

**Graduado o Graduada en Maestro en Educación Infantil (Programa
Internacional)**

Graduate in Early Childhood Education Teacher (International Program)

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Final Degree Project

Un análisis comparativo de los sistemas

educativos en España y Dinamarca

A comparative analysis of the

Educational Systems in Spain and

Denmark

Estudiante: Lidia Domínguez Fernández

Student: Lidia Domínguez Fernández

Tutor: María Ángeles Hidalgo Gordo

Departamento: Ciencias humanas y de la educación.

Campo: Educación

Mayo, 2023

“The future of the world is in my classroom today.”

- *Ivan Welton Fitzwater*

RESUMEN

En el presente Trabajo Fin de Grado (TFG, en adelante), se hace una comparación detallada entre la Educación Infantil en Dinamarca y la de España. De cómo es la legislación en ambos países, el enfoque educativo, las metodologías que se llevan a cabo, además de los valores propios de cada país. Todo ello se basará en el segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil, en edades de 3-6 años. Igualmente, nos centraremos tanto en las similitudes como en las diferencias, reflexionando acerca de la educación en ambos países y proponiendo posibles mejoras que se podrían realizar tanto en el entorno educativo actual de España como en el de Dinamarca. Además, se subraya la relevancia del juego en el desarrollo integral del niño y el papel del docente en la promoción del aprendizaje. También se intentará dar respuesta a cuestiones como: ¿Atiende a las verdaderas necesidades del niño el sistema educativo actual en la etapa 3-6? ¿Dispone el maestro de las herramientas necesarias? Finalmente, se concluye que estas disparidades educativas están moldeadas por las normas culturales y los valores de cada país, y comprender estos elementos es fundamental para que los educadores puedan atender de manera efectiva las diversas necesidades de sus estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Dinamarca, España, educación infantil, legislación, metodología, educación.

ABSTRACT

In this Final Degree Project, a detailed comparison is made between Early Childhood Education in Denmark and Spain. This includes an analysis of the legislation, educational approach, methodologies employed, as well as the inherent values of each country. Specifically, we will focus on the second cycle of Pre-Primary Education, ages 3-6. Likewise, throughout the study we will address both similarities and differences, reflecting on education in both countries and objectively proposing potential improvements that could be made in the current educational environments of Spain and Denmark. Additionally, the significance of play in a child's holistic development and the role of the teacher in promoting learning are emphasized. The paper also aims to address questions such as: Does the current educational system adequately address the true needs of children in the 3-6 age group? Does the teacher have the necessary tool? Finally, it is concluded that these educational disparities are shaped by the cultural norms and values of each country, and understanding these elements is crucial for educators to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students.

Keywords: Denmark, Spain, Early Childhood, legislation, methodology, education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN SPAIN	2
2.1. Legislation	2
2.2. Educational approach and value system	4
2.3. Methodologies	5
3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN DENMARK	8
3.1. Legislation	8
3.2. Educational approach and value system	10
3.3. Methodologies	12
4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPAIN AND DENMARK	13
5. STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT AFTER KINDERGARTEN IN SPAIN AND IN DENMARK	17
6. DISCUSSION	19
7. CONCLUSIONS	22
REFERENCES	24
APPENDIXES	30

1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education is a fundamental stage for the development of the child, both in the first cycle (0-3 years) and in the second cycle (3-6 years).

As we all know, education in each country is different. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to compare the second cycle of pre-primary education between Denmark and Spain. Education is very different in the two countries. In the Nordic one, education between 3 and 6 years old is based on free play and "risky play". On the other hand, in Spain, a much more specific curriculum is followed, in which the areas to be worked on, the contents and the objectives are developed to a greater extent. For this reason, it can be said that teachers in Spain must work in a more specific way, through concrete activities that practitioners must create. Educators will carry out didactic units related to the interests of the children and with which teachers will work on the contents and objectives to be achieved during the course. Still, children also invest a lot of time in playing.

The importance of play in the integral development of the child during this stage has been demonstrated (Anderson, 2010), something that is clearly very present in both Danish and Spanish culture. However, in the first case a greater number of hours are spent playing (UNESCO, 2018), play as the trigger of development being the main educational focus. In this context, children spend most of their time playing, choosing by themselves what they want to do and having almost absolute freedom. On the other hand, in Spain, children have a stricter routine, where although at some moments they do play, there are also many other guided activities in which the teacher plays an essential role (Llorent, 2013).

This role of the teacher is also a very important aspect to consider, as it is completely different in the two countries. In both countries, teachers have to work so students learn how to comprehend the world. In the Nordic countries, the teacher is usually a "companion" rather than a "guide". In other words, they are in charge of the welfare of the students, observing them and evaluating their process, but without really getting into explaining contents (Einarsdottir, & Wagner 2006). In both countries, teachers have to work so students learn how to comprehend the world. In Spain educators have a more leading role, although the protagonist will always be the students.

Finally, in this paper, we will examine not only the main differences in the methodologies, legislation, and educational approach between Spain and Denmark but also the values of each country, focusing on how the families see education and why this vision changes the educational practice completely (González, 2020). Early Childhood Education differs greatly between nations and is a crucial time in a child's development (Neuman, 2005). This paper specifically explores the second cycle of pre-primary education in the Nordic country and Spain, emphasizing the contrasts in teaching approaches,

curricula, and teacher roles, highlighting the significance of play in a child's holistic development and underscoring the role of teachers in promoting learning. These educational disparities are shaped by the cultural norms and values of each nation, which also influence how families perceive education (Einarsdottir & Wagner, 2006). By examining these elements, instructors can better comprehend and respond to the diverse demands of their students.

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN SPAIN

2.1. Legislation

Early Childhood Education in Spain is established through the Royal Decree 95/2022, of February 1; which regulates the minimum contents of this educational stage. Article 3 of the Royal Decree establishes that "Infant Education constitutes an educational stage with its own identity that takes care of boys and girls from birth to six years of age". In addition, it also mentions that "this stage is organized in two cycles. The first one comprises up to three years of age and the second one, from three to six years of age". In the present Final Degree Project we will focus on the second one.

In Article 7, the objectives of this stage are established. They are 8:

- a. To know their own body and that of others, as well as their possibilities of action and learn to respect differences.
- b. To observe and explore their family, natural and social environment.
- c. To progressively acquire autonomy in their usual activities.
- d. To develop their emotional and affective capacities.
- e. To relate with others in equality and progressively acquire basic guidelines for coexistence and social relations, as well as exercise in the use of empathy and peaceful conflict resolution, avoiding any kind of violence.
- f. To develop communication skills in different languages and forms of expression.
- g. Initiate in logical-mathematical skills, reading and writing, movement, gesture and rhythm.
- h. To promote, apply and develop social norms that promote equality between men and women.

The evaluation criteria is explained in Article 12, and consists of the following parts:

1. The evaluation will be global, continuous and formative. Direct and systematic observation will constitute the main technique of the evaluation process.
2. The evaluation at this stage shall be aimed at identifying the initial individual conditions and the pace and characteristics of the evolution of each child. For this purpose, the assessment criteria

established for each cycle in each of the areas will be taken as a reference.

3. The evaluation process shall contribute to improving the teaching and learning process by assessing the relevance of the methodological strategies and resources used. To this end, all professionals involved shall evaluate their own educational practice.
4. Parents and legal guardians shall participate and support the evolution of the educational process of their children, as well as be aware of the decisions related to the evaluation and collaborate in the measures adopted by the centers to facilitate their educational progress.

Furthermore, throughout Article 13, great importance is given to the individual differences of each student, so that individualized attention will constitute the ordinary pattern of the educational action of teachers and other education professionals. The educational intervention will also consider the diversity of the students, adapting the educational practice to the personal characteristics, needs, interests and cognitive style of the boys and girls and identifying those characteristics that may have an impact on their development during this school period with the aim of ensuring the full inclusion of all students. Procedures will be adapted within the educational administrations to allow the early detection of difficulties that may arise within the teaching-learning process.

It is important to mention how the contents to be addressed are organized through different proposals. As explained in Article 8, Pre-primary education is divided into three areas:

- Growing in Harmony.

In this area teachers will work in an environment that enables emotional and affective manifestations.

- Discovery and Exploration of the Environment.

Parra Ortiz (2003) emphasizes the importance of fostering autonomy, confidence, and security in young children, enabling them to understand and adhere to social rules and appreciate the benefits of group living. Through interactions with peers and adults, children learn to form relationships, develop emotional connections, and acquire values of collaboration, tolerance, and respect, which provide a strong foundation for their socialization. The peaceful resolution of conflicts and the cultivation of positive attitudes such as trust, empathy, and attachment are crucial in this process.

- Communication and representation of reality.

