education, as well as ten private and two international settings (Men.lu 2023).

Provider structures

Non-formal education and care sector

Types of settings that belong to the non-formal sector can be operated either by municipalities or by private non-profit or private for-profit providers.

According to the ASFT Act (1998, modified 2011), all providers need an operating licence (*agrément*) from the state. Non-profit providers that conclude a service agreement (*convention*) with the state receive public funding (OECD 2022a). Among the contracted providers, many are non-profit, but the majority are for-profit organisations. The providers also have their own admission criteria. For example, public *crèches* often give priority to children under 3 years of age living in the respective municipality. For children over 3 years of age, the municipalities are obliged to provide a place. The providers are bound by the conditions laid down in the ministerial accreditation, which includes, for example, the staffing ratio.

Since the introduction of service vouchers for parents in 2009 (*chèques-service accueil*, see also section *Financing*), the supply of private-commercial providers in the non-formal education sector has increased considerably. This development is a significant structural change that was not intended by political measures, but was accepted. Almost two-thirds of places for under 4 year-olds are provided by these commercial providers.

Table 1 shows the distribution of ECEC settings according to whether they have concluded a (non-mandatory) service agreement with the state or not. In centres with an agreement to provide *éducation plurilingue*, parents are eligible to receive 20 hours of free education for their child. The prerequisite is that these centres use plurilingual education in the fields of language education, in cooperation with parents and in their networks. Furthermore, they are required to employ a pedagogical coordinator (*réfèrent pédagogique*, with 30 hours of training). All staff are obliged to attend eight hours of CPD within a period of two years and one member of staff must have C1 level³ in Luxembourgish, another the C1 level in French. If these conditions are met, the centres may employ 10% more staff than is the case in regular settings. The families are eligible to use the CSA vouchers (see *Financing and costs for parents*) in these settings.

There is a trend towards very young children being more likely to attend ECEC settings run by commercial providers, and older children being more likely to attend non-profit facilities. Overall, the number of available places has increased considerably between 2009 and 2019: Places in contracted facilities have more than doubled, and in non-contracted facilities they have even increased fivefold (OECD 2022a). Drawing on *Table 1*, 92.4% of the settings for children over 4 years of age have a contractual agreement with the state while this applies only to 27.1% of settings for under 4 year-olds.

³ Language proficiency level according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*

Table 1

Luxembourg: Number of places in non-formal ECEC settings with/without a service agreement with the state, 31.12.2022

	Number of available places for under 4 year-olds	Number of available places for over 4 year-olds (Children in primary education up to age 11/12)	Total number of places	Number of ECEC settings with an operational licence
ECEC settings with a contractual agreement with the state <i>Services d'éducation et d'accueil conventionnés</i> (Mostly private non-profit)	4,994	40,724	45,718	355
ECEC settings without a contractual agreement with the state <i>Services d'éducation et d'accueil commerciaux</i> (Mostly private for-profit)	13,392	3,368	16,760	491
Total	18,386	44,092	62,478	846

Source: MENJE 2023b, 18

In addition, there were 1,924 places provided by 395 home-based child carers in 2022 and 22 places in *mini-crèches*. Of the 2,133 children cared for, 601 were under 3 years of age (MENJE 2023b, 18f).

Formal education sector

Formal education institutions for 3 to 6 year-olds in the first cycle of primary education are almost exclusively state-run as part of the school system. Private schools are the exception in Luxembourg. Among them, there are private schools that follow the national curriculum, private schools that apply their own curriculum, and international schools.

In 2021/22, 4,587 3 year-old children attended early education (*précoce*) institutions and 203 private and international settings. 12,699 four and five year-old children were enrolled in public pre-primary schools and 1,400 in private and international settings. Approximately 10.3% of children aged 3–6 years are in private ECEC schools (MENJE 2023a, 10).

Participation rates in regulated ECEC settings

Non-formal education and care sector

Most places in non-formal education are to be found in conventional state education and care services for young children and for school children while places in *mini-crèches* and in home-based provision are relatively rare (see *Table 2*).

Table 2

Luxembourg: Number of places in non-formal ECEC settings by contract type, 2022

Settings (age range)	Number of places
<i>Mini-crèche</i> (0–12 years)	22

Settings (age range)	Number of places
Home-based providers (<i>Parental assistants</i>) (0–12 years)	1,924
Services with a contractual agreement	45,718
Commercial ECEC services	16,760
Total	64,424

Source: MENJE 2023b, 18

While in 2005 only just under a quarter of under 3 year-olds were enrolled in institutions, by 2022 this figure had risen to over a half. The proportion significantly increased for the over 3 year-olds: from 59% in 2005 to 91.4% in 2022 (see *Table 3*).

Table 3

Luxembourg: Enrolment rates in ECEC centre-based settings according to age and duration of attendance, 2005-2022

Year	Weekly hours of attendance	Under 3 year-olds, in %	3 years to minimum compulsory school age, in %
2005	1 to 29 hours	14	48
	Over 30 hours	8	11
	No enrolment in ECEC	78	41
2010	1 to 29 hours	1	42
	Over 30 hours	8	66
	No enrolment in ECEC	91	21
2015	1 to 29 hours	16.9	27.0
	Over 30 hours	34.9	54.9
	No enrolment in ECEC	48.1	18.1
2022	1 to 29 hours	18.2	26.8
	Over 30 hours	36.5	64.6
	No enrolment in ECEC	45.3	8.6

Source: Eurostat 2023b, Slight deviations from 100% due to rounding

On average, under 3 year-olds spend approximately 32 hours in a centre-based setting, over 3 year-olds 35 hours. The latest report of the Ministry of Education indicated that children below 1 year of age spent on average 28 hours a week in a *crèche*. By contrast, they were enrolled for 30 hours in 2017 and 33 hours in 2012. The Ministry explains this drop through the introduction of parental leave in 2016, as a result of which children are now older when they first enrol in a *crèche*. Children under 4 are found to spend less than 30 hours a week in an ECEC service (MENJE 2023c). Finally, between 2015 and 2022, 52% and 59% of children aged 4–12 attended a *Maison Relais* 15 hours weekly (MENJE 2023c, 3-5). The number of hours has not increased significantly although the *Maison Relais* have been free of charge since September 2022 (MENJE 2023c, 6).

Formal education sector

Broken down by age, 2.6% of 2 year-olds were enrolled in a centre-based setting in the formal education sector in 2021, over two-thirds of 3 year-olds, and almost all 4 and 5 year-olds (see *Table 4*).

Table 4

Luxembourg: Number and enrolment rates of children in centre-based ECEC settings, by age, 2021

Age	Number of children in ISCED-02 settings	Enrolment rates in ISCED-02 settings, in %
Under 2 years	n.d.	
2 year-olds	176	2.6
3 year-olds	4,593	67.9
4 year-olds	6,700	99.6
5 year-olds	6,364	93.8
6 year-olds	406	5.8

Source: Eurostat 2023f, k

Table 5 shows the development of enrolment figures in **formal education institutions** (cycle 1, 3 to 6 year-olds). Over the last ten years, the proportion of 3-year-olds attending a non-compulsory early education group (*éducation précoce*) increased slightly. In 2017, over 87% of 3 year-olds were enrolled in an early education group (OECD 2022a). Due to compulsory education, it can be assumed that 100% of the 4 and 5 year-olds attended an early education group or pre-primary class respectively.

