



TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON KINDERGARTEN ADMISSION STANDARDS: RISKS TO TODDLER WELL- BEING?

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Abstract/Izvleček The aim of this paper is to present the opinions of teachers on the standards for admitting toddlers to kindergartens in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and to discuss these standards in relation to the risks to children's well-being. Opinions were obtained through a quantitative survey among teachers from the Czech Republic (n=574) and Slovakia (n=593) in 2023. Results showed that most teachers do not support the admission of children under three to kindergartens. They conditionally support admission based on self-care skills, hygiene habits, and socio-emotional independence, which do not match typical toddler development, posing pressure on the child and family.

Mnenja učiteljev o merilih za sprejem v vrtec: Tveganje za dobrobit malčkov?

Ključne besede:

vzgojitelji v vrtcih,
merila za sprejem,
malčki, vrtec, dobrobit
otrok.

Namen tega prispevka je predstaviti mnenja vzgojiteljev o merilih za sprejem malčkov v vrtec na Češkem in Slovaškem ter razpravljati o teh merilih v povezavi z nevarnostmi za dobrobit otrok. Kvantitativna raziskava med vzgojitelji iz Češke (n=574) in Slovaške (n=593) leta 2023 je pokazala, da večina vzgojiteljev ne podpira sprejema otrok, mlajših od treh let, v vrtec. Sprejem podpirajo pogojno, glede na otrokove samostojne veščine, higienske navade ter socialno in čustveno neodvisnost. Pričakovanje izpolnjevanja teh meril je redko in predstavlja pritisk na otroka in družino, kar je škodljivo za dobrobit otroka ob začetku predšolske vzgoje.

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, the enrolment of children under three in early childhood education (ECE) has risen across Europe (OECD, 2024), driven by economic pressures on families, policy efforts to boost parental workforce participation (European Council, 2022), and evidence highlighting the developmental benefits of high-quality ECE (Barnett, 2008; European Commission, 2025; McClelland et al., 2006; OECD, 2025; Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997). While all European countries mandate pre-school curricula and most provide national guidelines for children under three, admission standards remain decentralized. Instead of uniform regulations, decisions are left to kindergarten heads or founders, leading to varying expectations of children's readiness (European Commission, 2023; Gill et al., 2006). This flexibility allows institutions to adapt to local conditions but may also impose developmentally misaligned demands on young children.

Research on kindergarten readiness has primarily focused on North America, where ECE emphasizes responsive caregiving and inclusive pedagogy, typically assessing expectations for children aged 5 to 7 (Baucom et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2023; Gill et al., 2006; Robinson and Diamond, 2014; Skinner, 2018; Urbina-Garcia and Kyriacou, 2018). Comparative empirical data on admission standards and developmental expectations for toddlers remain scarce.

A responsive ECE model should address children's and parents' needs, ensuring that preschool conditions adapt to developmental and family contexts. Prioritizing children's well-being is essential, as high-quality ECE programs significantly enhance social-emotional development and stress regulation (Laevers, F., and Declercq, 2018; Li-Grining et al., 2021; Sandseter and Seland, 2016; Van Laere and Boudry, 2019). Understanding teachers' views on kindergarten readiness and admission standards provides insight into the ongoing shift towards practices aligned with European recommendations for high-quality ECE (European Council, 2019).

Kindergarten standards and readiness

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Development (1994) provides a framework for understanding kindergarten readiness through environmental influences on child development. Kindergarten readiness is an important predictor of children's successful transition to formal education (Duncan and Magnuson, 2013; Sharma et al., 2022). Readiness is primarily indicated by academic competences, self-regulation, and attentional control (Blair and Raver, 2015).

Assessing and monitoring readiness is essential because of its profound and lasting impact on overall child development (Fitzpatrick, 2020). Even prior to kindergarten entry, disparities among different demographic groups emerge, often leading to long-term developmental consequences (Reardon and Portilla, 2016). Positive *microsystem* interactions, such as family and preschool relationships, foster essential social, emotional, and cognitive skills (Hatcher et al., 2012).

The *mesosystem* highlights the importance of support between home and kindergarten (Fan et al., 2024). Significant challenges persist in fostering family engagement and ensuring effective communication between families and schools (Sheridan et al., 2011). The *exosystem* encompasses broader social systems, such as legal frameworks and community resources, that indirectly influence the transition.

Cultural values within the *macrosystem* and time-related factors in the *chronosystem* further shape readiness (Fan et al., 2024). The broader societal perspective on kindergarten entry is evolving from a narrow focus on the child's individual readiness to a more dynamic, interactional model (Zhang et al., 2023). This model acknowledges the collective influence of children, families, educators, and kindergarten staff in facilitating a successful transition to preschool education (OECD, 2017).