It is very necessary at this stage to work on both oral and written communication, as they will be necessary throughout their integral development.

It is also important to mention that, this article also states the requirement of a Bachelor's Degree to work in the second cycle of Pre-primary education, or a Master's Degree with the speciality of Early Childhood Education.

Finally, Article 7 of the Royal Decree 132/2010 of February 12, explains that schools offering the second cycle of Early Childhood Education shall have a maximum of 25 pupils per class, which

translates into up to 25 students per teacher.

In conclusion, Early Childhood Education in Spain is regulated by the Royal Decrees 95/2022 and 132/2010, which outlines the minimum contents for this educational stage. This stage is divided into two cycles, and Article 7 establishes eight objectives, including the development of emotional and affective capacities, communication skills, and logical-mathematical skills. Evaluation is global, continuous, and formative, and individualized attention is emphasized to ensure the full inclusion of all students. The contents are organized into three areas: Growing in Harmony, Discovery and Exploration of the Environment, and Communication and Representation of Reality. The involvement of professionals with specific qualifications is also highlighted. Ultimately, this system aims to foster children's autonomy, confidence, and social skills, providing them with a strong foundation for their future development. (Spanish education system structure in Appendix 2).

2.2. Educational approach and value system

The educational approach to Early Childhood Education is based on the Royal Decree 95/2022 mentioned in the previous section. There are objectives to be met and the role of the teacher, among many other duties, is to ensure that these goals are achieved throughout the academic year. For that reason, we can say that the teacher has a fundamental role and is a determining factor in the elements of quality or failure within the education system. A system made up of good educators will have a much higher percentage of educational success than one made up of unqualified and non-vocational ones (Buxarrais, 1997).

Among some of the adjectives and qualities that should define a teacher, we can find empathy, maturity and emotional stability. In addition, they must also have the ability to be a good communicator in order to make themselves understood by children (Jiménez, 2004). Being a good conflict mediator is of utmost importance if we want to have a peaceful classroom to work in. And, last but not least, it is necessary to have the appropriate psycho-pedagogical training.

As Jiménez (2004) explains, Early Childhood Education's teachers play a didactic and animation role, as well as an organizing one since they prepare the activities and the necessary materials. They play the role of motivator and stimulator of development, as, in addition to offering the children actions that allow them to learn, they will also boost children's curiosity and interest in the elements that surround them.

For all these reasons, in Spain the teacher's role is of utmost importance for the fulfillment of the current educational legislation. In addition, in the Spanish educational approach the relationship between the school and the families must be close. If families do not collaborate with schools and do not participate in their children's education, it will be very difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils

learn at the same time as their peers and achieve the objectives in the same way.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to comment on the importance given to values in Early Childhood Education. Goleman (1999) argues that values are the reasoned and firm conviction that something is good or bad and that it is more or less convenient for us. Values reflect the personality of individuals and are the expression of the moral, cultural, affective and social tone set by the family, school, institutions and society.

If we want to work on these values at school, we must do so in a transversal and globalized way so that this knowledge makes sense to the children. As Cuevas (2004) explains, we can divide in three areas some of the values that children should learn: Firstly, it is important to focus on self-concept and self-esteem, highlighting the importance of understanding and accepting oneself before being able to develop a positive self-image. It emphasizes the notion of identity, positive self-evaluation, and acknowledging one's limitations. Secondly, it is crucial to emphasize the relevance of avoiding prejudice and learning empathy, assertiveness, and emotional regulation. Finally, Cuevas (2004) highlights the value of collaboration, teamwork, and positive social interactions. It is underscored the significance of developing communication and cooperation skills, maintaining positive relationships with others, and learning strategies for conflict resolution.

2.3. Methodologies

In the field of Early Childhood Education, various methodologies have been developed with the aim of improving the teaching and learning process in this educational stage. In Spain, the methodologies used in this educational stage have evolved over the years, and currently there are several options that adapt to the needs of each center and educational community. Furthermore, the inclusion of all learners is of great importance. This involves providing a safe, welcoming, and adapted environment to the individual needs of each child, in order to promote their integral development. To achieve inclusive education, it is important for education professionals to work closely with families and other support services to ensure that all children have access to quality education and feel valued and respected as unique individuals (Toboso, 2012).

The globalized technique is one of the most common used approaches in Spain. As explained by Urbano Reyes (2014), the methodology of globalization aims to explore the world of children in order to help them discover, observe, analyze, interpret, and critique it. We can find different types of globalization. Normalized or formal globalization is based on centers of interest analyzed by Decroly (Dubreucq, Choprix & Fortuny, 1999), but the focus is on cultural content rather than the development of basic skills such as observation, experimentation, association, and expression. To implement this type of globalization effectively, Urbano Reyes (2014) suggests focusing on developing skills, general

objectives, and overall development to form the child's personality and explains the different types of globalization: Informal globalization focuses on clear objectives and organizing activities to achieve them, with a focus on developing habits of conduct and working in a designated space. Mixed globalization is a combination of the two types and involves starting with informal globalization to develop basic skills and compensate for any deficiencies, followed by normalized or formal globalization to focus on cultural content.

Urbano Reyes (2014) comment that, in order to encourage the child's holistic growth, this methodology places a strong emphasis on teaching through projects that combine several fields of knowledge. The projects are structured around a particular theme and are completed in an interdisciplinary manner with the intention of fostering children's experiential and investigative learning. The author also emphasizes the integration of several topic areas as well as the use of real-life contexts and experiences to facilitate learning.

The constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning, which highlight the active role of the learner in creating knowledge and the significance of social interaction and context in influencing learning experiences, serve as the theoretical foundation for the globalized methodology approach.

Constructivism is a widely accepted theory in Early Childhood Education that emphasizes the importance of children actively constructing their own knowledge and understanding through interactions with their environment (Piaget, 1952). According to this theory, children are not passive recipients of information, but rather active participants in the learning process who construct meaning from their experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). This means that educators need to create a learning environment that encourages exploration and discovery, allowing children to interact with materials and peers to build their own understanding of the world.

To implement a constructivist approach in Early Childhood Education, teachers must understand the developmental needs of children and provide opportunities for hands-on learning that build on their prior knowledge and interests. Educators should create a curriculum that is open-ended, flexible, and based on the children's interests and needs. The use of play and discovery-based learning should be encouraged to promote active engagement and foster creativity (Kamii, 1985).

The sociocultural theory, which Vygotsky first advanced in 1978, contends that learning is a social activity that takes place as a result of interactions between a person and their environment. According to Vygotsky, learning happens when a kid engages in meaningful and pertinent activities within their cultural environment and learns through the mediation of adults and more experienced peers. This notion is put into practice in Early Childhood Education by encouraging group work, conversation, and the child's active involvement in the learning process (Rogoff, 1990). Additionally, the significance of the child's operating cultural and social context is emphasized.

The objectives of the Spanish educational system are in line with this method of teaching. These

objectives, which are based on the integral education of students and aim to prepare them for their personal and professional growth, are outlined in the Organic Law of Education (LOE). Developing students' fundamental competencies and skills, encouraging their personal and social growth, offering an inclusive education that respects diversity and equips students for active participation in society and the workforce, and encouraging lifelong learning and ongoing knowledge and skill updating are some specific goals. Through education at all levels, from Early Childhood Education to higher education and vocational training, these goals are pursued. Urbano Reyes (2014) argues that the effectiveness of this approach depends on the utilization of real-life circumstances and experiences because it enables students to recognize the value and relevance of what they are learning and to draw connections between various topic areas. As they work together to solve problems and exchange ideas and viewpoints, this method also fosters student collaboration and communication.

Overall, promoting relevant and interesting learning experiences for young children in Spain can be done by using the globalized methodology approach. As Urbano Reyes (2014) points out, this strategy necessitates a change in educators' perspectives on teaching and learning, but it may be able to assist students in acquiring the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes they need to succeed in a world that is changing quickly. For instance, it is necessary for teachers to adopt more updated pedagogical approaches based on research and scientific evidence. For example, it has been shown that learning through play and exploration are fundamental to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children in this stage.

On the other hand, it is also very important to talk about the methodology by "rincones" or "corners" as it is one of the most widely used in Spain. Morón (2010) explains that this methodology consists of organizing the classroom space into areas designated for different uses, where different proposals are offered to carry out activities of different types belonging to various educational fields. This method allows for adapting to the differences, interests, and learning rhythms of each child, while working on all educational fields in an integrated, playful, and enriching way. The "corners" are designated areas within the classroom that must be adaptable and provide a variety of learning possibilities, enabling kids to conduct quick experiments, projects, and manipulations, foster their creativity, and connect with their peers and adults (Romera & Martínez, 2008). They allow students to perform independently or under the guidance of the teacher, and they teach them how to cooperate, communicate, and work in teams. The quantity and design of these "corners" are determined by the goals and areas to be covered as well as the available space, resources, and the number of pupils in each classroom. In order to adapt to the needs of each student, it is crucial to provide them in a way that allow for autonomous work as well as others that require the teacher's presence. The activities should also have varying degrees of difficulty (Piatek, 2009).