Table 5

Luxembourg: Number of enrolments and enrolment rates in formal ECEC settings

School year	Cycle 1			
	<i>Éducation précoce</i> Early education groups for 3 year-olds		<i>Éducation préscolaire</i> Pre-primary groups/primary school classes for 4 to 6 year-olds	
	Number	Share of 3 year-olds in %	Number	Share of 4 to 6 year-olds in %
2010/2011	3,961	67.8	10,195	100 (= statutory schooling)
2015/2016	4,183	64.5	11,027	100 (= statutory schooling)
2021/2022	4,587	67.4	12,699	100 (= statutory schooling)

Source: MENJE 2023b, 127

Drawing on survey data completed by parents on their first graders' ECEC enrolment between 2009 and 2019, a LUCET report of the University and the MENJE found that 53% of the children had attended early education (formal education) in addition to a *crèche* (non-formal education), 29% had only attended *crèche*, and 17% had only attended early education. Only 0.6% had attended no institution (Hornung et al. 2023, 33).

Financing and costs for parents

A total of 0.94% of the gross domestic product was spent on the early education sector in 2019 (OECD 2023).

Since their introduction in 2009, CSA vouchers (*chèques-service accueil*) entitle parents to three hours of free childcare, music or sport per week, regardless of their income. This contributed significantly to lowering parents' childcare costs and increasing demand. Since 2016, this entitlement has also applied to cross-border commuters and to institutions abroad if they meet the same quality standards as in Luxembourg. In addition, the free childcare hours were increased to 20 hours for 1- to 4-year-old children. The vouchers are valid for institutions that are recognised by the Ministry of Education as CSA service providers and are valid until the end of primary

school. These services are also used to supplement early education attendance for 3 to 4 year-olds. More than 60 hours per week per child are not subsidised and the state subsidy is a maximum of €6 per hour, plus a maximum of €4.50 per meal.

Through the 2018 amended law on *mini-crèches*, the state also subsidises childcare costs for children up to 12 years of age through the CSA vouchers. In addition to the state subsidy, *mini-crèches* receive an additional €0.71 per child per hour for participating in multilingual education sessions.

In 2022, a total of 55,593 children up to 12 years of age participated in the CSA model, with an additional 3,301 from border areas (MENJE 2023b, 20).

In ECEC settings in the **non-formal sector**, some types of facilities are subsidised by the state up to 75%, others up to 100% of the operating costs. The differences depend on various factors, including who paid for the buildings (state or municipality). Differences are covered by the municipality or the respective provider.

Private ECEC settings are financed through the CSA vouchers only; all other costs have to be covered by the setting providers. For low-income parents, costs for additional care are reduced. Since the introduction of childcare vouchers, take-up has increased considerably, especially in non-formal facilities without a contract with the state. Nevertheless, especially in these facilities the costs can be very high, as the fees are not regulated.

From 2022, out-of-school hours spent in non-formal facilities have been free of charge for parents between 7:00 and 19:00 (OECD 2022a).

According to the Ministry of Education, the system of CSA is an important instrument of social justice as the risk of poverty of children decreased by about 6% (STATEC 2019). However, the number of hours that children spent in a *Maison Relais* has not increased significantly albeit them having become free of charge since September 2022 (MENJE 2023c).

Formal educational settings (*précoce*) are free of charge for parents of children over 3 years old, except for meals. Municipalities bear the costs of public primary schools and receive state funding, mainly for salaries. Private schools receive some state subsidies, even if they do not operate according to the national framework plan, but in this case they are calculated differently. Parents pay fees that are set by the institution and are usually much higher than in public institutions. Costs for infrastructure and equipment are borne by the municipalities; the state contributes to the financing with annual budgets and personnel costs.

In 2022, a couple with two children spent about 6% of net household income on childcare costs⁴ (OECD.Stat 2023).

Staff to child ratios and group size

Staff to child ratios depend on the age of the children (see *Table 6*).

In *mini-crèches*, a maximum of 11 children under 12 years of age may be enrolled at the same time, with a maximum of four children under 1 year of age.

Home-based child carers can look after five other children in addition to their own, with a maximum of two children under 2 years of age.

⁴ The calculation is based on: full-time working parents (average wage); two children aged 2 and 3 years in full-time childcare; childcare benefits included.

Table 6

Luxembourg: Staff to child ratios and maximum group size in non-formal ECEC settings

Age	Max. number of children per group	Max. number of children per team member	Max. number of children per core practitioner
Under 2 year-olds	12	6	6
2 year-olds	16	8	8
3 year-olds	20	10	20
4 and 5 year-olds	24	24	24

Source: Eurydice 2023, 4.2

In the voluntary *éducation précoce*, the maximum is 20 children per core practitioner and one assistant; in the compulsory *éducation préscolaire*, there are on average 16 children per qualified staff member (SNJ 2020, 3).

Curricular frameworks

The curricular frameworks for both sectors in Luxembourg emphasise children’s agency and view children as co-constructors of knowledge, identity, culture and values. Both take a plurilingual approach, recognising all children’s multilingual potential (OECD 2021, 61f.).

Non-formal education and care sector

In 2017, the national framework for the non-formal sector for children under 3 (*Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes*) was issued with four annexes. It is mandatory for all state-subsidised institutions as well as for home-based childcare workers participating in the CSA voucher system. In 2018, a further addendum was added with guidelines for multilingual education. This is intended to give children contact with different languages at an early age and to facilitate language learning. Great emphasis is placed on regarding children as individuals with a unique educational background, on seeing them as social and cultural beings and as equal members of society. Educational work is seen as competence-oriented and aims to promote children's self-determination, participation and responsibility. The main characteristics of non-formal education are, among others, learning by doing, process-oriented and cooperative learning, openness to the needs of the children and participation. Areas of development and learning include social relationships, motor activities, gender education, languages, communication and media, creativity, environment and technology, values, democracy and interculturality.

In the 2021 revision, the individual parts became more closely aligned and more emphasis was placed on participation, children's rights and transitions. Furthermore, multilingual education has been integrated into the main document as multilingualism is considered a transversal mission of non-formal education. Unlike in the formal sector, however, the focus here is not on competences to be achieved.

The National Youth Service (*Service National de la Jeunesse* SNJ) is responsible for the development and implementation of the plan (OECD 2022a).

Institutions for children under the age of 3 draw up their own education plan on the basis of this national framework (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 97).

Formal education sector

Educational guidelines for children from the age of 3 (*plan-cadre pour l'éducation précoce*) and in the 1st cycle of primary school are set out in a compulsory framework plan (*Plan d'études*

pour les quatre cycles de l'enseignement fondamental, 2011) which specifies the skills to be achieved at the end of each cycle.

