

*From the Editor,*

The current special issue of the INT-JECSE represents a fruitful discourse of 8 research and training institutions in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) across Europe about 2 apparently controversy tendencies: respecting the diversity of concepts, structures and services in different European countries, on the one hand, introducing basic standards in terms of comparable quality (for parents) and comparability.

Even though most of the ECI systems and concepts are based on comparable key terms (preventive, child- and family-centred transdisciplinary work mainly in natural setting (home visits), including development-adequate methods and focusing on resources and strengths of family systems), the different contributions reflect, how different national systems address these key issues, but also how difficult it might be for parents to find the support they need (taking into account all these diverse pathways towards ECI. However, most of the descriptions highlight the need of coordination and cooperation of involved stakeholders, mainly health, social and educational systems. Taking into account this diversity, are we able to define standards in early childhood intervention in Europe?

At its simplest, a standard is an agreed, repeatable way of doing something. It is a published document that contains a technical specification or other precise criteria designed to be used consistently as a rule, guideline, or definition. To address this issue in ECI we will not be able to introduce one system of ECI in Europe, one common training approach, one new professional identity due to the diverse pathways in this complex field. However, we might be able to define general sets of rules (e.g., the existence of a participative concept, transparent and fully participative structures and processes and clearly related outcome parameter).

This set of rules will be based on a participative discourse of all involved partners: parents, professionals, financial bodies, research and training institutions; and to forget: our vulnerable children.

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