The use of this methodology in the classroom, as Torres (2014) explains, has a great number of

advantages for students. These advantages include the growth of habits of personal and social autonomy, the stimulation of logical thinking and experimentation, the promotion of social relationships and the acquisition of behavioral norms, the representation of various aspects of reality through symbolic forms, and the improvement of the child's overall development. In addition, it facilitates meaningful learning and meets students' play needs.

Finally, collaborative learning is also an important part of the Spanish educational system, as it is increasingly valued and used in classroom. It is a pedagogical approach that encourages collaboration among students to solve problems and carry out tasks jointly. In this way, the development of social and emotional skills is promoted, as well as the acquisition of knowledge in a more effective and meaningful way (Lucero, 2003).

In conclusion, Spanish Early Childhood Education has developed over time and now offers a variety of techniques that may be customized to meet the demands of each center and educational setting. One of the most widely applied ways is the globalized methodology approach, which is founded on the constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning. This method puts a lot of focus on teaching through interdisciplinary projects that bring together several fields of knowledge and are organized around a certain theme. It is crucial to design a learning environment that promotes experimentation and discovery, letting kids engage with objects and their peers to deepen their understanding of the world. Furthermore, the "rincones" or "corners" method is widely used in Spain, where the classroom is divided into areas with different purposes to provide a variety of learning opportunities and allow students to work independently or with the teacher's supervision. Both strategies seek to encourage Spanish young children to engage in meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN DENMARK

3.1. Legislation

Denmark has a rich and longstanding tradition of providing high-quality Early Childhood Education, with a particular emphasis on play and social interaction. Pre-primary education is a well-established component of the country's educational system, and it is considered an essential stage for children's development. The country's history of Early Childhood Education dates back to the early 1800s, when preschools were established for the children of working-class families who needed care, instruction, and socialization while their parents were at work. Over time, these facilities evolved into kindergartens, or "børnehaver," which are now accessible to children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Similar to many other nations, Denmark places a high priority on equity and quality in

education. The relationship between fairness and quality in education as well as the necessity to remove barriers that poor students confront have been highlighted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These challenges include discrimination, a lack of resources at home, and a low socioeconomic standing. To improve academic performance and outcomes for disadvantaged students, it is crucial to invest in teacher training and professional development, as well as to provide schools and underprivileged children with more resources and support. OECD (2000) tells us how crucial it is to address educational disparities in order to increase success for all children, especially the most disadvantaged. To achieve long-lasting and beneficial results for children, nations should establish a holistic strategy that addresses both the quality and equity of education.

Moreover, the Danish government has recognized that access to high-quality Early Childhood Education is essential to supporting working parents and promoting gender equality. As a result, the country has invested heavily in expanding access to Early Childhood Education for all children, regardless of their family's socioeconomic status. For instance, the "Folkeskole" system, which was introduced in the 1970s, provides free education from the age of six to sixteen, including Early Childhood Education, primary, and secondary education. In addition, Denmark's parental leave policy provides parents with up to 52 weeks of leave, which can be split between the mother and father, and many employers offer flexible work arrangements that allow parents to balance work and family responsibilities.

The Law on Day Care (Dagtilbudsloven), which was initially established in 2007 and updated in 2018, governs Pre-primary education in Denmark. This law lays out the guidelines for delivering Early Childhood Education and care services, along with the goals, curricula, and standards of excellence. All children between the ages of 0 and 6 are covered by the legislation, which guarantees that they have free access to high-quality care and education programs that support their growth and development. Early Childhood Education and care services in Denmark are required by law to offer a secure and stimulating environment that promotes kids' social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. All families must be able to access, utilize, and afford the services, and they must be built around a child-centered philosophy that considers the unique needs, passions, and abilities of each kid.

The curriculum is organized around six learning areas, which are:

- Identity and coexistence.
- Communication and language.
- Culture, aesthetics, and creativity.
- Nature, science, and technology.
- Body, movement, and health.

- Socialization, play, and learning.

Play-based learning, which is regarded as the main pedagogical strategy in Danish Early Childhood Education, is emphasized in the curriculum. Play is incorporated into all facets of the curriculum since it is recognized as a key activity for children's learning, growth, and wellbeing. Play-based learning encourages children's imagination, creativity, and social skills while allowing them to explore, experiment, and create.

With the exception of municipal childminder facilities, all daycare facilities (dagtilbud) must have a manager and a deputy manager who are both certified educators. Daycare facility managers have the authority to decide how the administrative and instructional administration of the facility they are in charge of will be handled. Additionally, there are two different categories of employees: nursery and childcare assistants (børnepasningsassistenter) and child and youth educators (paedagoger). Preschool teachers (børnehaveklasser) are also competent instructors. The teachers working at the Folkeskole have finished a four-year study program at an institution for teacher preparation. (OECD, 2000).

To sum up, Early Childhood Education is an important phase in a child's development, and Denmark has set up a robust system to make sure kids get the best possible care and instruction at this age. All children in Denmark have access to free, high-quality care and educational programs that support their growth and development according to the Law on Day Care, which regulates the provision of Early Childhood Education in the country. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on play-based learning as the primary pedagogical technique and is structured around six learning areas. All childcare centers must have a manager and a deputy manager who are both trained educators to assure high-quality care and education, and many staff types work at these centers. (Danish education system structure in Appendix 1).

3.2. Educational approach and value system

As it is explained in The Danish Pre-School Curriculum, in the Nordic country Pre-primary teachers are highly educated and trained professionals who hold a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field. The teacher's (or pedagogue's) role is to create a safe and stimulating environment that fosters children's learning, development, and well-being. They act as a facilitator, guide, and partner in children's learning, providing support and guidance while allowing children to explore and experiment on their own. The pedagogue also works closely with parents and families to support children's development and to ensure continuity between home and kindergarten. A three-year degree is needed to work in the Early Childhood Education field. Students receive a thorough education that covers both the theoretical and practical facets of teaching throughout this time.

As Einarsdottir and Wagner (2006) explain, in order to perform their jobs well, pedagogues are expected to possess a number of critical competencies. Among them we can find observing and assessing a child's development, designing and organizing educational activities that are tailored to the needs of the child, and building trusting, cooperative relationships with parents and other education professionals.

However, one can work as an assistant in a Danish nursery or kindergarten without any education related to the field. According to the Danish Ministry of Education, there are no educational prerequisites to work as a kindergarten assistant. To support the kindergarten's instructional efforts, the assistant must, nevertheless, be able to work well with children (Ministry of Education, 2022). Thus, while a degree in Early Childhood Education or a closely related field may be useful, it is not a strict requirement. The primary duty of an assistant is to support the kindergarten's pedagogical efforts and cooperate with the pedagogues. This can entail duties like setting up and planning activities, keeping an eye on kids as they play outside, and helping with meals and naps. The assistant's job is essential in fostering a supportive and secure learning environment for the kids even though they may not be teaching or crafting the curriculum.

On the other hand, it is also important to talk about Danish values and the way families take responsibility for their kids' education. Danish family values place a high importance on education, and parents are expected to actively participate in their children's education. One of the countries with the greatest percentages of parental involvement in education is Denmark, according to research by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019). By attending parent-teacher conferences, offering their time to the school, and assisting with homework, parents are encouraged to get involved in their children's education. In Denmark, kindergartens are highly valued and considered to be a crucial component of a child's early education. All children in Denmark receive free Early Childhood Education, including kindergarten, from the time they turn one until they are old enough to start primary school.

As Mikkelsen (2021) indicates, Danish parents instill in their children the values of independence and taking ownership of their actions from an early age. Children are urged to take care of themselves, for instance by dressing and preparing meals for themselves, which helps them become independent and self-assured. Danish parents also give their kids a lot of freedom and independence in making decisions. Children are encouraged to engage in family discussions and express their thoughts, which promotes a sense of independence and self-worth.

Finally, it is also important to talk about how inclusion is also prioritized by Danish family ideals. As Anderson (2014) explains, Denmark is one of the most accepting societies, being known for its progressive policies, which are mirrored in its family values and include gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights. Children are taught to value diversity and tolerate people's differences, showing kindness and

compassion to people of all racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This principle is represented in the educational system as well, where they are taught to cooperate and work as a team.

