



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



**INTERNATIONAL STUDY VISIT**  
*Innovation and Cooperation in Early Childhood Pedagogy*

**PROFESSIONAL MESSAGE OF PARTICIPANTS**

FROM **BELGIUM, CZECH REPUBLIC, ESTONIA, FRANCE (MARTINIQUE), GERMANY, HUNGARY, IRELAND, LITHUANIA, MALTA, THE NETHERLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM**  
AND GUESTS FROM **CROATIA AND THAILAND**

The latest national and international research emphasizes childhood as the key factor in determining the life chances of an individual.

High quality education and support for children is crucial for our futures since only happy, well-balanced, confident, resilient and creative children are able to build a prospering and sustainable society. Investment in our children and families now will give us good returns in the future.

Participants in our study visit felt that often there was ‘top-down’ pressure from governments to push children into more formal educational practice before they were developmentally ready. The group felt strongly that children learnt best through play and in stress free environments and that childhood was an important phase in itself.

It is therefore vitally important that student teachers have very high quality initial teacher education, supported by well-educated and knowledgeable lecturers and pedagogues. It is also important that qualified teachers and other adults working with our youngest children have access to, and opportunities for continual professional development throughout their career. Having highly qualified teachers for young children is vital as the early years are such an important stage of children’s development and pave the way for all future learning.

As a group we are committed to helping children reach their full potential through safe and play-based pedagogy and practice, supported by warm, highly qualified and reflective teachers in partnership with their parents and families.

We feel this message needs to be communicated to national government policy makers, who perhaps in the past have had little understanding of the pedagogy and principles of Early Years development and education. We feel that high priority should be given to ensuring that there is adequate financial expenditure early in the child’s developmental life cycle.

On behalf of the group

Yours sincerely,

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