The 1st cycle of primary school includes the following learning areas: logical and mathematical reasoning, languages (Luxembourgish, French), discovering the world with all the senses, body expression and health, creative expression and community life. Cross-cutting (learning dispositions, attitudes to relationships and emotions, media literacy) and especially linguistic competences are also defined here. The main objective is to develop multilingual and multicultural awareness and to improve knowledge and skills in different languages, including those that are not languages of instruction.

Digital education

From September 2021, the strategy for the development of digital competences in school education ("*einfach digital – Zukunftskompetenze fir staark Kanner*") presented by the Ministry of Education in 2020 has also been implemented in the 1st cycle. The task of the professionals is to introduce children to digital media in an age-appropriate way. In doing so, the key competences of the "5Cs" are to be observed: Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, Cooperation, Coding/programming (*kritescht Denken, Kreativitéit, Kommunikatioun, Kooperatioun, Kodéieren*). The children should be guided to research independently, to look for solutions and to assess information. They should learn to discuss with one another and learn together with the help of digital media. The best approach is seen as one that promotes playful learning, independence, active participation and the enthusiasm of the children. This comprehensive approach proposed by the Ministry of Education follows the guidelines of a so-called media compass (*Guide de référence pour l'éducation aux et par les médias*) and offers practical support to professionals. The guide includes 16 competences based on the "5Cs", which can be used to build media and digital literacy step by step throughout the course of education (MENJE 2021).

Monitoring – evaluation

Child-related assessment

Only formative assessment is used for children below the age of 3.

In Cycle 1, children are formatively assessed on a quarterly basis (*bilans intermédiaires*), then summatively at the end of the cycle (*bilan de fin de cycle*). Formative evaluation is based on observation and documentation of children's development and learning and is designed to improve performance. The teacher or class team members evaluate the children's work and learning progress in relation to the competences and objectives set out in the national curriculum. Parents are also involved in this exchange about learning progress. At the end of the 1st cycle, it can then be shown that the basic competences have been achieved. The children receive a personal evaluation portfolio. To support the pre-primary teachers, the Ministry of Education has issued an observation instrument and guidelines on formative assessment.

The pre-primary setting usually decides on whether the child is ready to start primary school. If parents have a different opinion on this, the final decision is made by the regional director of education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 107).

Centre-level internal assessment

For the formal sector, school development plans (*plans de réussite scolaire*) are drawn up every four years as part of self-evaluation procedures. A setting analysis is prepared, based on the

recommendations of the district school director (previously called “inspector”) and the quality agency as well as the specifications of the ministry. In addition to providing quantitative data on finances, equipment and infrastructure, they also describe the strengths and weaknesses of the respective setting.

Institutions that receive state funding are obliged to carry out self-evaluation. A new self-evaluation tool developed by the SNJ is currently being tested in a pilot project. It is planned that the self-evaluation results will also be included in the external evaluations (OECD 2022a).

The results of the self-evaluations, which also take into account the children's views and experiences, are also used to review the institution's pedagogical plan (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 103f, 128).

External Evaluation

– Non-formal sector

Supervision and quality monitoring at all levels of the education system is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry also organises the accreditation of providers, which is regulated by law.

The National Youth Service (*Service National de la Jeunesse, SNJ*), created in 1964, together with the ministerial Department for Children (*Direction générale du secteur de l'enfance*), ensures the control and monitoring of the quality of education in the non-formal sector (OECD 2022a). In 2016, they decided on two main criteria for the evaluation of non-formal institutions: structural quality (e.g. staffing ratio, group size, infrastructure) and process quality (pedagogical approaches, activities, child and professional interactions). The structural quality of non-formal settings is also regulated by the previously mentioned ASFT Act of 1998. Measures for pedagogical, structural and process quality assurance are anchored in the Youth Act (*Loi sur la jeunesse*, 2008, with amendments from 2016): Private providers of ECEC settings that are allowed to accept service vouchers or receive public funds on the basis of a service agreement with the state are obliged to develop a centre-specific conceptual plan on the basis of the national framework. This should describe the implementation of pedagogical goals, measures of self-evaluation and the CPD plans of the professionals and be published on the setting's website. The conceptual plan is valid for three years. In addition, a so-called logbook (*journal de bord*) is required which contains daily and weekly documentation, but also describes the distribution of tasks in the facility as well as the activities with the children and the participation of the professionals in CPD. Professional staff are required to participate in at least 32 hours of CPD over a period of two years (if employed full-time).

The external evaluation of ECEC settings is carried out twice a year by about 30 regional coordinators (*agents régionaux*). They also check the logbook and the CPD participation of the professionals and whether the objectives set in the curriculum for non-formal education are met. Non-formal settings only qualify for state subsidies if they can explain their quality assurance measures, have a general conceptual plan and implement the national framework.

On the basis of these visits, the regional coordinators draw up written reports, which also include comments from the provider. Since the end of 2021, indicators have been developed on the basis of which the regional coordinators are to write their reports within the framework of six quality dimensions (staff, infrastructure and equipment, interaction with children, pedagogical offer, relations with parents, management) (OECD 2022a).

– Formal education sector

For the formal sector, a quality agency (*Service de Coordination de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pédagogiques et technologiques – SCRIPT*) was established in 2009. Among other things, it



supports primary schools in evaluating their performance and in drawing up a conceptual plan for quality development. The agency is integrated into the Ministry of Education and works closely with the University of Luxembourg. External evaluations of the compulsory pre-primary groups are carried out at least twice a year. The overarching supervision lies with the Department of Primary Education (*Direction générale de l'enseignement fondamental*) (OECD 2022a). Since 2018, there is also an independent national school quality observatory (*L'Observatoire national de la qualité scolaire, ONQS*) for the entire school system. A national report is published every three years.

Primary schools have been required since 2017/18 to draw up a school development plan (*plan de développement de l'établissements scolaire, PDS*) with six areas. National targets are set for each of these areas. 15 teachers specialised in school development are assigned to the quality agency SCRIPT to review the PDS and focus on the following areas: Quality improvement of learning, support for children with special needs, organisation of pedagogical support, cooperation with parents, integration of information and communication technologies and cooperation with the relevant education and care service.

The quality of education provided by private, state-subsidised institutions is monitored by national authorities. At the regional level, 15 directorates are responsible for the pedagogical supervision of the schools, the administrative management and the implementation of the school development plans (SNJ 2020).

Inclusion agenda

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

In the **non-formal sector**, since 2009, children with special needs have a legal entitlement to attend a public educational institution and participate in education according to their individual needs. Only 1% of children attend a separate support institution. In 2017, this entitlement was extended to ensure that children receive the support they are entitled to as quickly as possible. To this end, multi-professional teams can provide support and centres that specialise in the needs of these children (European Commission 2021, 103).

In the **formal sector**, the law stipulates that children with special educational needs receive all the support they need and are only offered a place in a support facility if this is not sufficient. This means that whenever possible children are admitted first to a mainstream institution. In some cases, special needs facilities are integrated into the buildings of the regular facilities. The group size in the facilities depends on the respective needs of the children.