3.3. Methodologies

Denmark is renowned for having a top-notch educational system that begins in early life. The Danish approach to Early Childhood Education is completely child-centered, where the needs and interests of the kid are prioritized (Kamerman, 2000). As in Spain, both Piaget and Vygotsky developed theories that highlight the importance of education. In this case, their theories focused on child-centered learning, play-based learning, and collaboration between teachers, families, and the larger community.

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1952) emphasizes the role of children as active learners, who construct their understanding of the world through interactions with their environment. This theory aligns with the Danish approach to Early Childhood Education, which prioritizes the child's interests and needs, giving them the freedom to explore and learn at their own pace. Play-based learning, which is a cornerstone of the Danish educational system, aligns with Piaget's theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of hands-on, experiential learning.

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning (1978) focuses on the importance of social interaction in children's cognitive development. In his view, children learn best when they are engaged in collaborative activities with peers and adults, who can provide guidance and support. This theory aligns with the Danish approach to collaborative learning, which recognizes the value of teamwork in achieving shared objectives and advancing children's learning and development.

The child-centered method places a focus on the value of giving kids freedom to explore, learn, and grow at their own speed. Prins and Smidt (2021) claim that the child-centered approach values each child's uniqueness and concentrates on fostering a compassionate and encouraging atmosphere that fosters their holistic development. This strategy is based on the idea that kids are capable of participating actively in their education.

In addition, play is a crucial part of Danish Early Childhood Education. The physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth of children can be facilitated by play-based learning. Constantino and Hussain (2018) explain that this type of learning entails giving kids the chance to participate in meaningful play activities that are appropriate for their interests and skill levels. These activities are thoughtfully developed and created to support their learning and growth.

As mentioned above, another important value that guides Danish education is inclusion. No matter a child's socioeconomic status, aptitude, or disability, the Danish educational system is devoted to giving them equal chances. Creating a friendly and encouraging environment that caters to the needs

of all children is the goal of inclusive education. According to O'Hanlon (1995), inclusive education entails modifying instructional strategies, curricula, and learning settings to accommodate students' various needs.

We also have to mention collaborative learning as an essential component. To make sure kids have the help and direction they need to succeed, teachers work closely with kids, families, and other professionals. Collaborative learning entails forming alliances between kids, teachers, families, and the larger community (Lala & Ghodsi, 2012). This strategy acknowledges the value of teamwork in achieving shared objectives and advancing children's learning and development.

In conclusion, the methodologies followed in Early Childhood Education in Denmark are characterized by a child-centered approach, play-based learning, inclusive education, and collaborative learning. The success of the Danish educational system and its status as a model for other nations can both be attributed to these principles and practices. Education in this Nordic country has laid the groundwork for kids' lifelong learning and development by giving children's needs and interests top priority, offering chances for purposeful play, creating a warm and welcoming environment, and encouraging cooperation among stakeholders.

4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPAIN AND DENMARK

Spain and Denmark are two countries with different cultures and education systems. However, both countries share some similarities and differences in terms of Early Childhood Education. Firstly, in Spain, individualized treatment of pupils is of great importance, as the involvement of professionals with specific qualifications. On the other hand, in Denmark, great importance is given to play and autonomy. In both countries the government ensures that all children have access to Early Childhood Education. Therefore, we must talk about the similarities and differences that we can find between both countries, both in terms of current legislation and educational approach, main values, and methodologies that are followed.

With regard to legislation, both nations acknowledge the value of Early Childhood Education in a child's development. They also stress the requirement for experienced specialists to guarantee the level of instruction provided. Additionally, both Spain and Denmark acknowledge the importance of providing each student with individualized attention and the necessity of tailoring educational practices to the individual needs, interests, and cognitive styles of the kids. However, they differ in their approach and priorities. The Early Childhood Education framework in Spain places a strong emphasis on the improvement of a child's communication, logical and mathematical reasoning, and emotional and affective capacities (Royal Decree, 95/2022). Additionally, it places a high value on

providing individualized attention and evaluation through systematic observation. Danish early childhood education, in contrast, places a strong emphasis on play, sociability, and creativity, with outdoor activities playing a crucial role in children's development (Dagtilbudsloven, 2018).

The Spanish educational system is structured, with clear guidelines and a strong emphasis on individualized instruction. However, it may be too rigid and lack the emphasis on play and social contact that is so important for children's development. The Danish method, on the other hand, seems to be more flexible and centered on play and socialization, although it can be less organized and lack the emphasis on academic abilities that is required for later growth.

In both cases the role of families is important. In Spain, parents and schools have a tight working relationship, making it essential for parents to work with schools and be involved in their children's education. They are expected to support their kids' learning at home by reinforcing what is being taught in the classroom. Spanish schools usually provide regular communication with families through meetings, reports, and parent-teacher conferences. It would be difficult for teachers to ensure that students learn and accomplish goals if families do not support the school. In a similar way, education is highly valued in Denmark, where parents are expected to take an active role in how their kids are educated. Parental involvement in the schooling of their kids is of the utmost importance especially at a young age. Danish schools typically collaborate closely with families to build a learning environment that supports children's intellectual and social growth. In addition to supporting the educational progress of their kids at home, parents are encouraged to participate in activities, take part in school events and attend parent-teacher conferences. This partnership between families and schools is seen as essential for children's success in education.

Concerning values in both countries it is important to instill values in children from a young age. In Spain, it is believed that a person's values are a reflection of their personality and are influenced by their family, school, institutions, and society. It is thought that teaching values in a cross-cultural and global context can help kids understand them better. Responsibility, generosity, commitment, tolerance, humility, thankfulness, honesty, and respect are among the characteristics that are deemed crucial for kids to develop (Ortega & Mínguez, 2003). Danish parents put a lot of effort into teaching their kids to be independent and self-sufficient. Danish children are taught to take care of themselves from an early age, such as by getting dressed and making their own meals, which helps them grow up independent and confident. In addition, parents give their children a lot of flexibility and autonomy in choices, which fosters a sense of autonomy and self-worth. Danish family values also place a high priority on inclusiveness and diversity, teaching kids to respect and tolerate others' differences as well as to be kind and compassionate to people from all walks of life. Summarizing, teaching children significant principles that will influence their character and behavior in the future is a shared objective of both countries. Although Spain and Denmark may approach instilling values differently, the end

result is the same: a child who is responsible, respectful, tolerant, and inclusive.

Last but not least, it is essential to make a comparison between the methodologies followed in both countries, since although they have quite similar ideals, they are also carried out differently and with disparate objectives. The Danish approach places a higher priority on child-centered learning that encourages children to explore, learn, and grow at their own pace through play-based activities, in contrast to the Spanish approach, which emphasizes the use of projects that combine various fields of knowledge and real-life contexts to foster experiential and investigative learning. Both approaches share the goal of promoting holistic development and are grounded in constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning of Piaget and Vygotsky, which recognize the active role of the learner in creating knowledge and the importance of social interaction and context in influencing learning experiences.

The globalized methodology and “corners” are two common methods of Early Childhood Education in Spain. The latter organizes the classroom space into separate zones allocated for different activities that respond to the needs, interests, and learning rhythms of each child. The “corners” promote the growth of social and personal autonomy, rational thought, experimentation, interpersonal connections, behavioral standards, symbolic representation, and general development (Pardo, 2013). Additionally, they help kids work independently and teach them how to collaborate, communicate, and form teams. In Denmark, they also divide the class into zones, but in a way that children have total freedom of movement and play. Therefore, we could say that in the Nordic country, a similar classroom space distribution is followed, but used in a much more flexible way and with a completely different approach, as children have more freedom to move, play and choose their activities.

Furthermore, giving children the opportunity to explore, learn, and develop at their own pace is a key component of the child-centered approach in Denmark. It acknowledges the individuality of every kid and works to cultivate a supportive environment that promotes holistic growth. The Danish method is not complete without play-based learning, which contributes to promote the development of the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities (Bubikova-Moan, Næss & Wollscheid, 2019). As the Danish educational system aims to provide all students with equal opportunities, regardless of their socioeconomic status, aptitude, or disability, inclusive education is also a core value. To make sure that children have the support and guidance they require to succeed, collaborative learning—which entails creating partnerships between children, teachers, families, and the greater community—is also crucial. The main different is that, in Spain, playtime is often seen as a break from learning, while in Denmark, play is considered an integral part of education.

In conclusion, despite having different cultures and educational systems, Spain and Denmark have some things in common and others that set them apart when it comes to Early Childhood Education. Both nations recognize the value of this educational stage in a child's development as well as the

requirement of qualified professionals to ensure the quality of instruction delivered. Their methods and top priorities differ, though. The Spanish education system emphasizes individualized instruction, academic abilities, and systematic observation, while the Danish approach centers on play, socialization, and creativity, with outdoor activities playing a significant role. The role of families is essential in both countries and in terms of values, both Spain and Denmark prioritize the instilling of values in children from a young age. They share the goal of promoting holistic development and believe in constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning that recognize the active role of the learner in creating knowledge and the importance of social interaction and context in influencing learning experiences. Chart 1 illustrates the comparison of aspects examined in both countries.

