



Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

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## Childcare vouchers [21]

<b>Country</b>	Luxembourg
<b>Authors of the table</b>	<i>Luxembourgish team</i>
<b>Name of the policy / practice</b>	CSA (Chèque- Service Accueil: childcare service voucher) - 2009 (Règlement grand-ducal du 13 février 2009) [21]
<b>Short description and the main characteristics of the policy / practice</b>	<p>This policy aimed to reform child benefits and renamed a previously existing Child Benefit Fund (CNPF) with “Caisse pour l’avenir des enfants” (CAE). For decades the (para)public non-formal education had been financed via the state budget by a full-cost model with parent participation (calculated on social criteria), while the private non-formal sector had no direct funding. The CSA was introduced to stimulate the demand in childcare services. In parallel, maison relais as day care centers for children up to 12 years of age were created.</p> <p>The <i>Chèques-Services d’Accueil</i> (CSA) function as a central control and financing instrument. It is of structural significance within the Luxembourgish welfare state by lowering the costs of childcare for parents - residents and cross-border workers. The introduction of this care voucher system has tremendously increased the demand for childcare services among parents. In addition to the partially subsidizing principle for parents’ childcare expenses the CSA also provides some financial stability for childcare providers. Accordingly, this system serves both as a pivotal instrument for central state control and financing, and as a mechanism to particularly increase disadvantaged children’s access to professional educational services (non-formal ECEC and daycare). On this basis it also aimed at facilitating the inclusion of socially disadvantaged children in the education and care system thus promoting greater equal opportunities for all children between 0 to 12 years old.</p> <p>One important feature of this policy is the early childcare vouchers to help inclusion and integration of all children hence increasing social cohesion in the context of Luxembourg.</p> <p>With the CSA, parents can benefit from reduced rates in non-formal institutions that charge fees unlike the formal education system (pre-school/primary/secondary schools). The following facilities can be recognized as a childcare service by the Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crèches (kindergartens; children from 0-4 years old); while conventional (public and private non-profit) crèches follow more strongly a centralized structure, non-conventional (private-commercial) crèches are to some extent decentralized. Parents with children between 1-4 are eligible to 20 hours per week of</li> </ul>

	<p>childcare vouchers in crèches that implement the plurilingual education program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maisons relais/drop-in centers for children from 0-12 years old: these establishments offer greater flexibility and are less expensive than other day-care centers. They are open from 7am to 19pm and offer reception, lunch, care activities (incl. “entertainment”) and homework help. Parents with children between 1-4 are eligible to 20 hours per week of childcare vouchers in maison relais that encompass age groups from 0-4 and implement the plurilingual education program.</li> <li>• Mini-crèches: these are decentralized structures that can accommodate up to 11 children between 0 and 12 years old simultaneously, with only 4 children being under 1 year old. Their aim is to expand the offer, especially in rural areas. A minimum of 2 people can manage a mini-crèche,</li> <li>• Child caregivers (<i>assistants parentaux/Dageselteren</i>) are individuals who’d take care of children at their own home from few hours a day to full day or even nights.</li> </ul> <p>Any facility with a state agreement must meet the structural quality standards and depending on their convention with the state also the process quality requirements and fulfil the public service mission of guaranteeing equal opportunities for all children with the ultimate aim of social cohesion.</p> <p>The subsidiarity system of the CSA is calculated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The income of the household in which the child lives (married couples, civil partnerships or cohabiting couples are considered in the same way);</li> <li>• The number of children receiving family allowances in the household and the rank of the child in the family group;</li> <li>• Specific benefits depending on the age of the child (e.g., 20 hours per week of free childcare for children aged 1 to 4 in a crèche or maison relais that implements the plurilingual education program).</li> </ul> <p>Additional fees that are not covered by this subsidiarity system, depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The form of childcare facility (crèche, maison relais, assistant parental);</li> <li>• The type of childcare facility (private-commercial, non-profit, or communal);</li> <li>• The number of hours the child is cared for in the childcare facility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target group of the policy / practice:</b></p>	<p>As of December 31, 2022, 119,533 families with 198,697 children have benefited from the full amount of the family allowance, compared to 117,985 families with 196,921 children on 31 December 2021. While the policy targets families below a certain income threshold, these are not the majority who make use of it – most probably because of a lack of information about the voucher system among disadvantaged families.</p>