At the municipal level, staff from the multi-professional service for special education (*service d'éducation différenciée*) also provide mobile support. A regional commission for school inclusion (*Commission d'inclusion scolaire*) draws up a diagnosis for each child according to his or her needs and, in cooperation with the teacher and parents, an individual education plan (*plan d'éducation individualisé*), which describes goals and further development steps.

Since 2017, inclusive institutions (in the non-formal and formal sector) receive financial support. In addition, different support modalities exist at national level (eight centres of excellence for different impairments and a national inclusion committee), regional level (15 directorates with a coordinating director) and local level (support teachers working with class teachers) (SNJ 2020).

In 2018, in addition to the five existing centres, four new specialist centres in educational psychology (*centres de compétences en psycho-pédagogie spécialisée*) were established to provide

further support and monitoring and are part of the government's strategy for inclusion in education. The focus of the new centres includes learning and behavioural difficulties, and giftedness.

Children with a background of migration

Luxembourg has three national languages: Luxembourgish, French and German. Multilingualism is therefore an important part in all areas of life and needs also to be given a high priority in early childhood. A holistic, child-centred approach in the formal sector aims to introduce children to other languages through play, supported by pedagogical coordinators (*référent:e pédagogique pour l'éducation plurilingue*) who are fluent in Luxembourgish, French or German. A multilingual education programme was also launched in the non-formal sector in 2017 (OECD 2022a).

In 2022, almost half of the total population held a non-Luxembourgish citizenship (47.1%), as well as children under 5 (47.2%). The majority (80.8%) of these persons came from other EU countries, with a similar proportion (77.1%) in the under-5s group (Eurostat 2023c).

Broken down by country of origin, according to national statistics, more than three quarters (78.4%) of the total population in 2023 were EU citizens. Of these, 37.5% were from Portugal, 20% from France and 7.8% from Belgium. Persons from Ukraine made up 1.7% of the foreign population and were the largest group of immigrants in 2022 (4,268), ahead of persons from Portugal (3,633) and France (3,107). In total, there were 180 nationalities in Luxembourg in 2023, eight of which came from the EU. The largest groups from non-EU countries are people from Ukraine and India (Le Portail Statistique 2023a, b).

In 2021/22, 55.8% of the children attending *cycle 1 – précoce* spoke Luxembourgish as their first language followed by 10.3% speaking Portuguese and 8.5% speaking French as their first language. In the same year, Luxembourgish was the first language for 54.6% of children enrolled in *cycle 1 – préscolaire* followed by 14.3% speaking Portuguese and 6.3% speaking French (MENJE 2023a, 22, 27). However, the linguistic repertoires vary considerably if the children's home languages are added rather than focusing on their first languages only (see section on *Current Challenges*).

For immigrant parents and their children, there is information in several languages and the possibility of using an intercultural mediator. On account of the relatively high proportion of Portuguese children (according to Eurostat data 2022, 11.5% of under 5 year-olds), a family language assistant can be present in the class for a certain number of hours. Furthermore, some teachers switch to children's family languages when teaching. In many studies, translanguaging is suggested as a strategy to incorporate the family language and cultural background, as this contributes to the development of the whole semiotic repertoire. Professionals switch spontaneously between languages during play, storytelling or reading aloud (see also Kirsch 2021 and the research section of the ECEC Workforce Profile for Luxembourg, De Moll et al. 2024). Other teachers use children's home languages to value and further develop them as it is understood that mastering the first language facilitates learning the language of instruction. The respect of the family language is part of the programme of multilingual education that resulted from the amendment to the 2016 Education Act. Since 2017, all children are introduced French as a second language and potentially encounter their peers' family languages (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2019, 116f; SNJ 2020).

Finally, teachers can use two language support programmes developed mainly for Portuguese-speaking pre-primary children. The first language development programme MOLLY (Mother-tongue Oral Language and Literacy for the Young) lasts 30 weeks and promotes, among other



things, the vocabulary, narrative and phonological skills in the children's first language. The reading support programme LALA (*Lauter lëschteg Lauter*), which was developed especially for multilingual children, is primarily intended to support children who show a risk of reading or spelling difficulties in the first cycle before entering primary school. The aim is not to pre-empt reading skills, but to awaken the anticipation of reading (University of Luxembourg 2018, 133f).

Parental leave arrangements⁵

Compulsory **Maternity leave** (*congé de maternité*) lasts 20 weeks, eight of which must be taken before the birth, 12 after the birth. A sum of €12,541.18 (equivalent to five times the minimum wage of an unskilled worker) is paid per month. The condition is that the mother must have been a member of a social insurance scheme for at least six months during the year preceding the birth.

Paternity leave (*Pappecongé, congé extraordinaire*) amounts to ten working days, of which the first two days are paid in full by the employer. For the remaining days, the employer receives reimbursement from the state based on a maximum of €12,541.18 per month.

Parental leave (*congé parental*) is granted for four to 20 months per parent (depending on the hours worked and the option chosen). It is an individual, non-transferable entitlement. Full-time employed parents (40 hours per week) can choose between different options in terms of duration and payment: (1) take four or six months of full-time parental leave, (2) choose eight or 12 months of part-time parental leave, (3) four months within a maximum period of 20 months, or (4) one day per week for a maximum of 20 months. For parents working part-time (20 hours per week), the first two options are available. Parents who work 10 hours a week or are in training can choose option 1. Both parents can take parental leave at the same time. The pay depends on income, average hours worked in the last year before parental leave and the option chosen. For example, full-time employees who choose option 1 receive between €2,508.24 and €4,180.39 per month. The prerequisite is that the parent has worked continuously for at least one year before the start of parental leave.

Since 2016, the number of fathers taking parental leave has been increasing and exceeded the number of mothers (7,160 fathers vs. 5,529 mothers) in 2022. However, mothers and fathers took different parental leave options: 68% of mothers chose the full-time version, 21% the part-time version and 11% options 3 and 4. In contrast, 30% of fathers took full-time parental leave, 22% the part-time version and 48% options 3 and 4.

Current challenges for the ECEC system in Luxembourg

Country expert assessment by Claudine Kirsch

Since the last SEEPRO report, the Luxembourg population has grown more and more diverse with **monolingual children now a minority**. This complex and ever-evolving cultural and linguistic diversity poses considerable socio-political and educational challenges for Luxembourg and the ECEC system (ONQS 2022). These will be outlined following a brief consideration of the current situation, which differs considerably from that in other European countries. While the following paragraph focuses on children's plurilingual repertoire, it is clear that language diversity

⁵ The brief overview in this section is based mainly on the country note for Luxembourg by Frédéric Berger Ioana Salagean and Marie Valentova in the *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2023* (see *References*).

is only one of many characteristics of children’s heterogeneous experiences and living conditions.