	SPAIN	DENMARK
LEGISLATION	Royal Decree, 95/2022. Communication, logical and mathematical reasoning. Emotional and affective capacities. Individualized attention.	Dagtilbudsloven, 2018. Play, sociability, and creativity, with outdoor activities.
ROLE OF FAMILIES	Tight relationship.	Tight relationship.
VALUES	Responsibility, generosity, commitment, tolerance, humility, thankfulness, honesty, and respect.	Independence and self-sufficiency. Inclusiveness and diversity.
METHODOLOGIES	Experiential and investigative learning. Holistic development, “corners” and globalized methodology.	Child-centered learning and play-based learning. Holistic development, “corners” and globalized methodology.

Chart 1. Aspects examined in Spain and Denmark.

5. STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT AFTER KINDERGARTEN IN SPAIN AND IN DENMARK

In order to analyze the level of performance acquired by Spanish students compared to Danish students, we will use the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as it allows for the comparison of the level of knowledge and skills of students between different countries and provides information on equity and equal educational opportunities. First, we will compare the 2018 report between Spain and Denmark and, after that, we will talk about the possible reasons for these differences in results.

PISA is part of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) and it is conducted every three years to measure the reading, mathematics, and science skills of 15-year-old students worldwide. In 2018, Spain and Denmark participated in the assessment and the results show some interesting differences.

Regarding Spain's performance in the 2018 PISA Report, it is noted that students scored an average of 481 points in mathematics, 483 points in science, and 481 points in reading. These results are a little bit better than what was seen in the PISA Report from 2012. Although Spain performs better than average in science, it still lags behind average in reading and mathematics. Danish students, on the other hand, scored an average of 503 in math, 500 in science, and 504 in reading. Overall, Denmark outperforms the PISA average in every category. Denmark's performance increased in all categories, while Spain improved their scores in math and science, but slightly decreased in reading. Overall, both countries showed progress in their performance, but Denmark showed a greater improvement.

The PISA report of 2018 also examined the gender gaps in academic performance. In both Spain and Denmark, girls outperformed boys in reading, while boys tended to perform better in math and science. In Spain it was more significant than in Denmark, particularly in math, where the difference in performance between boys and girls was much larger. In the Nordic country, the gender gap was relatively smaller than in many other nations, indicating that the Danish education system is more inclusive of both genders.

Regarding socioeconomic factors, it has been found that academic achievement and socioeconomic status are positively correlated in Spain, as they are in the majority of other nations (OECD 2018). In other words, pupils from households with greater wealth perform better academically than students from less affluent families. In Denmark, however, the correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance is much less pronounced than in other countries, including Spain. This suggests that the Danish educational system is more egalitarian in terms of educational opportunities.

The 2018 PISA report also looked at how pupils in Denmark and Spain felt about education. The findings demonstrated that in both nations, pupils who had an optimistic mindset about learning tended to score higher on the PISA exams. Comparatively, 73% of pupils in Denmark and 66% of students in Spain said they enjoyed attending to school. This shows that pupils in Spain are slightly less enthusiastic about education than those in Denmark. However, the report also revealed that there were variations in how pupils in the two nations regarded the quality of teaching. While only 56% of students in Spain said their teachers were effective in assisting them in learning, 76% of students in Denmark said the same. Furthermore, only 9% of students in Denmark and 25% of students in Spain claimed that their teachers did not use language that was clear and understandable. Chart 2 illustrates the results of PISA 2018 between Spain and Denmark.

AREA OF ASSESSMENT	SPAIN	DENMARK
Reading	481	495
Mathematics	481	502
Science	483	495
Equity in Education	0.871	0.852
Equal Opportunities in Education	0.773	0.800
Access to Education	96.5%	100%

Chart 2. PISA 2018: Spanish and Danish scores.

Note: Mean scores for reading, mathematics, and science are based on the average score of students in each country who participated in the PISA assessment in 2018. The scores range from 0 to 1000. The scores for equity, equal opportunities, and access to education range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating better performance. The percentage for access to education represents the percentage of 15-year-old students in each country who are enrolled in school.

Michael (2018) explains that the performance of students on the PISA tests at age 15 is the culmination of numerous elements that have an impact on children's development from conception up until the evaluation. The “educational prosperity” framework used by PISA identifies five such factors that it calls “foundations for success”: resources, inclusive environments, learning time, quality instruction, and family and community support. Furthermore, the success of a country's educational system is founded on a number of important pillars. The first pillar is equity, which states that all students should have equal access to a quality education regardless of their socioeconomic status or family history. The second pillar is quality, which entails offering pupils a top-notch education that matches market demands and prepares them for the future. Efficiency is the third basis, where educational systems must make efficient use of their resources. It is also emphasized the need for

strong leadership, good instructors, and a culture that prioritizes education for a high-performing educational system. Finally, lifelong learning is so important as it involves providing educational opportunities to individuals throughout their lives to help them adapt to the changing world of work and society (Michael, 2018).

6. DISCUSSION

As we have been able to verify, the results of the PISA report are higher in the Nordic country. In what follows, we will discuss some of the possible reasons, among which the education system, teachers' qualifications, culture and attitude towards education and socioeconomic status stand out. These reasons are related to the "foundation of success" identified by the "educational prosperity" framework used in PISA (Michael, 2018). After this, we will also discuss how the approaches are both in Spain and Denmark and how we could improve the educational system of both countries.

The design of the educational system may be one reason for the disparities in performance. Due to Denmark's highly decentralized educational system, each municipality has a significant amount of autonomy when it comes to deciding on the educational curriculum and allocating resources (Moos, 2014). On the other hand, the majority of decisions regarding the curriculum and the distribution of resources are made by the central government in Spain, which has a less decentralized education system. The lack of flexibility and response to the unique needs of pupils in various parts of the country may result from this centralized organization.

The number and opportunities of teachers is perhaps another cause for the variations in performance. Teachers in Denmark enjoy a great deal of autonomy when it comes to planning and executing classes. Furthermore, teachers in Denmark are held in high regard by society, which might inspire them to be the best in their field. On the other hand, teachers are frequently overworked and paid relatively little in Spain compared to the Danish income. Sánchez (2009) explains that in the former, the salary is higher than the average of the OECD countries and the European Union. This, however, does not seem to be perceived by the population, especially among the affected population, which generally has a negative opinion of the salary received. Perhaps it is a perception taken from within, from the day-to-day activity. In addition, there is a severe teacher shortage, which forces many teachers to teach courses in which they lack the necessary expertise.

Culture and attitudes towards education are also factors that can explain differences in academic performance. Denmark has a strong culture of lifelong learning and places a high importance on education. The commitment of the Danish government to offering free education from kindergarten through university only serves to strengthen this attitude toward education. In comparison, fewer

students in Spain continue their education after completing secondary school. Some students lack motivation as well, and many are thinking about leaving school early (see appendixes fig. 3). Bernardí and Requena (2010) explain how a significant relationship has been found between social background and academic results, tracing the differences back to the educational level of the

parents, the prestige of their occupations, their income level, their quality of life, or even their lifestyle.

Finally, and as we have mentioned before, socioeconomic status is another factor that can explain the differences in performance. The social level and academic achievement are positively correlated in Spain, as they are in many other nations. This implies that students from more affluent families are more likely to succeed academically. The Danish education system appears to be more successful in ensuring equitable chances for all pupils, regardless of their socioeconomic background, as seen by the fact that this correlation is significantly weaker there.

We must also talk about the different approaches, both in Spain and in Denmark. The approach to Early Childhood Education in Spain, which is based on regulation and defined objectives, can ensure that all the educational needs of children are addressed. On the other hand, the approach to Early Childhood Education in Denmark, which focuses on play and social interaction, can help children develop important social and emotional skills for their future development. Both strategies have advantages and combining them would be good for kids' development. The development of cognitive skills like communication and logical-mathematical reasoning must be prioritized, but sociability, creativity, and play are equally important for a well-rounded education. To guarantee that each child's particular needs are satisfied, individualized consideration and assessment are required. A high-quality education that can promote children's future growth and development must also incorporate the participation of skilled experts. For these reasons, combining the two approaches would help children develop holistically, stimulate creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication, and get them ready for a world that is changing quickly. In order to foster a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development, Early Childhood Education should strive to create a supportive and engaging atmosphere that caters to the individual needs, interests, and learning cycles of each child. If teachers want to promote a lifetime love of learning, it is also vital to acknowledge the value of play, autonomy, inclusion, and collaborative learning.

