

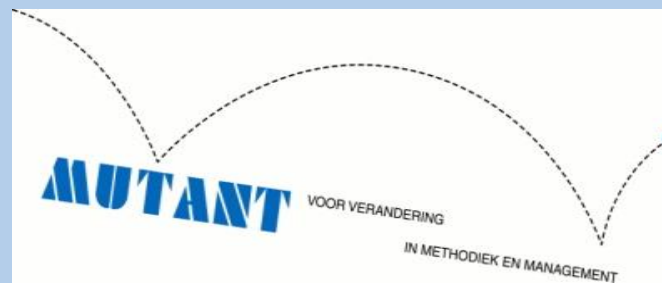


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Early Childhood Learning Communities in Utrecht municipality

Based on
Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework

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Aims Early Childhood Learning Communities

- * improving pedagogical / educational quality
- * improving cooperation with parents
- * enhancing mutual, cooperative and continuous learning in teams



Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework 0- 6

- * 4th city in the Netherlands:
- * 10 % students of Utrecht University
- * 20 % ethnic minorities
- * 80 primary schools, 60 pre schools, over 100 child care centres



Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework 0 - 6

- * Commitment of 200 primary schools, preschools and child care centres**
- * Governance boards signed agreement**
- * Local authority stimulating and giving financial support**
- * Implementation in organisations (schools and centres) and in learning communities in neighbourhoods**
- * Started in 2013; now 18 learning communities**



Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework 0- 6

- 1) pedagogical / educational quality
- 2) cooperation with parents
- 3) mutual, cooperative and continuous learning in teams, organisation, community

Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework 0-6

1) Pedagogical / educational quality



Focus on:

- creating warm relations in the group,
- showing a sensitive eye and ear for the needs of children,
- giving children more responsibility,
- using casual moments as educational moments,
- facilitating fantasy- and role play,
- encouraging activities in exploration and science.

2) Cooperation with parents

Focus on:

- reciprocity in communication,
- respect for each other's competencies and responsibilities,
- respect for the social, cultural and economic backgrounds of parents, taking into account the diversity of needs of parents.



Utrecht ECCE Quality Framework 0-6

3) Mutual, cooperative and continuous learning in teams, organisation, community

- **Based on the CoRe research in 17 EU countries: *Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (London, Gent, 2011)***
- **Based on 21st century needed competences (*WRR report, 2013*)**

3) Mutual, cooperative and continuous learning in teams, organisation, community

- Focus on:
- continuous learning,
- reflection
- questioning attitude, critical reflection,
- cooperation
- a learning attitude at all levels in the organisation (pedagogical staff, teachers, coordinators, managers, director)
 - * in learning communities (mutual learning; cooperative learning)
 - * in communities of practice (change agents, ownership)

Result CoRe research:

**From a competent
professional**

**towards a competent
team**

A Venn diagram consisting of three overlapping circles. The top-left circle is orange, the top-right circle is teal, and the bottom circle is yellow. They all overlap in a central white area.

**towards a competent
organisation**

Five focal points



- 1) Deepening and ownership at all levels of organisation
- 2) Culture of learning, experimenting and reflecting
- 3) Collective responsibility for improvement of quality
- 4) Application of competent educational coaches/coordinators
- 5) Conditions and management

Focal point 1

Deepening and ownership

- * Description of shared vision**
- * All levels participate, are committed: ownership**
 - * From individual attitude towards collective vision and goals**
- * Connection with educational principles in Utrecht Quality Framework**

Focal point 2

Culture of learning, experimenting and reflecting

- * Democratic: all levels reflect and participate**
- * Responsibility in learning process**
- * Every one is learning and teaching**
- * Learning opportunities, experimenting**
- * Co-construction of new knowledge**

Focal point 3: Team reflection as professional attitude



- **Individual reflection:** each one has its own role as professional
- **Team reflection:** cooperation and learning together
- **Critical reflection:** focus on educational changes

Early Childhood Learning Communities

Participants:

- professional diversity in functions 0-6: primary school teachers, preschool teachers, child care educators,
- different schools and centres
- in one neighbourhood/district
- transfer new knowledge from learning community to school/centre team



Early Childhood Learning Communities

Approach:

- participants choose educational principle from Utrecht Quality Framework to improve in their practice
- meetings mix of exchanging, coaching and instruction
- in between meetings: practicing, reflection, cooperating with critical friend, reading texts



Focal point 4:

Competent team coaches

- Focus on pedagogical/educational principles and questions**
- Connection Quality Framework and daily practice**
- Feedback in practice**
- Pedagogical documentation**

Focal point 5:

Conditions and management

- **Time to reflect and to document**
- **Participation at all levels in the organisation**
- **Transfer new knowledge from network to team**

Results learning communities

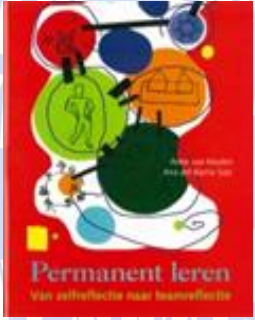
- * **New ideas to improve quality**
- * **Transfer from network to team**
- * **Interaction between diversity of professionals**
- * **Improvement multiple perspectives and respect for diversity**

Learning communities



‘In a learning community you learn together, it is not just learning from an expert. And so you get connected together. And so there is more cooperation!’

Literature



- *Van Keulen, A & A. del Barrio Saiz (2010) Permanent leren. Van zelfreflectie naar teamreflectie. SWP, Amsterdam . (A professional learning community. Action-training research- project to improve professional quality in early childhood organisations through critical reflection)*
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- *Leseman, P., Keulen, A. van, et al. Utrechts kwaliteitskader voor educatie van het jonge kind 2012/2013. Aanbevelingen voor versterking van professionele competenties voor medewerkers, team en organisatie. (Utrecht Quality Framework young child. Recommendations to improve professional competences for practitioners, teams and organisations.)*