A recent survey of 8,342 parents of 10,090 children aged 0–4 shows that the most frequently spoken languages at home are Luxembourgish (54.1%), French (15.8%), and Portuguese (12.0%), with most children speaking two languages (SNJ 2023a). Two-thirds of the parents claimed they spoke two or more languages with their children, most frequently combining Luxembourgish and French or French with English. According to the parents, however, the children did not always use the same language(s) with the parents as the parents use with them. When speaking to siblings, two-thirds of the children used only one language, in the main Luxembourgish or French. About 15% of the siblings were reported to communicate in Luxembourgish although their parents did not speak this language. The linguistic profiles become even more diverse and complex when one considers children’s exposure to books, music, and television as the role of German and English grows considerably. Finally, given that 61% of children attended early childhood institutions in 2019 (Hornung et al. 2023) and that these centres have a multilingual policy, children have additional opportunities to encounter and develop languages⁶. According to Hornung et al. (2023), children encounter much Luxembourgish and some French in *crèches*, listening to the languages either separately or in combination. This finding helps us understand why 73.9% of parents reported in the SNJ survey that their children were exposed to Luxembourgish on account of the languages used at home and in ECEC. The role of ECEC settings in familiarising children with Luxembourgish is thus significant as only 55.7% of children were exposed to Luxembourgish at home (SNJ 2023a). Similarly, 61.5% of children are reported to encounter French (and 17.0% German) at home, but 74.3% (and 23.0%) were in contact with French (and German) in ECEC centres (SNJ 2023b, 30). A survey with parents of first graders aged 6 shows similar findings, indicating that about half of the children encountered Luxembourgish at home when they were 3 years old, although only a third of them spoke it as their first language (Hornung et al. 2023). Luxembourgish appears to be the main language of communication among first graders who enter a multilingual education system where they develop literacy in German, continue to develop oral French, and are taught in German or Luxembourgish, depending on the subject. This multilingual education system is highly challenging and does not offer the equal opportunities the Ministry of Education aims for. Each year, evaluation reports show that children of families of lower socioeconomic status, migration background, or children whose home languages differ from the instruction languages, do not reach the required minimum standard in German reading and comprehension and in mathematics in cycle 3 (Hoffmann et al. 2018; Hornung et al. 2021). Based on the vision that “every child has a right to a high-quality education”, the Education Ministry recently took several measures to strengthen equal opportunities (MENJE 2023c). For instance, non-formal education is now free of charge, all children have free meals, and a national network of resource centres and a national plan for help with homework have been instituted. Furthermore, there are currently six state-run European international primary schools, some with preschools, and six state-run European international secondary schools that offer tuition through the medium of English, French, Portuguese or German. Perhaps as a consequence of the programme of multilingual education and the dominance of French, the Ministry launched a pilot project in 2022 to help children to become literate in French and to teach maths in French.

Next, we outline some challenges particular to the ECEC system in Luxembourg.

⁶ Since the introduction of *the éducation plurilingue* in 2017, practitioners in both the formal sector (early education and pre-primary) and the non-formal sector have to familiarise children with Luxembourgish and French and value their home languages.



1. An evaluation of the ECEC system (Hornung et al. 2023) shows that children benefit academically if they attend an ECEC setting. The findings are based on tests in Luxembourgish and German listening comprehension, early literacy, and maths, which children took in year 1, a few months after having finished pre-primary education. The results show that children scored highest in these tests when they had attended both early education (*précoce*) and an ECEC service. Their scores were slightly lower when they attended either early education or a childcare setting and lowest when they did not attend any ECEC institution. Children from a Luxembourgish-speaking background and from families with higher socio-economic backgrounds outperformed other children. Performances were mostly influenced by family background variables (e.g., socioeconomic status, home language) and child-related variables (e.g., age, gender). The results confirm that not all children benefit equally from ECEC and that the Education Ministry needs to continue to invest in equal opportunities.
2. To improve the effectiveness of ECEC provision, it is necessary to increase continuity between the formal and non-formal sector with a view to reflecting on similarities and differences between pedagogical approaches in both domains. Apart from helping children develop and learn, the discussion contributes to the current debates on the meaning of “non-formal education” and the potential “schoolification” of the non-formal sector. It may also encourage professionals from both sectors to collaborate. According to the National Observatory of Educational Quality (ONQS), professionals do not show the necessary respect for other ECEC institutions and are not willing enough to consider other viewpoints and integrate them in their own work (ONQS 2022).
3. In relation to the programme of multilingual education, more continuity between the formal and non-formal sectors could guarantee that language skills and positive attitudes towards languages developed in ECEC are built upon in primary schools (MENJE 2023c).
4. Home-based childcare providers, primarily female, represent a special category of early childhood personnel and play an essential role in Luxembourg in what is essentially an ethnically segregated childcare market. Therefore, if the ECEC system is to improve social inclusion, the position of these home-based carers must be clarified and regulated within it.
5. Standardisation appears to be an issue, particularly regarding public and private providers in the non-formal sector. The lack of standardisation regarding the professionals’ skills and the diversity of human and material resources in ECEC institutions may be instrumental in creating early inequality.
6. According to the OECD (2022b), the quality of the ECEC services varies greatly and this diversity makes it difficult to define national criteria to monitor, evaluate and improve quality.
7. In the last years, the SNJ has instituted several measures to monitor and evaluate quality in ECEC: the national framework; the statutory requirement to write a pedagogical concept every three years that is validated by the regional coordinators; the statutory requirement to document pedagogical activities in a logbook; the statutory requirement for all staff to take 32 hours of CPD over two years. A recent survey with educators in the non-formal sector, parental assistants, and regional coordinators indicated that they all agreed that the quality of the pedagogical practice has improved (MENJE 2023c). The survey results furthermore showed that there is a need for a simplification of the national framework and of the structure of the logbook, for more guidance on how to write the pedagogical concept, as well as for more CPD. The SNJ is addressing all these issues

and, as a consequence, one could expect more monitoring and higher quality in the years to come.