How could we improve Early Childhood Education? Next, we will talk about which aspects of the Danish education system could be implemented in Spain, and vice versa.

The emphasis on play-based learning is one of the key contrasts between the Danish and Spanish approaches to Early Childhood Education. In Denmark, play is regarded as the main method of early learning for kids. To educate social, emotional, and cognitive skills, teachers employ games and activities. The Spanish method, in comparison, is more formal and scholarly and places more of a focus

on memorization. The Danish strategy would bring to the Spanish system advantages in terms of developing essential skills. More play-based activities in the curriculum can help Spanish children develop important social and cognitive skills while having fun. This would require a shift in mindset for Spanish educators and policymakers, who already recognize the importance of play in learning but not as much as in the Nordic countries. Investing in teacher training programs that emphasize child development, play-based learning, and family participation is essential if Spain wants to improve Early Childhood Education. Although a large financial outlay will be necessary, the advantages for the Spanish kids would be enormous. Related to this outlay, it is important to talk about how Denmark's Early Childhood Education system benefits from significant government investment. Early Childhood Education receives a large percentage of Denmark's education budget, which enables smaller class sizes, higher salaries for educators, and better facilities. In Spain, Pre-primary education is not as well-funded. Many schools struggle to provide high-quality education to young children due to limited resources. More funding must be dedicated to the field of Early Childhood Education in Spain if the system is to be improved.

On the other hand, Denmark could also adopt some of the main aspects of the Spanish education system. The use of technology in Early Childhood Education is one area where Spain might offer insightful advice. Technology is being incorporated into the curriculum in Spain to improve learning and make it more interesting for young learners. Children's cognitive and social abilities can be developed with the use of digital resources including interactive games, apps, and online platforms. Danish teachers could improve the learning experiences of young students and provide them the skills they need to use digital tools, which are becoming more and more crucial in today's society, by implementing such technology.

Improving Early Childhood Education in both Spain and Denmark is essential to guarantee that every child has access to high-quality early education, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This is crucial for their future academic success, personal development, and overall well-being. There are various ways we can enhance this educational stage, and it is vital to prioritize this area to foster a strong foundation for the future of our society. To achieve this, it is necessary to improve the financing of Early Childhood Education programs and infrastructure, enabling smaller class sizes and better-trained teachers. With adequate resources, we can provide children with the best possible educational experience and ensure that their needs are met effectively. Furthermore, it is vital to offer continual professional development opportunities to Early Childhood educators to keep them updated with the latest information and skills, including dealing with families, curriculum design, and child development. This will guarantee that teachers possess the necessary expertise and knowledge to provide children with the best possible education. Lastly, involving families in their children's early education is another crucial tactic to ensure their academic progress. This can be achieved by keeping families informed

about their child's development on a regular basis and providing opportunities for them to participate in classroom activities and events.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this paper, we have been able to come to the conclusion that investing in Early Childhood Education is crucial for building a strong educational foundation for our future generations. It is vital to provide children with a nurturing and stimulating environment to foster their growth and development effectively. By implementing the strategies mentioned above, we can ensure that every child has access to high-quality early education, giving them the best start in life. It will take a multifaceted strategy that includes more money, play-based learning, continued professional development, and significant family involvement to improve Early Childhood Education in Spain and Denmark. We can ensure that every child has the best start in life by putting these tactics into practice.

The Nordic countries, particularly Denmark, have consistently performed better in the PISA report than Spain and many other nations. Several factors could explain this disparity, including the design of the educational system, the differences between Danish and Spanish teachers, the culture and attitudes towards education and the socioeconomic status. Among these factors, the Danish education system's emphasis on play-based learning, individualized consideration and assessment, and government investment in Early Childhood Education are essential aspects that could be implemented in Spain to improve its education system. The combination of the Spanish and Danish approaches could help children develop holistically, stimulate creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication, and prepare them for a rapidly changing world. By improving Early Childhood Education, Spain could create a strong foundation for its future generations, ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

It is important to recognize and address the constraints and challenges that can occur when conducting research on Early Childhood Education in Spain and Denmark. Since a lot of the content is only available in Danish and Spanish, access may be limited for those who do not speak these languages. Furthermore, acquiring thorough and current information is difficult as Early childhood education policies and practices may vary across different regions in Spain, making it difficult to obtain a standardized overview. In the case of Denmark, it is true that its early childhood education system receives less international attention compared to other countries, resulting in limited available information in languages other than Danish.

Other limitations related to the comparison of these countries are the cultural and environmental variations that shape their methods. Direct comparisons are further made more difficult by differences

in educational structures, curricula, and regulations. Furthermore, it might be challenging to accurately compare particular elements due to problems with data comparability brought on by various methods of data collection, classification, and reporting. It is important to consider the cultural and contextual factors influencing each country's Early Childhood Education system and account for variations in data collection and reporting methods. By doing so, a more nuanced and informed understanding of Early Childhood Education in Spain and Denmark can be achieved.

Furthermore, it is essential to discuss the lines of future research that I would like to pursue after this project, delving deeper into some of the aspects we have studied throughout this paper. On the one hand, I would like to talk about teacher training and professional development, exploring the training and professional development opportunities available to Early Childhood Educators in Spain and Denmark. By investigating the impact of different training models and approaches on teacher quality, pedagogical practices, and student outcomes we could provide recommendations for improving teacher education programs in both countries. On the other hand, I would like to investigate about cross-cultural exchange and best practices. Exploring opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and the sharing of best practices between Spain and Denmark in the field of Early Childhood Education could be so useful for my future career. I would investigate successful initiatives, programs, and approaches implemented in one country that could be adapted and implemented in the other. This research could contribute to the development of innovative and effective practices in both contexts.

In conclusion, I would like to extend a heartfelt invitation to the reader to embark on a captivating voyage of exploration and reflection. Throughout this remarkable journey, we have delved into the diverse methodologies, legislation, and educational approaches of Spain and Denmark, unveiling the significance of comprehending the distinct perspectives and values that mold their respective educational systems. We have come to appreciate the profound role of play in fostering the holistic development of children aged 3 to 6, as well as the crucial position educators hold in cultivating a love for learning. This paper has raised thought-provoking questions about the genuine needs of children and the indispensable tools required to deliver a high-quality education. By engaging with this paper, I hope to have created a heightened awareness and appreciation for the rich spectrum of educational diversity, equipping educators with a robust foundation to empathetically meet the unique needs of their students. Above all, my aspiration is for Early Childhood Education in Spain and Denmark to reciprocally enrich one another, driven by inspiration and an unwavering commitment to providing extraordinary education that shapes and nurtures the generations yet to come.

8. REFERENCES

Ali, E., Constantino, K. M., Hussain, A. & Akhtar, Z. (2018). *The effects of play-based learning on early childhood education and development*. Journal of Evolution of medical and Dental Sciences, 7(43), 4682-4685. <https://doi.org/10.14260/jemds/2018/1044>

Anderson, J. (2010). *The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development* <http://lanefacs.pbworks.com/w/file/attach/65563699/Importance%20of%20Play.pdf>

Anderson, K. (2014). *The Resilience of the LGBT Communities in Denmark, the United States, and Russia through the past 50 Years: A Comparative Analysis*. Retrieved from <https://www.argus-a.com/archivos-dinamicas/the-resilience-of-the-lgbt-communities.pdf>

Bernardí, F. & Requena, M. (2010) *Inequality in Educational Transitions: the case of post-compulsory education in Spain* <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/revista-de-educacion/gl/dam/jcr:19f56111-5e09-4f3f-8699-fb6029afc478/re201004-pdf.pdf>

Bubikova-Moan, J., Næss, H. & Wollscheid, S. (2019). *ECE teachers' views on play-based learning: a systematic review*. EUROPEAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL VOL. 27, NO. 6, 776–800
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/1350293X.2019.1678717?needAccess=true&role=button>

Buxarrais, M. R. (1997). *La formación del profesorado en educación en valores. Propuesta y materiales* (3a ed.). Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer.