Admission processes and standards for kindergarten entry in selected countries

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, early childhood education (ECE) follows a split system model (European Commission, 2025). Children under three are usually cared for at home or in separate nursery-type settings, while kindergartens (*materšské školy*) serve children aged three to six within the formal education system. Admission of two-year-olds is not automatic and depends on the decision of the kindergarten head.

In Czechia, kindergartens prioritize children aged three and older from the catchment area. Children under three may be admitted if they meet developmental expectations outlined in the national curriculum, with decisions based on institutional conditions (MEYS, 2021; 2025). In Slovakia, Act 273/2021 allows the admission of two-year-olds if capacity, staff, and resources permit. Neither country has national kindergarten readiness standards. Admission criteria are determined locally by kindergarten heads and commonly include expectations of social maturity, hygiene routines, and basic self-care (Lipnická et al., 2024). Although no toddler-specific curriculum exists, kindergartens have admitted two-year-olds for over two decades. In Czechia, toddler enrolment peaked at 12.3% in 2017–2019, declining to

8.8% (31,927 children) in 2023/2024 (MEYS, 2024). In Slovakia, the average is 4.8%, with 4.9% (8,859 children) in 2024/2025 (CVTI, 2025).

The aim of this paper is to present the opinions of teachers on the standards for admitting toddlers to kindergartens in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and to discuss these standards in relation to the risks to children's well-being. The focus is on two-year-old children, since this age group increasingly constitutes a significant portion of preschool entrants in both countries (OECD, 2024).

Research objectives

This study aims to explore teachers' opinions on the admission standards for two-year-old children to kindergartens in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The research was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the teachers' opinions on admitting toddlers to kindergarten?

RQ2: What standards do the teachers expect for toddlers to be admitted to kindergarten?

The aim of this study was to perform a descriptive analysis and comparison of respondents' perspectives, along with the developmental and behavioural expectations placed on children. The research sought to investigate the underlying relationships between teachers' stated views on admission standards, and requirements for children and their professional education and training.

Methods

The study surveyed 1,167 kindergarten teachers – 574 from the Czech Republic (via the National Institute of Education, Prague) and 593 from Slovakia (via Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica).

Respondents

Respondents averaged 22.1 years of teaching experience. Professional practice was defined as the number of years working as a kindergarten teacher, as reported in the demographic section. In Slovakia, 62% were teachers and 38% kindergarten heads, while in the Czech Republic, 47% were teachers and 53% kindergarten heads. Secondary education was completed by 42.5% of Slovak and 50% of Czech teachers. Among university graduates, 26.5% of Slovak and 49.6% of Czech teachers held a bachelor's degree, 69.5% and 48.6% a master's, and 4% and 1.8% a doctorate.

Professionally, 81.5% of Slovak and 87% of Czech teachers had experience with two-year-olds, while 97% and 94.4% reported experience with this age group in either a family or professional context.

Instrument and Procedure

Method of data acquisition

The study used a custom online questionnaire administered via SURVIO in spring 2023. It comprised twenty-eight closed-ended and one open-ended item. The first five addressed demographics (role, experience, qualifications, familiarity with two-year-olds). Seven items used yes/no responses; seventeen employed a 5-point Likert scale to assess opinions. The final open-ended item invited reflections on the adaptation of two- and three-year-olds to kindergarten.

This paper analyses the section of the questionnaire focused on expected toddler standards, comprising five demographic items, 10 Likert items, five dichotomous items, and one open-ended item. To ensure content validity, we developed these items based on theoretical knowledge of education and care for two-year-olds and consulted with ECE experts to cover key themes. Particular attention was paid to clarity, precision, and factual accuracy during item design. Teachers' views on toddler enrolment were examined in relation to their training, childcare perspectives, and toddler developmental characteristics. For descriptive analysis, Likert (Table 1) and dichotomous items (Table 2) were categorised accordingly.

Reliability was assessed separately for the Czech and Slovak versions using Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability (corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula). For the Czech version, Cronbach's alpha was 0.67 and split-half reliability 0.79 – acceptable for shorter scales or early-stage tools. In the Slovak version, values were slightly higher: alpha = 0.72 and split-half = 0.87, indicating good internal consistency and supporting overall reliability in both versions.