8. On account of the split ECEC system (formal versus non-formal; state versus private), the very different working contexts and conditions (e.g. languages of children and staff, expectations) and the various organisational and pedagogical orientations, the multilingual education programme is implemented in different ways both in the formal and the non-formal sector and within institutions of the non-formal sector. There is a need to research the outcomes of the programme in the formal sector. Some studies in the non-formal centre provide insights into the implementation and the language use in the organisations. While studies (Kirsch and Aleksić 2021; Kirsch and Bergeron-Morin 2023) have shown that language practices in ECEC centres have become more diverse, they have also pointed to existing language hierarchies. Furthermore, they confirm that some professionals continue to be unsure of how to implement the programme and some report lacking competences in Luxembourgish. This is particularly the case in large commercial centres where many French-speaking professionals commute daily from the neighbouring countries to work in Luxembourg. These centres, which offer lower wages, find it challenging to recruit Luxembourgish-speaking staff who communicate or offer activities in this language. These findings show that the policy remains difficult to implement in similar ways in all settings. Furthermore, the differing conditions make it difficult to give professionals guidelines on how best to implement the programme.
9. The multilingual education programme aims to contribute to equal opportunities by giving all children better starting positions. The policy has, however, been criticised for its vague and unclear goals as well as for the absence of instruction in German which would help prepare all children for literacy development in primary school (Hornung et al. 2023). The current focus on Luxembourgish and French in ECEC could legitimise existing language hierarchies and privilege Luxembourgish as well as Luxembourgish-speaking children (Simoes 2023). It seems that a clarification of the goals of the multilingual education programme is necessary. This may also contribute to ease of implementation.
10. On account of the high language diversity, it is difficult to identify “the best” way to take account of and build on children’s language repertoires in the formal and non-formal sectors. While individualisation and differentiation are key principles in non-formal education (MENJE and SNJ 2021, 23), there is a need to help professionals systematically observe and document children's language practices to offer differentiated linguistic support (SNJ 2023a).
11. Inclusion is an important aim in the formal and non-formal sectors. In the latter, it is hoped that ECEC institutions develop inclusive practices with the help of the pedagogical coordinators in the forthcoming years, similar to the implementation of the programme of multilingual education. Given that the tasks of the ECEC professionals continue to grow, it is essential to guarantee that all staff are well-qualified and have access to continuous guidance and training. This is even more crucial in Luxembourg where the workforce is highly heterogeneous in relation to their social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, qualification, country of qualification, citizenship, and country of residence (Honig and Bock 2018).
12. As seen above, the quality of initial professional education is important. There are, however, currently neither study programmes for teachers to become early years specialists nor for educators to develop this specialist profile. Furthermore, as in many other European countries, Luxembourg is currently experiencing challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff.

13. There was little consistency in the quality of CPD programmes. As a consequence, the National Youth Service now coordinates its quality. While continuing this effort, it is crucial also to ‘train the trainers’ and regional coordinators (*agents régionaux*).
14. Over the last years, the quality of ECEC has begun to be researched and monitored. There are, however, still few qualitative and quantitative studies of the non-formal sector and there is a need for a national database including all sectors, to guarantee sustained monitoring and contribute towards high-quality provision (Hadjar et al. 2021; Honig et al. 2015; Hornung et al. 2023).

Demographic data

Please note: For reasons of comparability, data on children are always reported up to 6 years of age, even if compulsory schooling starts earlier or later in some countries.

Total population

In 2022, the total population in Luxembourg was 645,397. Population numbers have increased steadily over the last 20 years (2000: 433,600, 2010: 502,066, 2020: 626,108) (Eurostat 2023a).

Total fertility rate

In 2021, the average total birth rate in the EU27(2020) was 1.53. The highest total fertility rate of the 33 SEEPRO-3 countries (EU27+6) was in France (1.84), the lowest in Malta (1.13). At 1.38, Luxembourg was below the EU27 average (Eurostat 2023d)⁷.

Children under age 6

Table 7

Luxembourg: Number of children under age 6 in the population, 2022

Age	Number of children
Under 1 year	6,671
1 year-olds	6,670
2 year-olds	6,724
3 year-olds	6,803
4 year-olds	6,857
5 year-olds	6,832
Total 0 to under 6 year-olds	40,557

Source: Eurostat 2023a

The proportion of children under 3 years of age in the total population was 3.1% in 2022, and that of children under 6 years of age was 6.3%. These shares were well above the EU average in

⁷ Data for **Ukraine** and the **UK** (2021) are from Statista (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/296567/fertility-rate-in-ukraine/> and <https://www.statista.com/statistics/284042/fertility-rate-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/>). Data for the **Russian Federation** (2021) are from WorldBankData (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=RU>).

2000 and remained that way, though they fell considerably during the next two decades (see Table 8).

Table 8

Luxembourg: Share of children under 6 years compared with the EU averages, 2000 to 2022, in %

Year	Comparison Luxembourg/EU	Under 3 year-olds	3 to under 6 year-olds	0 to under 6 year-olds
2000	Luxembourg	3.8	4.1	7.9
	Ø EU15 ⁸	3.2	3.2	6.4
2005	Luxembourg	3.5	3.8	7.3
	Ø EU25	3.1	3.1	6.2
2015	Luxembourg	3.3	3.4	6.7
	Ø EU28	3.0	3.2	6.2
2022	Luxembourg	3.1	3.2	6.3
	Ø EU27(2020)	2.7	2.9	5.7

Source: Eurostat 2023a, own calculations, slight deviations due to rounding

Single households with children under age 6

81.7% of households with children under 6 were couple households in Luxembourg in 2022. Households with single parents accounted for only 2.2% – the majority of them single mothers (1.5%).

Table 9

Luxembourg: Households with children under age 6, 2022

Household type	Total households	Share of all households, in % ⁺
Total households	66,700	
Couple households	54,500	81.7
Other types of households	10,700	16.0
Total single households	1,500	2.2
Single households, women	1,000	1.5
Single households, men	500 ^{**}	0.7

Source: Eurostat 2023j, *Own calculations, ** data calculated

Employment rates of parents with children under 6 years of age

In Luxembourg, in 2022, the overall employment rate for men (15-64 years) was 76.4% and for women 70.4% (Eurostat 2023e).

In 2022, 81.9% of women and 90.4% of men (18-64 years) with children under 6 were employed. Among the 27 EU-countries (2020), the shares of employed fathers were thus above the EU EU-

⁸ The data for 2000 include the EU15-Länder at that time (AT, BE, DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, F, FI, IT, LU, NL, PT, SE, UK). The 2005 data (EU25) include CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, SI, SK. Data for 2015 include the additional EU28 countries BG, RO und HR. Data for EU27 (from 2020) comprise the countries of the EU28 without the UK.

average (87.2%); those of mothers were the highest in the EU27 (average 63.6%) (Eurostat 2023g).

Table 10a

Luxembourg: Employment rates of parents with children under 6 compared with other EU countries, 2010 und 2021

	2010	
	Mothers in %	Fathers in %
Luxembourg	67.4	93.4
Highest rate of employment in 27 EU countries ⁹	Denmark: 82.7	Netherlands: 93.4
Lowest rate of employment in 27 EU countries	Hungary: 31.7	Latvia: 72.7
	2022	
	Mothers in %	Fathers in %
Luxembourg	81.9	90.4
Highest rate of employment in 27 (2020) EU countries ¹⁰	Luxembourg: 81.9	Sweden: 95.1
Lowest rate of employment in 27 (2020) EU countries	Czech Republic: 42.5	Romania: 78.5

Source: Eurostat 2023g

For the SEEPRO-3 countries that were not part of the EU27(2020) in 2021/2022, data are displayed in *Table 10b*:

Table 10b

Employment rates in non-EU SEEPRO-3 countries, 2021/2022

Countries	Parents with children under 6 years		Overall employment rate	
	Mothers in %	Fathers in %	Women in %	Men in %
*Norway (2022)	82.9	94.3	75.4	80.1
***Russia (2021/2022)	67.1 (2021)	k.A.	55.6 (2022)	70.4 (2022)
*Serbia (2022)	64.4	78.3	57.9	71.0
**Switzerland (2022/2023)	46.9	95.3	60.0 61.1 (2023)	83.5 84.2 (2023)
+Ukraine (2021)	n.d.	n.d.	60.7	69.9
+++United Kingdom (2021/2023)				
with dependent children	75.6	92.1	++72.3	++79.2
with children under 2 years	72.4	93.1	++72.1 (2023)	++79.4 (2023)
with children 3–4 years	70.7	95.0		

*Eurostat 2023e, 2023g

**[BFS] Bundesamt für Statistik. 2023. *Erwerbsquoten in Vollzeitäquivalenten nach Geschlecht, Nationalität, Altersgruppen, Familientyp* [Full-time equivalent employment rates by gender, nationality, age groups, family type]. <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/asset/de/je-d-03.02.00.01.03>

***Rosstat. 2022. *Statistical annex SDG in Russia 2022*. <https://eng.rosstat.gov.ru/sdg/report/document/70355>;
BRICS. 2023. *Joint Statistical Publication 2023*. https://brics2023.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/BRICS-2023-JSP_Final_Web.pdf

⁹ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, ES, F, FI, IE, IT, HU, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK

¹⁰ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, ES, F, FI, IE, IT, HR, HU, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK

⁺[SSSU] State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. *Employed population in 2021, by age group, sex and place of residence*. <https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/rp/eans/eanse/Archznmve.htm>

⁺⁺Statista. 2023. *Employment rate in the United Kingdom from June 1971 to January 2023, by gender*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/280120/employment-rate-in-the-uk-by-gender/>

⁺⁺⁺Office for National Statistics. 2023. *Families and the labour market, UK: 2021*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021>

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion¹¹

In 2022, 22% of children under 6 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This proportion was below the EU27 average (23.3%) for this age group. The share of all persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the total population was 19.4% (EU: 21.6%). In 2020, 2.4% of children under 6 and 1.6% of the total population suffered from severe material deprivation (EU average 6.1% and 4.3% respectively) (Eurostat 2023h, i).

References

Berger, F., I. Salagean, and M. Valentova. 2023. "Country Note Luxembourg." In *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2023*, edited by S. Blum, I. Dobrotić, G. Kaufman, A. Koslowski, and P. Moss. https://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/user_upload/k_leavenetwork/annual_reviews/2023/Luxembourg2023.pdf

De Moll, F., V. Kemp, K. Simoes Loureiro, A. Hadjar, and C. Kirsch. 2024. "Luxembourg – ECEC Workforce Profile." In *Workforce profiles in 33 early childhood education and care systems*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. Munich: State Institute for Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy. www.seepro.eu/English/Country-Reports.htm

European Commission 2020. *Education and Training Monitor 2020 – Luxembourg*. <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/countries/luxembourg.html>

European Commission. 2021. *Toolkit for inclusive early childhood education and care*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4c526047-6f3c-11eb-aeb5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search#>

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. 2019. *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2019 Edition*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/966808>

Eurostat. 2023a. *Population on 1 January by age and sex*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demopjan/default/table>

Eurostat. 2023b. *Formal Childcare by Age Group and Duration -% over the population of each age group*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilccaindformal/default/table>

Eurostat. 2023c. *Population on 1 January by age group, sex and citizenship*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migrpop1ctz/default/table>

Eurostat. 2023d. *Fertility rates by age*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMOFRATE-custom1559524/default/table>

Eurostat. 2023e. *Employment and activity by sex and age – annual data*. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSIEMPA\\$DV881/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSIEMPA$DV881/default/table)

¹¹ 'At risk of poverty or social exclusion' refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty (threshold set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers), or severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Materialdeprivation>)

- Eurostat. 2023f. *Pupils enrolled in early childhood education by sex and age*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUCUOEENRP02custom1910674/default/table>
- Eurostat. 2023g. *Employment rate of adults by sex, age groups, educational attainment level, number of children and age of youngest child (%)*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSTH-HEREDCH/default/table>
- Eurostat. 2023h. *People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion by Age and Sex*. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILCPEPS01N\\$DV1161/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILCPEPS01N$DV1161/default/table)
- Eurostat. 2023i. *Severe housing deprivation rate by age, sex and poverty status*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilcmdho06a/default/table>
- Eurostat. 2023j. *Number of adults by sex, age groups, number of children, age of youngest child and household composition*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFST_HHACE-DAY_custom_4495620/default/table
- Eurydice. 2023. *Early Childhood Education and Care – Luxembourg*. <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/luxembourg/early-childhood-education-and-care>
- Hadjar, A., A. Grecu, K. Simoes Loureiro und K. Koch. 2021. *Projektbericht PerSEALux. Pädagogisches Personal in Einrichtungen der non-formalen Bildung in Luxemburg: Eine Analyse zur Situation von männlichen und weiblichen Fachkräften in SEA-Einrichtungen in Luxemburg* [Project report PerSEALux [Pedagogical staff in non-formal education institutions in Luxembourg: An analysis of the situation of male and female of male and female professionals in SEA institutions in Luxembourg]]. https://madak.lu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/PerSEALux_Projektbericht.pdf
- Hoffmann, D., C. Hornung, S. Gamo, P. Esch, U. Keller und A. Fischbach. 2018. „Schulische Kompetenzen von Erstklässlern und ihre Entwicklung nach zwei Jahren. Erste längsschnittliche Befunde aus dem nationalen Bildungsmonitoring [School competences of first graders and their development after two years. First longitudinal findings from the national education monitoring programme]. In *Nationaler Bildungsbericht Luxemburg*, edited by LUCET and SCRIPT (Luxembourg Centre for Educational Testing and Department for the Coordination of Educational and Technological Research and Innovation), 84–96.
- Honig, M.-S. 2015. „Frühkindliche Bildung“ [Early childhood education]. In *Bildungsbericht Luxemburg 2015. Band 2. Analysen und Befunde*, herausgegeben vom Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse, SCRIPT (Department for the Coordination of Educational and Technological Research and Innovation), 8-14. <http://www.men.public.lu/catalogue-publications/themes-transversaux/statistiques-analyses/bildungsbericht/2015/band-2.pdf>
- Honig, M.-S., and T. Bock. 2018. „Luxembourg – ECEC Workforce Profile.” In *Early Childhood Workforce Profiles in 30 Countries with Key Contextual Data*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer, 713-746. Munich. www.seeepro.eu/ISBN-publication.pdf
- Honig, M.-S., A. Schmitz, and M. Wiltzius. 2015. “Early Education and the Unloved Market of Commercial Childcare in Luxembourg.” In *The Development of Early Education in Europe and North America*, edited by H. Willekens, K. Scheiwe, and K. Nawrotzki, 254-274. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://orbilu.uni.lu/bitstream/10993/21053/1/Scheiweend.pdf>
- Hornung, C., R. Wollschläger, U., Keller, P. Esch, C. Muller und A. Fischbach, A. 2021. „Neue längsschnittliche Befunde aus dem nationalen Bildungsmonitoring ÉpStan in der 1. Und 3. Klasse: Negativer Trend in der Kompetenzentwicklung und kein Erfolg bei Klassenwiederholungen“ [New longitudinal findings from the national education monitoring ÉpStan in Grades 1 and 3: Negative trend in competence development and no success of class repetition]. In *Nationaler Bildungsbericht Luxemburg*, edited by LUCET & SCRIPT 2021, 44–55. LUCET & SCRIPT.
- Hornung, C., L. M. Kaufmann, M. Ottenbacher, C. Weth, R. Wollschläger, S. Ugen, and A. Fischbach. 2023. *Early childhood education and care in Luxembourg. Attendance and associations with early learning performance*. Luxembourg Centre for Educational Testing (LUCET). doi: 10.48746/epstanal-pha2023pr
- Kirsch, C, and G. Aleksić. 2021. “Multilingual Education in Early Years in Luxembourg: A Paradigm Shift?” In *International Journal of Multilingualism* 18 (4): 534–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.1905643>
- Kirsch, C., and L. Bergeron-Morin. 2023. “Educators, parents and children engaging in literacy activities in multiple languages: an exploratory study”. In *International Journal of Multilingualism*, DOI: 10.1080/14790718.2023.2195658

