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# BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR OUTCOME-ORIENTED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Supporting young children's acquisition of socio-emotional competences, early literacy, and numeracy, and facilitating their transition to primary education

*A brief on the TSI project for Lower Saxony, Germany  
(2024 – 2026)*

## FACTSHEET

### BACKGROUND

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) forms the first tier in the German education system, and all children from the age of one year are legally entitled to benefit from this service.

Across the European Union, ECEC is regarded as a steppingstone for success in education and lifelong learning. In the past decade, Lower Saxony has increased state funding to improve the structural quality of and the access to ECEC provision for all children, focusing primarily on enhancing the staff-child-ratio and reducing parental fees.

In Germany there is no tradition or mandate for ECEC provision to focus on and plan for achieving specific learning outcomes. The education mandate as decreed in national legislation is to support children in becoming self-determined, responsible, and socially minded individuals (§ 22 SGB VIII). The education mandate as decreed in the state legislation of Lower Saxony (§§ 2-4 NKiTaG) sees explorative self-learning in every-day activities as the foundation for early learning.

There is no systemic approach to realizing the ambition that all children should – within their individual possibilities – acquire certain levels in competences that are vital for a successful transition to primary school. There is no specific curriculum for elementary education and there are no guidelines for ECEC professionals on how to plan or strive for children to achieve learning and development outcomes.

### AIM OF PROJECT

Building on the existing education mission and previous ECEC reforms around enhancing access and structural quality, the State Government of Lower Saxony seeks to improve the pedagogical quality and effectiveness of ECEC provision by strengthening systematic and team-based planning to support children achieving developmental milestones and basic skills and competences.

In this context, the aim of the TSI project is to build and validate a framework to strengthen outcome-oriented pedagogy and planning for learning outcomes to support competence development among children.



## OUTCOME-ORIENTED ECEC

**Outcome-oriented ECEC provision** creates an enabling environment for ECEC staff and its leadership to provide high quality outcome-oriented pedagogy. It entails a joint responsibility of all who have ECEC provision in their remit.

**Outcome-oriented pedagogy** involves educators planning for children to achieve learning and development outcomes as a team, thinking from the perspective of the child and collaborating closely with children and their families. It further involves the designing and re-designing of learning environments in support of children's learning based on continuously observing and documenting children's progress as well as constantly self-reflecting on the effectiveness and effects of pedagogy in the setting. Outcome-oriented pedagogy has to take care that all children feel safe and well. Its ambition is to ensure that each child can realise its full potential by scaffolding self-determined learning and enabling self-efficacy. Taking children's needs, learning pathways and circumstances of life into account, outcome-oriented pedagogy systematically encourages and challenges every child throughout elementary education with a child-centred attitude to step by step acquire the competences needed for a successful transition to primary education.

**Learning and development outcomes** are competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) that children achieve through the enabling of self-efficacy and (learning) experiences.

## EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT

The project is funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). The TSI is the EU programme that provides tailor-made technical expertise to EU Member States to design and implement reforms.

## INTENDED IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

In the short term, it is expected that the Ministry of Education of Lower Saxony adopts a framework for outcome-oriented ECEC provision which seeks to systematically support the acquisition of social-emotional competences, early literacy and early numeracy in elementary education, thus facilitating children's successful transition to primary education.

In the longer term, it is expected that through the implementation of the framework for outcome-oriented ECEC children's acquisition of socio-emotional competences, early literacy and numeracy, and their transition to primary education will be improved in Lower Saxony.

## PROJECT OUTPUTS

- "As-is" analysis of current practice on the systematic support of outcome-oriented pedagogy in the provision of early childhood education and care and the transition to primary education in Lower Saxony.
- Study of relevant good practice from other European countries.
- Report with consolidated recommendations on outcome-oriented ECEC and its continuation in primary education in Lower Saxony.
- Framework for supporting outcome-oriented pedagogy and ECEC provision in elementary education and the transition to primary education, to be pilot-tested in selected ECEC institutions.
- Final recommendations for adoption, dissemination and implementation of the framework.

## PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

Technical support is provided by the Early Childhood Development section of UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, in co-operation with the European Commission.

The project is led by the Ministry of Education and is supported by stakeholders from the areas of ECEC provision, professional training and primary education.