Table 1

Overview of the thematic focus and wording of the questions in the Likert scales

Question number	Thematic focus	Wording of the question
Question 1	Part I: Preparing the respondent to work with	I had the opportunity to learn the specifics of the development of two-year-old children in the theoretical preparation (in the theoretical part of the study)
Question 2	toddlers in the study	I had the opportunity to learn the specifics of the development of two-year-old children in practical training - hospitalization and observation

Question 3		I had the opportunity to learn how to plan educational activities for two-year-olds
Question 4		I had the opportunity to implement educational activities for two-year-old children
Question 5	Part II: Suitable place of care for toddlers	Two-year-olds should not be admitted to kindergartens, as nursery-type groups or facilities are more suitable for them.
Question 6		Two-year-old children should not be admitted to kindergarten because the mother (parent) can stay on parental leave until the child is 3 years old.
Question 7	Part III: Characteristics of the toddler affecting his/her inclusion in kindergarten	The child's ability to concentrate makes it difficult to educate two-year-olds in kindergarten.
Question 8		The ability of the child to communicate makes it difficult to educate him/her in kindergarten.
Question 9		The greater need for sleep makes it more difficult to educate him/her in kindergarten.
Question 10		Frequent alternation of emotions in a child makes it difficult for him/her to learn in kindergarten.

Table 2

Summary of the wording of dichotomous questions focusing on the standards expected of a toddler upon kindergarten entry

Question number	Thematic focus	
Question 11		no longer wearing diapers
Question 12	A two-year-old child can be admitted to kindergarten when	does not use a pacifier
Question 13		performs simple self-care tasks with little help (puts on parts of his/her clothes, puts on shoes, washes hands, etc.)
Question 14		can handle separation from mother/parent for at least 4 hours
Question 15		can function in a social group

Data processing methods

Data were analysed in stages: outliers were removed using the inner fences method, and descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, SD) summarised responses. Given the ordinal nature of Likert data, non-parametric tests were applied—Mann-Whitney U for two-group (CZ/SK) comparisons, and Kruskal-Wallis with post hoc (Dunn's, Nemenyi's) for multiple groups. Spearman's rank correlation assessed relationships, and effect sizes (Cohen's d , η^2) indicated practical significance.

Results

Descriptive statistics of the responses focused on selected items from the questionnaire. It provided us with data-based responses to two research questions.

RQ1: Teachers' opinions on admitting toddlers to kindergarten.

Results are based on ten Likert items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 3

Descriptive analysis for individual Likert scale questions – respondent's preparation for working with toddlers in the study (1-4), appropriate place to provide care for toddlers (5-6), toddler characteristics affecting toddler enrolment in kindergarten (7-10)

Question	CZ						SK					
	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
Question 1	2.91	3.00	3.00	1.37	5.00	1.00	3.07	3.00	3.00	1.46	5.00	1.00
Question 2	2.37	2.00	1.00	1.37	5.00	1.00	2.26	2.00	1.00	1.46	5.00	1.00
Question 3	2.23	2.00	1.00	1.27	5.00	1.00	2.25	2.00	1.00	1.42	5.00	1.00
Question 4	2.16	2.00	1.00	1.29	5.00	1.00	2.28	2.00	1.00	1.48	5.00	1.00
Question 5	3.96	4.00	5.00	1.16	5.00	1.00	3.47	4.00	5.00	1.47	5.00	1.00
Question 6	3.64	4.00	5.00	1.22	5.00	1.00	3.15	3.00	5.00	1.49	5.00	1.00
Question 7	4.05	4.00	5.00	1.09	5.00	1.00	3.88	4.00	5.00	1.29	5.00	1.00
Question 8	4.07	4.00	5.00	1.06	5.00	1.00	3.90	4.00	5.00	1.20	5.00	1.00
Question 9	3.86	4.00	5.00	1.14	5.00	1.00	3.45	3.00	5.00	1.35	5.00	1.00
Question 10	3.83	4.00	5.00	1.15	5.00	1.00	3.69	4.00	5.00	1.28	5.00	1.00

Czech and Slovak teachers showed similar agreement on questions 1–10 (Table 3), reporting partial theoretical knowledge of toddler development (meanCZ = 2.91, SD = 1.37; meanSK = 3.07, SD = 1.46). The relatively high standard deviations suggest varied degrees of exposure to this content. Training offered limited opportunities to explore developmental characteristics of two-year-olds through practical sessions or practicum (meanCZ = 2.37, SD = 1.37; meanSK = 2.26, SD = 1.46), again with wide variability. Respondents indicated minimal preparation for planning and implementing educational activities for toddlers. Consequently, attitudes toward toddler admission to kindergartens were largely negative. Most preferred toddlers to attend playgroups or nursery-type settings, citing parental leave policies enabling home care until age three.