<b>Educational stage or transition phase of the policy / practice</b>	Early childhood education and primary (all children from 0 to 12)		
<b>Level of implementation</b>	Macro: National Meso: Municipal Micro: Institutional		
<b>MILC dimensions</b>	Multi-level and Life course perspective; Note: while there is no explicit mention of intersectionality or intersectional groups, the policy is aiming for an improvement regarding vulnerable groups such as low SES and migrant backgrounds (particularly non-Luxembourgish -speaking groups)		
<b>Key dimensions of the identification procedure</b>			
<b>CONDITIONS: Foundational and premise level</b>	<i>Comprehensive</i>	this is a national and comprehensive policy for residents and non-residents.	High
	<i>Coherent</i>	The CSA facilitates provision of non-formal ECEC (children 0-4) as well as day-care/after-school care (up to the age of 12) for children.	High
	<i>Continuous</i>	The policy integrates existing mini-crèches into public service hence increasing quality control over their provision and extending allowances to all children at ECEC level.	High
<b>ELEMENTS: Structural level</b>	<i>Contextual</i>	The policy is highly sensitive to the multilingual and multicultural context of Luxembourg by integrating the implementation of a multilingual education programs in early childhood education into the childcare voucher system.	High
	<i>Relational</i>	Starting from 2022, there are on-the-job trainings for pedagogical practitioners of the mini-crèches delivered by the Ministry of Education as well as ongoing quality assurance and evaluation of their programs to ensure harmonization and high quality of services.	Medium
<b>TOOLS: Action level</b>	<i>Autonomous</i>	Pedagogical practitioners in all above-mentioned facilities do have autonomy in their practice knowing that the aim is to promote high quality education (e.g., multilingualism) to all children hence creating social cohesion and equality.	Medium
	<i>Reflexive</i>	In the case of the plurilingual education program which is linked to the childcare voucher system is reflexive because it aims to increase participation of parents, and create collaboration among ECEC centers with schools, social, and medical services.	Medium

<p><b>Evidence backing the policy / practice:</b></p>	<p>With the childcare vouchers, parents can benefit from an extent of free childcare services in SEA (services d'éducation et d'accueil) as well as certain communal out-of-school activities provided by structures that are recognized as a CSA service provider by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (MENJE). The study by Hornung et al. (2023) indicates that family background (socioeconomic status, migration background and home language group) is linked with ECEC attendance. High SES children speaking Portuguese or French at home attended crèche for more hours a week than children from high SES families speaking Luxembourgish at home. The CSA has strengthened the private ECEC sector in Luxembourg, while the duration of ECEC attendance did not change significantly. No further evaluation is currently available on these non-formal kindergartens and CSA.</p> <p>Bénéficiaire du chèque-service pour l'accueil d'un enfant. (n.d.). <a href="https://guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/famille/parents/garde-enfants/cheque-service.html">https://guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/famille/parents/garde-enfants/cheque-service.html</a></p> <p>Caisse pour l'avenir des enfants. (2021). Rapport d'activité 2021. <a href="https://cae.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/2021-Rapport-d-activites-version-finale-pour-site.pdf">https://cae.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/2021-Rapport-d-activites-version-finale-pour-site.pdf</a></p> <p>Caisse pour l'avenir des enfants. (2022). Rapport d'activité 2022. <a href="https://cae.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/public-2022-rapport-d-activites-versdef.pdf">https://cae.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/public-2022-rapport-d-activites-versdef.pdf</a></p> <p>Formation continue - enfancejeunesse. (2021, December 7). Enfancejeunesse. <a href="https://www.enfancejeunesse.lu/fr/formation-continue/">https://www.enfancejeunesse.lu/fr/formation-continue/</a></p> <p>Hornung, C., Kaufmann, L. M., Ottenbacher, M., Weth, C., Wollschläger, R., Ugen, S. &amp; Fischbach, A. (2023). Early childhood education and care in Luxembourg. Attendance and associations with early learning performance. Luxembourg Centre for Educational Testing (LUCET).</p> <p>Receiving childcare service vouchers. (n.d.). <a href="https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/enseignement-formation/education-prescolaire-primaire/parascolaire/demarche-cheque-service.html#bloub-2">https://guichet.public.lu/en/citoyens/enseignement-formation/education-prescolaire-primaire/parascolaire/demarche-cheque-service.html#bloub-2</a></p>
<p><b>Brief concluding analysis of policy / practice in the context:</b></p>	<p>The main features of this policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and education allowance</li> <li>• Increase in access into and participation in non-formal education, in particular at ECEC level and day care</li> <li>• Quality assurance and evaluation extended to kindergartens that accommodate children benefiting from CSA</li> <li>• Indirectly preparing for multilingual education in this non-formal stage</li> </ul>

