



Inclusive Early  
Childhood  
Education

Enabling all children to  
actively participate

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# The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Independent platform for collaboration for the ministries of education in 31 member countries - with the specific mission of improving the quality and effectiveness of inclusive provision for all learners.

Inclusion – “meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers”.

## Inclusive Early Childhood Education IECE 2015-2017

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Primary outcome of high-quality IECE services is to ensure each child’s belongingness, engagement and learning.

**An Ecosystem Model of Inclusive Early Childhood Education** grounded in project data.

**A Self-Reflection Tool** enabling practitioners to review their service’s quality in terms of the inclusiveness of the learning environments.



**INCLUSIVE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION**

# How can you ensure that all children belong, engage and learn?



INCLUSIVE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION

- The main outcome of inclusion in preschool is participation in social and learning experiences.
- Participation is conceptualised as ‘attendance’ (‘being there’) and ‘involvement’ (‘being engaged’).
- Engagement is enabled by *structures* and *processes* in everyday life in preschool.
- The time spent engaged in activities is related both to child characteristics and environmental characteristics in the social and physical environment.
- Certain environmental characteristics in preschool promote engaging experiences better than others.

# The ecosystem model of inclusion

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## Inspired by three frameworks:

Structure-process-outcome framework (Pianta et al, 2009).

Ecological systems framework –bioecological perspective(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Odom et al., 2004).

Inclusive education framework – access, workforce, curriculum, evaluation and monitoring & governance and funding (European Agency, 2015).

## Grounded in project data from 28 countries in Europe

Country descriptions

Descriptions of best practices of 32 example inclusive preschools

Observations and interviews in 8 countries – practises

Qualitative, thematic analysis identified 25 subthemes representing the perceived constituents of inclusive early childhood education provision.



**INCLUSIVE  
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EDUCATION**

# The Ecosystem model of inclusion



## INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

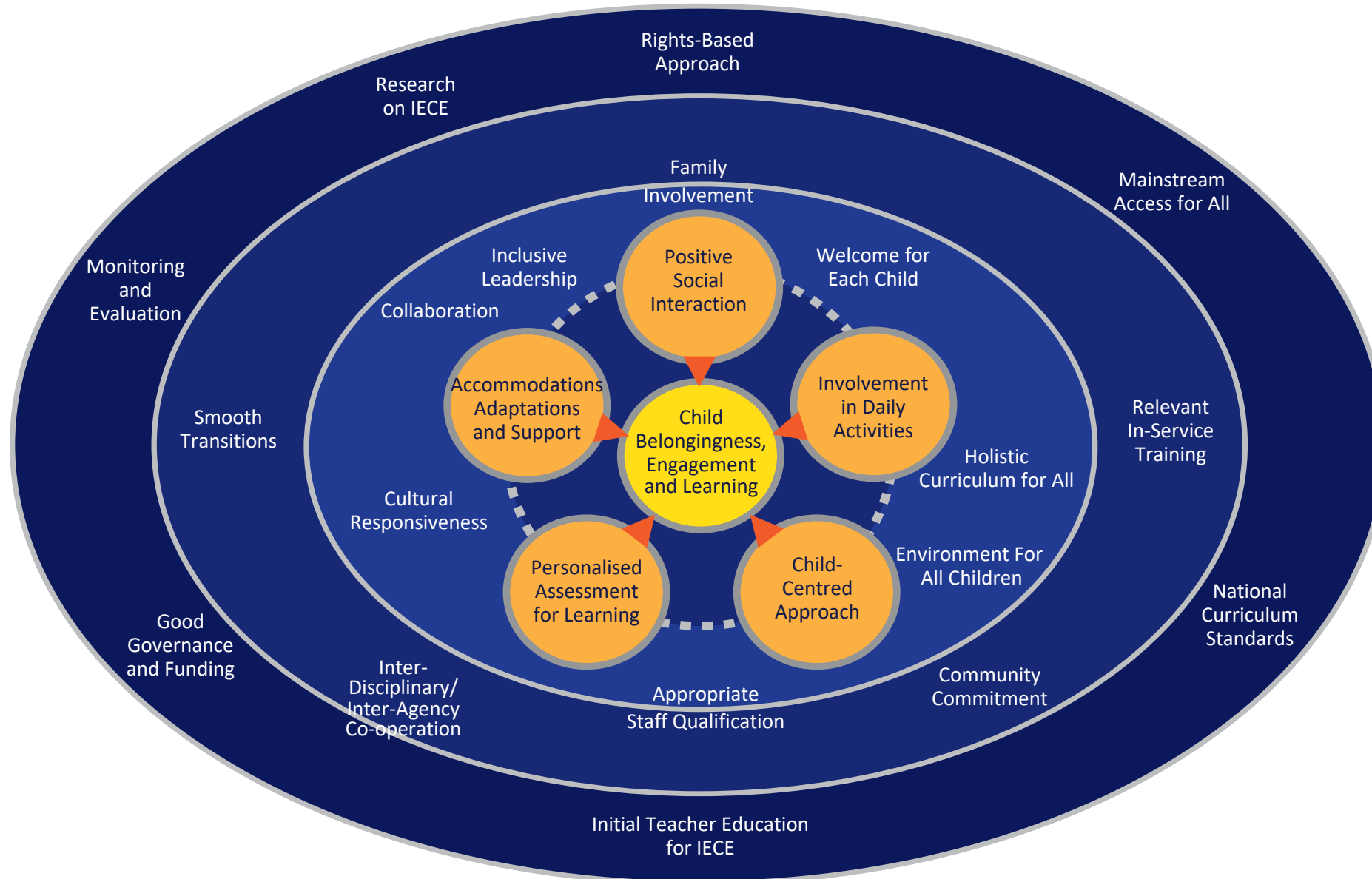
The resulting ecosystem model for inclusive early childhood education comprises five dimensions:

- (1) The inclusive education outcomes, belongingness, engagement and learning
- (2) Processes within the micro environment of the preschool
- (3) Structural factors within the micro environment of the preschool;
- (4) Wider inclusive structural factors at community, and
- (5) at national levels.

The framework can be useful for practitioners as well as researchers and policy makers seeking to improve inclusive early childhood education provision.

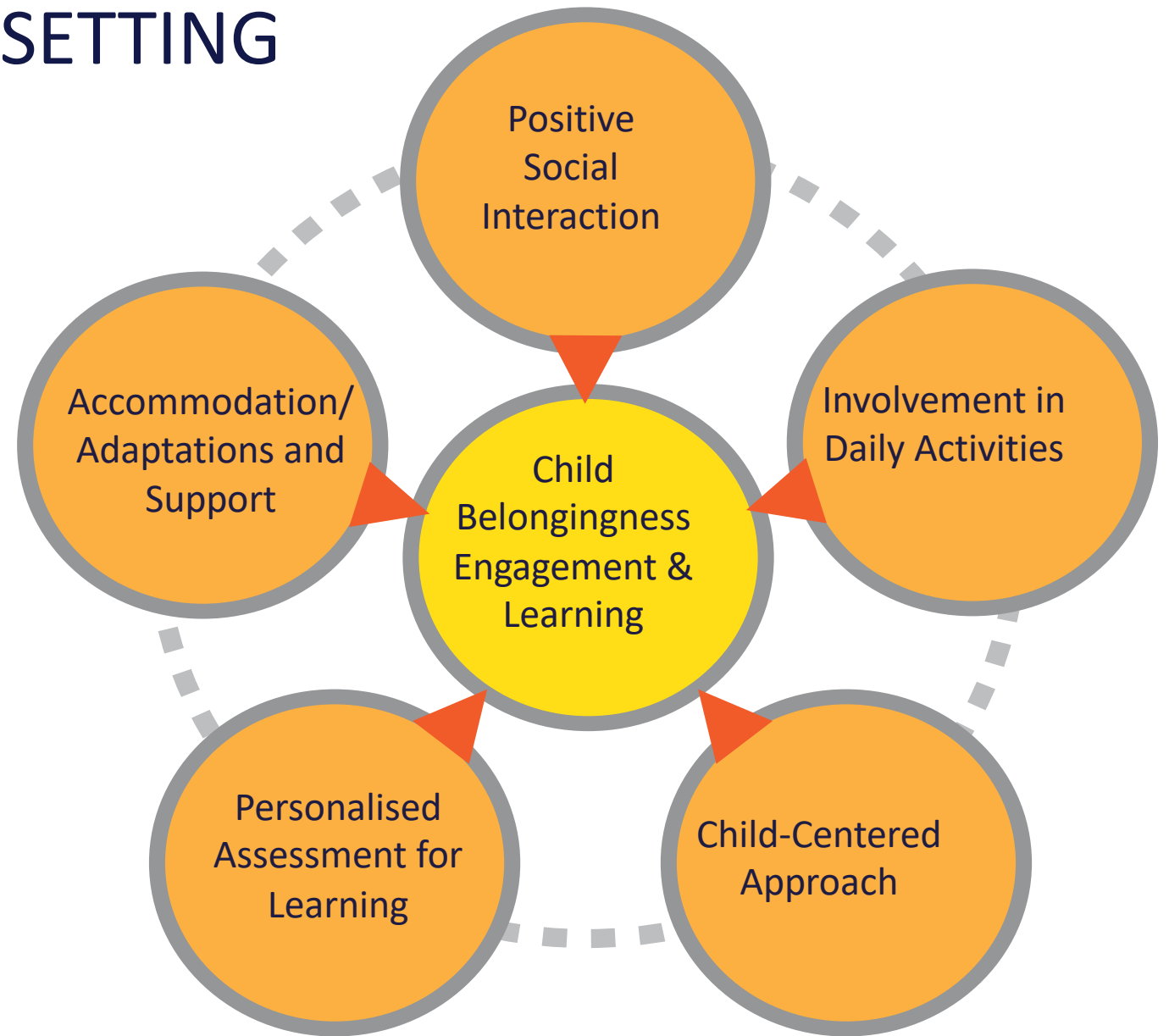
Bartolo, Paul A ; Kyriazopoulou, Mary ; Björck-Åkesson, Eva ; Giné, Climent (2021). An adapted ecosystem model for inclusive early childhood education: a qualitative cross European study. *International journal of school & educational psychology*, Vol.9 (1), p.3-

# The Ecosystem model of inclusion



# PROCESSES WITHIN THE SETTING

Children are directly involved in these five processes that enable them to belong, to be engaged and to learn



# SELVREFLEKSJONSVERKTØY FOR INKLUDERENDE BARNEHAGEMILJØ

## Inclusive Early Childhood Education Environment Self-Reflection Tool

1. Overall welcoming atmosphere
2. Inclusive social environment
3. Child-centred approach
4. Child-friendly physical environment
5. Materials for all children
6. Opportunities for communication for all
7. Inclusive teaching and learning environment
8. Family-friendly environment

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017.  
*Inclusive Early Childhood Education Environment Self-Reflection Tool.*  
(E. Björck-Åkesson, M. Kyriazopoulou, C. Giné and P. Bartolo, eds.). Odense, Denmark





## Inclusive Early Childhood Education

New Insights and Tools – Contributions from a European Study



*Inkluderande utbildning i förskolan: Nya rön och verktyg – Slutlig sammanfattande rapport.*

*Inkluderende barnehage: Nye innsikter og verktøy – Endelig sammendragsrapport.*

*Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Ny indsigt og nye værktøjer – endelig, sammenfattende rapport.*

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*Osallistava varhaiskasvatus: Uudet näkymät ja työkalut – lopullinen yhteenvetoraportti.*

*Evrópumiðstöð um nám án aðgreiningar og sérþarfir, 2017. Menntun ungra barna án aðgreiningar: Ný innsýn og verkfæri – Endanleg yfirlitsskýrsla.*

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017. *Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Final Summary Report.* (M. Kyriazopoulou, P. Bartolo, E. Björck-Åkesson, C. Giné and F. Bellour, eds.). Odense, Denmark

<https://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/inclusive-early-childhood-education-new-insights-and-tools-final-summary>