- Le Portail Statistique. 2023a. *Population by nationalities in detail on 1st January*. [https://lustat.statec.lu/vis?lc=en&pg=0&fs\[0\]=Topics%2C1%7CPopulation%20and%20employment%23B%23%7CPopulation%20structure%23B1%23&fc=Topics&df\[ds\]=ds-release&df\[id\]=DF_B1113&df\[ag\]=LU1&df\[vs\]=1.0&pd=2015%2C2023&dq=.A](https://lustat.statec.lu/vis?lc=en&pg=0&fs[0]=Topics%2C1%7CPopulation%20and%20employment%23B%23%7CPopulation%20structure%23B1%23&fc=Topics&df[ds]=ds-release&df[id]=DF_B1113&df[ag]=LU1&df[vs]=1.0&pd=2015%2C2023&dq=.A)
- Le Portail Statistique. 2023b. *L'immigration au Luxembourg marquée par la guerre en Ukraine* [Einwanderung nach Luxemburg durch den Krieg in der Ukraine geprägt]. <https://statistiques.public.lu/dam-assets/actualite/2023/stn-21-population/stn21-2023-population-v2023-v3.pdf>
- [MENJE] Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse – Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. 2021. *Einfach digital – Zukunfts-kompetenze fir staark Kanner* [Simply digital – Future skills for robust children]. <https://men.public.lu/content/dam/men/catalogue-publications/dossiers-de-presse/2019-2020/einfach-digital.pdf>
- [MENJE] Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse – Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. 2023a. *L'Enseignement fondamental. Année scolaire 2021/2022* [Basic education. School year 2021/2022]. <https://men.public.lu/fr/publications/statistiques-etudes/themes-transversaux/22-23-enseignement-chiffres.html>
- [MENJE] Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse – Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. 2023b. *Rapport d'activités 2022* [Annual report 2022]. <https://men.public.lu/fr/publications/rapports-activite-ministere/rapports-ministere/rapport-activites-2022.html>
- [MENJE] Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse – Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. 2023c. *Factsheet. Zuelen a Fakte ronderëm déi non-formal Bildungsstrukturen. 19 April 2023* [Fact sheet. Facts and figures about the non-formal educational structures. 19 April 2023]. <https://men.public.lu/de/actualites/communiques-conference-presse/2023/04/19-factsheet-kannerbetreuung.html>
- [MENJE and SNJ] Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse & Service National de la Jeunesse – Ministry of Education, Children and Youth & National Youth Service. 2021. *Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes* [National reference framework on non-formal education for children and young people]. MENJE, SNJ.
- Men.lu 2023. *Offre scolaire* [School offers]. <https://men.public.lu/fr/publications/statistiques-etudes/fondamental/21-22-ef-statistiques-globales.html>
- [OECD] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2021. *Starting Strong VI. Supporting Meaningful Interactions in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- [OECD] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2022a. *Strengthening Early Childhood Education and Care in Luxembourg: A Focus on Non-formal Education*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/strengthening-early-childhood-education-and-care-in-luxembourg04780b15-en>
- [OECD] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2022b. *Quality early childhood education and care for children under age 3: Results from the Starting Strong survey 2018*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/99f8bc95-en>
- [OECD] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2023. *Public spending on early childhood education and care*. <https://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjym-XKwsfzAhVchPOHHcq7B7oQFnoECA4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.oecd.org%2Fels%2Fsoc%2FFPF31Publicspendingonchildcareandearlyeducation.xlsx&usg=AOvVaw1vQhuFn3HHO4UH9eTPAy24>
- OECD.Stat. 2023. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Net childcare costs for parents using childcare facilities*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=NCC>
- [ONQS] Observatoire national de la qualité scolaire. 2022. *Rapport thématique "Orientations pour une réduction de l'impact des inégalités d'origine sociale dans le système éducatif"* [Thematic report "Guidelines for reducing the impact of inequalities of social origin in the education system"]. Walferdange.
- Simoes Loureiro, K.2023. *Aiming towards more equal opportunities? Analysing the implementation of the plurilingual education policy in the non-formal early childhood education and care sector in Luxembourg*. Unpublished dissertation presented on the 27th of June 2023 in Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) to obtain the title of Docteur de l'Université du Luxembourg en Sciences Sociales. Esch-sur-Alzette: l'Université du Luxembourg.

- [SNJ] Service National de la Jeunesse. 2020. *Quality beyond regulations in early childhood education and care. Country background report of Luxembourg*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/Starting-StrongVI-CBR-Luxembourg.pdf>
- [SNJ] Service National de la Jeunesse. 2023a *Impact du dispositif de développement de la qualité sur le secteur de l'éducation non formelle SEA & AP 2016-2022, 23* [Impact of the quality development scheme on the non-formal education sector SEA & AP 2016-2022, 23]. https://www.enfance-jeunesse.lu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2304056_SNJ_brochure-Impact-Qualite_accessible_1b.pdf
- [SNJ] Service National de la Jeunesse. 2023b. *Enquête: la diversité linguistique des jeunes enfants et les pratiques langagières au sein des familles au Luxembourg* [Survey: the linguistic diversity of young children and language practices within families in Luxembourg]. <https://men.public.lu/dam-assets/catalogue-publications/langues/luxembourgeois/brochure-snj-diversite-linguistique.pdf>
- STATEC. 2019. *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale. L'état social et le bien-être de la société luxembourgeoise* [Report on work and social cohesion. The social state and the well-being of Luxembourg society]. <https://statistiques.public.lu/dam-assets/catalogue-publications/analyses/2020/analyses-06-20.pdf>
- University of Luxembourg. 2018. *Nationaler Bildungsbericht Luxemburg 2018* [National Education Report Luxembourg]. <https://www.bildungsbericht.lu/>