Respondents also agreed that developmental traits – short attention spans, weak communication, and emotional instability – complicate kindergarten integration. Moderate agreement was found regarding toddlers' increased sleep needs. Differences between Czech and Slovak responses to questions 1–10 are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4

Differences in opinions of Czech and Slovak respondents – respondent's preparation for working with toddlers in the study (1-4), appropriate place to provide care for toddlers (5-6), toddler characteristics affecting toddler enrolment in kindergarten (7-10)

Questions	CZ	SK	Average CZ	Average SK	U	Z	P	Cohen d	η^2
Question 1	574	593	2.90	3.06	159549.5	-1.849	0.065	0.108	0.003
Question 2	574	593	2.36	2.26	159294.0	1.893	0.058	0.111	0.003
Question 3	574	593	2.23	2.25	166307.5	0.675	0.500	0.041	<.001
Question 4	574	593	2.16	2.28	168002.0	-0.380	0.704	0.022	<.001
Question 5	574	593	3.96	3.46	140541.5	5.151	0.000	0.305	0.023
Question 6	574	593	3.63	3.15	139380.0	5.353	0.000	0.317	0.025
Question 7	574	593	4.05	3.87	161940.5	1.433	0.152	0.084	0.002
Question 8	574	593	4.06	3.90	159615.5	1.837	0.066	0.108	0.003
Question 9	574	593	3.85	3.45	143045.5	4.716	0.000	0.279	0.019
Question 10	574	593	3.82	3.69	162588.5	1.321	0.187	0.077	0.001

Statistically significant differences between Czech and Slovak respondents were identified only for items 5 (meanCZ = 3.96; meanSK = 3.47), 6 (meanCZ = 3.64; meanSK = 3.15), and 9 (meanCZ = 3.86; meanSK = 3.45), with Czech teachers reporting higher agreement. However, the effect sizes were negligible ($d < 0.05$), indicating that nationality had limited practical influence. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed no significant association between level of education and responses across items 1–10. While seven items showed no statistical differences, the remaining three yielded results that were statistically but not practically significant, likely because of the large sample size (Table 5).

Spearman's correlation analysed the relationship between the length of professional practice and the degree of agreement with questions 1–10. Correlation coefficients (R) were consistently low, with negligible determination coefficients (R^2). No significant relationships emerged for most questions, except for questions 6, 9, and 10 ($p < 0.05$).

However, these results are likely due to the large sample size ($N = 1167$), since R values ranged from -0.054 to 0.105 , indicating minimal practical significance. Overall, professional experience had little to no meaningful impact on response patterns.

Table 5

Analysis of the influence of qualification level on respondents' opinions – respondent's preparation for working with toddlers in the study (1-4), appropriate place to provide care (5-6), toddler characteristics affecting enrolment in kindergarten (7-10)

Question	K-W test	η^2	Cohen's d
Question 1	H (3, N= 1167) =11.71331 p =.0084	.007	.174
Post hoc	M.A. – V.S. (p = 0.034)		
Question 2	H (3, N= 1167) =2.110982 p =.5497	.001	.055
Question 3	H (3, N= 1167) =.7137571 p =.8700	.002	.089
Question 4	H (3, N= 1167) =1.049731 p =.7892	.002	.082
Question 5	H (3, N= 1167) =5.626354 p =.1313	.002	.095
Question 6	H (3, N= 1167) =11.97122 p =.0075	.008	.177
Post hoc	B.A. – V.S. (p = 0.040)		
Question 7	H (3, N= 1167) =10.05430 p =.0181	.006	.156
Post hoc	B.A. – V.S. (p = 0.081)		
Question 8	H (3, N= 1167) =2.307463 p =.5111	.001	.049
Question 9	H (3, N= 1167) =2.567161 p =.4633	.001	.039
Question 10	H (3, N= 1167) =2.423150 p =.4893	.001	.045

The study examined whether experience with two-year-olds in kindergarten influenced responses to questions 1–10 using the Mann-Whitney U test. Statistically significant differences appeared in questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 ($p < 0.001$), but effect sizes were small (Cohen's d : 0.214 – 0.318 ; η^2 : 0.011 – 0.025). No significant differences emerged for questions 1, 7, 8, and 10 ($p > 0.05$). Although some results were statistically significant, the differences between teachers with experience of working with two-year-olds (either in kindergarten or in a home setting) and those without such experience were minimal, indicating limited practical relevance.