Dubreucq, Choprix M. & Fortuny. (1999). *Ovide Decroly*. Correo pedagógico 5: 4-8. <https://medull.webs.ull.es/pedagogos/DECROLY/decroly.pdf>

Einarsdottir, J. & Wagner J, (2006) *Nordic Childhoods and Early Education: Philosophy, Research, Policy, and Practice in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden*. <https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=YPgnDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA43&dq=preschool+tea>

[cher+denmark&ots=dD9uMEffB0&sig=JVEI7d6TwAI9DyeenUjfDyLV6vw#v=onepage&q=preschool%20teacher%20denmark&f=false](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352111111/figure/fig/1/figure-pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

García Cuenca, A. (2012). *Metodologías Constructivistas en el Aula de Educación Infantil*
https://reunir.unir.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/959/2012_07_23_TFG_ESTUDIO_DEL_TRABAJO.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Goleman, D. (1999). *La práctica de la Inteligencia emocional*. Barcelona: Ed: Kairós

Gómez, A.M. (2009). *La importancia del juego y desarrollo en educación infantil*.
<https://www.eumed.net/rev/ced/10/amgg.htm>

González C, P. (2020). *¿Está preparada España para la educación del futuro? El caso español y la perspectiva de Dinamarca*
<https://repositorio.comillas.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11531/36982/TFG%20-%20Gonzalez%20Cerdeiras%2C%20Paula.pdf?sequence=1>

Jiménez, J. (2004) *El profesorado*. Ed. CISS-praxis. Barcelona.

Kamerman, S. (2000). *Early Childhood Education and care: an overview of developments in the OECD countries*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0883035599000415>

Kamii, C. (1985). *Young Children Reinvent Arithmetic : Implications of Piaget's Theory*. Teachers College Press
[https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=XWPdDgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT6&dq=Kamii,+C.+\(1985\).+Young+children+reinvent+arithmetic:+Implications+of+Piaget%27s+theory&ots=FC5hlcBEzJ&sig=UHzVwHrV9w0BDWg2k1nDTJ_3OUk#v=onepage&q=Kamii%2C%20C.%20\(1985\).%20Young%20children%20reinvent%20arithmetic%3A%20Implications%20of%20Piaget's%20theory&f=false](https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=XWPdDgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT6&dq=Kamii,+C.+(1985).+Young+children+reinvent+arithmetic:+Implications+of+Piaget%27s+theory&ots=FC5hlcBEzJ&sig=UHzVwHrV9w0BDWg2k1nDTJ_3OUk#v=onepage&q=Kamii%2C%20C.%20(1985).%20Young%20children%20reinvent%20arithmetic%3A%20Implications%20of%20Piaget's%20theory&f=false)

Key features of the Danish Education System
<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/print/pdf/node/23171>

Kjær, B. (2004) *Pædagogmedhjælperens kompetencer. Den lille forskel?*
http://applikationer.foa.dk/publikationer/pjecer/Paedagogisk/paed_kompetencer_lille_forskel.pdf

Kousholt, D. (2012). *Researching family through the everyday lives of children across home and day care in Denmark*. *Childhood*, 19(3), 365-378. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dorte-Kousholt/publication/227821161_Researching_Family_through_the_Everyday_Lives_of_Children_across_Home_and_Day_Care_in_Denmark/links/5d892dff92851ceb793a95bf/Researching-Family-through-the-Everyday-Lives-of-Children-across-Home-and-Day-Care-in-Denmark.pdf?origin=publication_detail

Laal, M., & Ghodsi, S. M. (2012). *Benefits of collaborative learning*. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 31, 486-490. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.091>

Llorent, V. (2013). *La educación infantil en Alemania, España, Francia e Inglaterra*. Estudio comparado. <http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv/bibliuned:reec-2013-21-6005/Documento.pdf>

Lucero, M. M. (2003). *Entre el trabajo colaborativo y el aprendizaje colaborativo*. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* <https://rieoei.org/RIE/article/view/2923/3847>

Cuevas, N. (2004). *Fortalecer Los Valores Pedagógicos Para Desarrollar Una Actitud Educativa Integral En Los Alumnos*. *Revista Educación en Valores* 1,31-43. Universidad de Carabobo.

Michael, W. (2018). *PISA for Development, Results in Focus*. OECD No. 91. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c094b186-en>

Mikkelsen, K. H. (2021). *Parenting Culture in Denmark*. In *Parenting Cultures and Cultures of Parenting* (pp. 115-125). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/48705/1/9783030650025.pdf#page=116>

Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional. (n.d.). *Objetivos educativos europeos y españoles*. El sistema educativo en España. Gobierno de España. <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/dctm/ievaluacion/indicadores-educativos/objetivos-et2020-informe2011.pdf?documentId=0901e72b80faaff5>

Ministry of Children and Education. (2018). *Executive Order on Daycare, Preschools and After-school Centres*. Retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=201527>

Ministry of Children and Education. (2019). *The Danish Childcare Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.uvm.dk/-/media/filer/uvm/engelsk/legislation/the-danish-childcare-act.pdf>

Moos, L. (2014) *Educational Governance in Denmark, Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 13:4, 424-443, DOI: 10.1080/15700763.2014.945655
<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F15700763.2014.945655>

Morón, M. C. (2010). *La organización espacio-temporal en el 2o ciclo de educación infantil: los rincones y las rutinas*. Temas para la educación.

Neuman, M. (2005) *Governance of early childhood education and care: recent developments in OECD countries*, *Early Years*, 25:2, 129-141, DOI: [10.1080/09575140500130992](https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140500130992)

O'Hanlon, C. (1995). *Inclusive Education in Europe*.
<https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=PmVQDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=inclusive+education+denmark&ots=7BQFtWZK-L&sig=Olk1-lvFaKAz88BUJ3Qz8AD9CIU#v=onepage&q=inclusive%20education%20denmark&f=false>

OECD. (2017). *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/eag-2017-en.pdf?expires=1682710203&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=0AE81E4F2824392F036EEB25B56B2502>

OECD. (2019). *Education at a glance 2019: OECD indicators*. París: OCDE.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>

Ortega, P. & Mínguez, R. (2003). *Familia y transmisión de valores*. *Revista Interuniversitaria de Teoría de la Educación*, 15, 33-56.

Pardo, M. (2013). *Aprendizaje cooperativo: una experiencia de rincones en un aula de cinco años*. Universidad Pública de Navarra.

Parra Ortiz, J. M. (2003). *La Educación en valores y su práctica en el aula. Tendencias Pedagógicas*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. https://sites.pitt.edu/~strauss/origins_r.pdf

Piatek, A. I. (2009). *El trabajo por rincones en el aula de Educación Infantil. Ventajas del trabajo por rincones. Tipos de rincones*. *Innovación y experiencias educativas*, 15, 1-8. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/56243611/TRABAJO_EN_RINCONES-libre.pdf?1522929743=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DTRABAJO_EN_RINCONES.pdf&Expires=1683207775&Signature=EKJmUNSA0cv1ydOzdHrHn-Pcflc8E5sD9G-AwhxAPWaAnkVFxdbAe5jg~5QCmBCYqt~6hegbceH~heej3XQeOXadQ04sJI9eWX~xGrKx8yltCMPlqpHzaSVgyJXuMnwxJt2NK3g6xmos5X8mAjzQ3LdURpUGqqgtLnB2ddZCbh9e1P8jMraelO0Ko7V9xpnQZ6mhjEwToYdOkXlprgWkAe707uxg-9jB0ztk86ogDrnNk0CuiyTqVSCc~FVeUJWFd9FI6IG6IXacuDxf92NWW2UZfS5WZmZODtdLQuQu0Mc6AX4N3Tv2sQDIA8u9VFa9LdAzIOSwSIPNR6hkPQ_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

PISA Results in Denmark (2018) https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_DNK.pdf

PISA Results in Spain (2018) https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_esp_ESP.pdf

Real Decreto 132/2010, de 12 de febrero, por el que se establecen los requisitos mínimos de los centros que impartan las enseñanzas del segundo ciclo de la educación infantil, la educación primaria y la educación secundaria. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2010/BOE-A-2010-4132-consolidado.pdf>

Real Decreto 95/2022, de 1 de febrero, por el que se establece la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Infantil. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-1654>

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. <https://es.scribd.com/document/490937011/Barbara-Rogoff-Apprenticeship-in-Thinking-Cognitive-Development-in-Social-Context-Oxford-University-Press-1990-pdf>

Romera, Ma. M. & Martínez, O. (2008). *Los rincones: propuestas para jugar y aprender en el aula*. Madrid: SM.

Sánchez L., E. (2009). *Dos caras de la carrera docente: satisfacción y desmotivación*. <https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/47070/36954-116525-1-PB.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Thingstrup, S.H., Prins, K. & Boje M. (2021). *View of "It is not that I didn't already know these places, but I never thought of them like this." Methodological approaches to community research in Early Childhood Education in Denmark.* *Forskning & Forandring*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2021, 40-61.
<https://forskningogforandring.dk/index.php/fof/article/view/3288/6084>

The Ministry of Social Affairs in consultation with the Ministry of Education. (2000). *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Denmark – Background Report*
<https://www.oecd.org/education/school/2475168.pdf>

The strengthened pedagogical curriculum. Framework and content.
https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/8077%20SPL%20Hovedpublikation_UK_WEB%20FINAL-a.pdf

Toboso, M. (2012). *Sobre la educación inclusiva en España: políticas y prácticas.* *Revista sociológica de pensamiento crítico*, Vol. 6 (i) 2012. ISSN 1887 – 3898
http://riberdis.cedid.es/bitstream/handle/11181/3525/sobre_la_educacion_inclusiva_en_espana.pdf?sequence=1&rd=0031189212452933

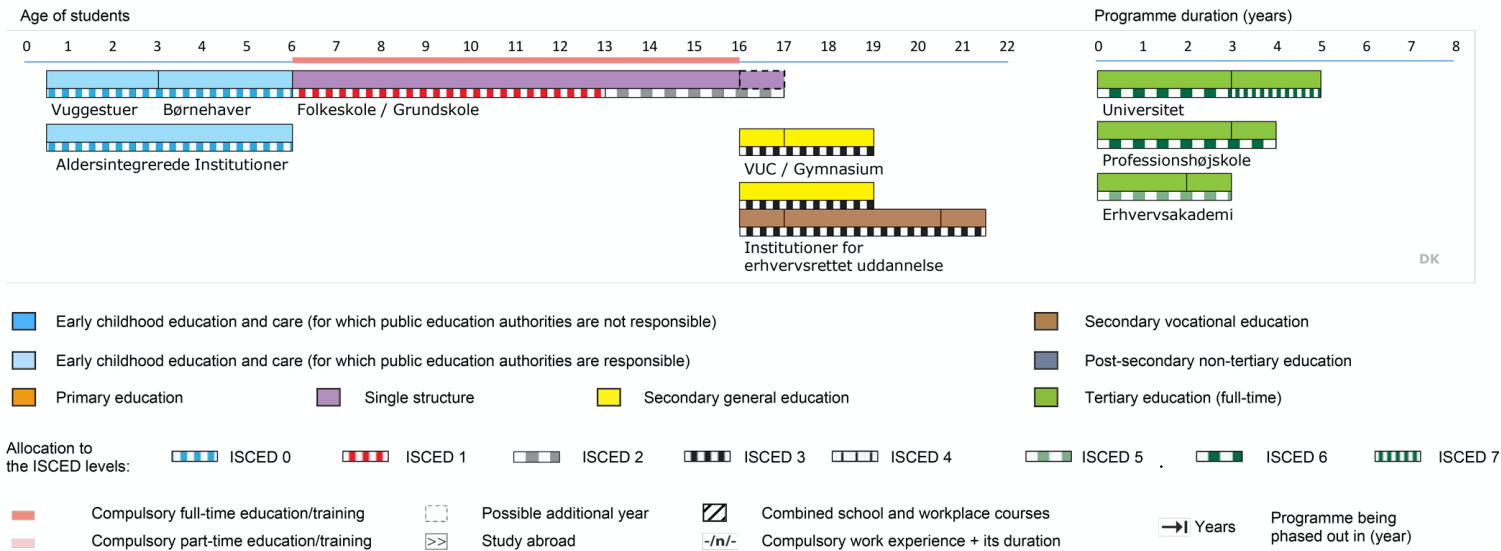
Urbano Reyes, G. (2014). *La metodología globalizada en educación infantil.* *CSIF Revista Enseñanza*, (28), 53-63. Recuperado de
https://archivos.csif.es/archivos/andalucia/ensenanza/revistas/csicsif/revista/pdf/Numero_28/GEMA_%20URBANO%20REYES_1.pdf

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.*

APPENDIXES

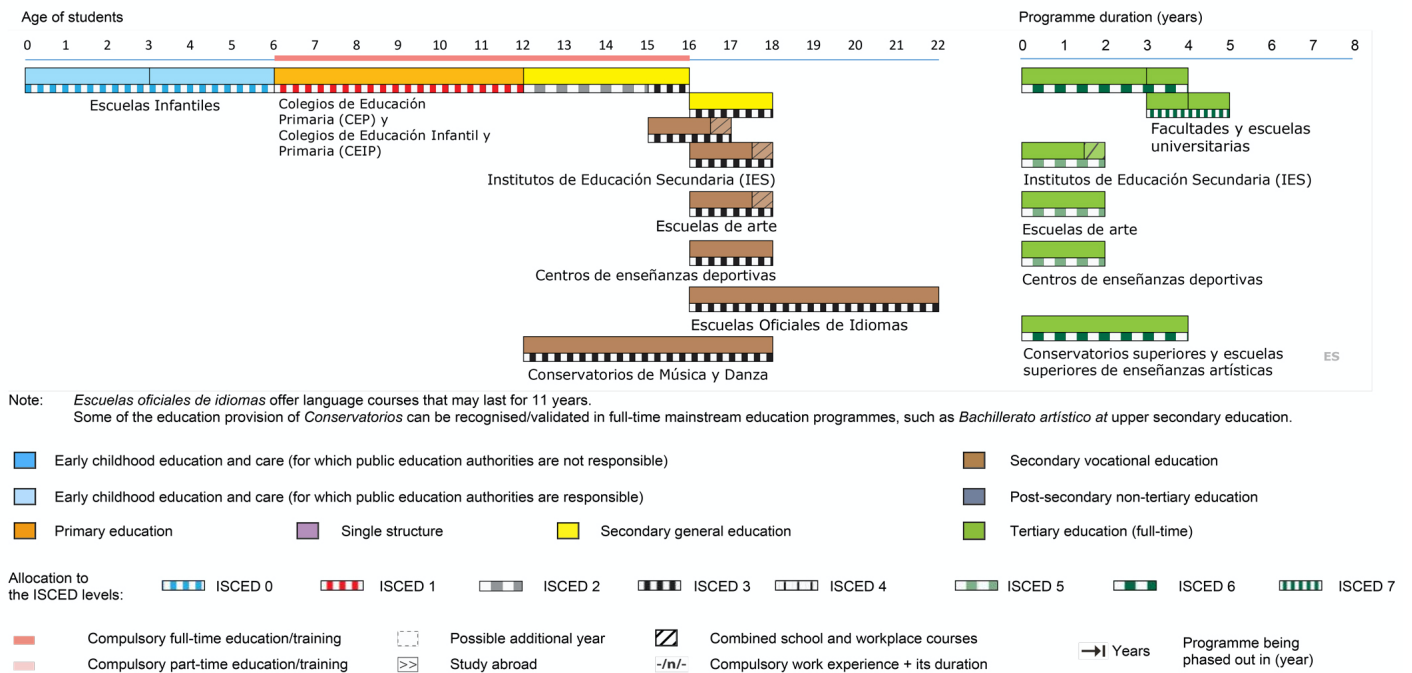
1. Danish education system structure

Denmark – 2022/2023

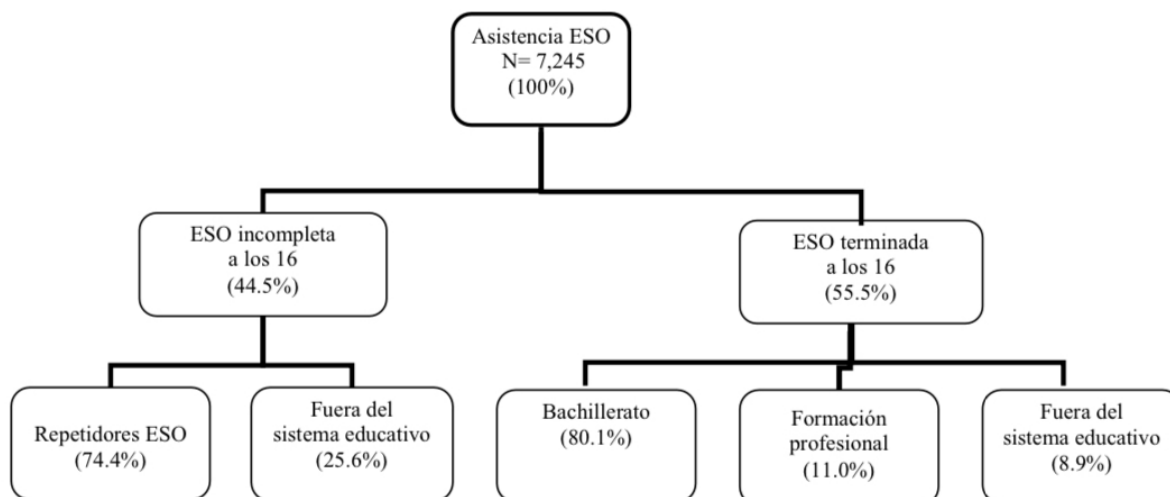


2. Spanish education system structure

Spain – 2022/2023



3. Percentages of students choosing different paths in the Spanish education system (Bernardí, F. & Requena, M., 2010)



Fuente: SLF (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008).