RQ2: Standards that teachers expect for toddlers to be admitted to kindergarten

Results from the five dichotomous items indicate that most teachers perceive nappy use (80.38%) and difficulty separating from a caregiver for four hours (83.2%) as key barriers (Table 6). It is noteworthy to observe the extent to which teachers are perturbed by minor issues, such as the use of a pacifier, or by a broader range of factors.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics for questions focusing on the standards expected of a toddler upon kindergarten entry

Answers	Question 11 no longer wears diapers	Question 12 does not use a pacifier	Question 13 performs basic self- care with minimal help	Question 14 can separate from parent for at least 4 hours	Question 15 can function in a group of peers
YES	938	724	782	971	672
NO	229	443	385	196	495
Sum	1167	1167	1167	1167	1167
YES	80,38%	62,04%	67,01%	83,20%	57,58%
NO	19,62%	37,96%	32,99%	16,80%	42,42%

The highest percentage of teachers (35.3%) expect children to meet all specified criteria, followed by those requiring four (20.6%), three (19.8%), or two (7.7%). Nearly 17% are unconcerned with four of the five issues. Table 7 explores correlations between teachers' concerns and responses to questions 1–10, revealing significant but weak associations.

Table 7

Correlation between the standards expected of a toddler upon kindergarten entry and responses to survey questions

Questions	N	R	R ²	t(N-2)	p
Question 1	1167	-0.051	0,256%	-1.729	0.084
Question 2	1167	-0.063	0,402%	-2.169	0.030
Question 3	1167	-0.099	0,976%	-3.388	<0.001
Question 4	1167	-0.089	0,801%	-3.067	0.002
Question 5	1167	0.166	2,751%	5.740	<0.001
Question 6	1167	0.151	2,287%	5.222	<0.001
Question 7	1167	0.167	2,793%	5.785	<0.001
Question 8	1167	0.158	2,505%	5.471	<0.001
Question 9	1167	0.130	1,682%	4.464	<0.001
Question 10	1167	0.147	2,169%	5.082	<0.001

Teachers do not strictly favour homogeneous groups for toddlers. The data indicate that 30.42% support placing two-year-olds exclusively together, while 57.50% prefer grouping them with two- to three-year-olds. Smaller proportions advocate integration with two- to four-year-olds (7.11%) or two- to six-year-olds (4.97%). Overall, nearly 90% favour placing two-year-olds with same-age peers or slightly older children.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer insights into kindergarten teachers' perspectives on the admission standards for two-year-old children in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The results underscore discrepancies between institutional expectations and the developmental capacities of toddlers, raising concerns about their well-being and readiness for structured educational settings.

Teachers' reluctance to admit two-year-olds (RQ1) primarily stems from these children's limited self-care abilities, inconsistent emotional regulation, and challenges in group integration. These findings align with prior research (Vašínová and Srbená, 2019) emphasizing the importance of developmentally appropriate expectations in ECE (Melhuish et al., 2015). The well-being of toddlers transitioning to kindergarten is significantly influenced by the quality of care and the availability of adequate support systems. Research indicates that high-quality ECE environments can mitigate stress and foster socio-emotional development, if teachers receive comprehensive training and institutional support (Burchinal et al., 2010; Pianta et al., 2009). This study suggests that many respondents lack adequate professional preparation for working with this age group, which likely contributes to their reluctance to support ECE enrolment. Targeted professional development initiatives focusing on responsive caregiving (Pözl-Stefanec et al., 2023), attachment-based pedagogical strategies, and gradual transition frameworks could alleviate these concerns (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2011).

Teachers in both countries articulated high developmental expectations for two-year-olds (RQ2), particularly regarding self-care skills and independence, which frequently exceed normative developmental milestones. This misalignment places undue stress on both children and their families, potentially leading to adverse emotional and behavioural outcomes (Sabol and Pianta, 2012). Czech teachers exhibited slightly stronger opposition compared to their Slovak counterparts, a difference that may reflect variations in national ECE policies and pedagogical traditions (OECD, 2024). Empirical studies have demonstrated that excessively stringent expectations at this developmental stage can negatively impact children's self-confidence and adaptive abilities (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000).

Reforming policy to align admission standards with children's developmental needs and well-being is imperative (Thomason and La Paro, 2009). Reducing rigid expectations, incorporating individualised adaptation plans, and enhancing teacher-child ratios would facilitate smoother transitions and minimize stress among young

learners (Lipnická et al., 2024). National frameworks should be grounded in evidence-based best practices, ensuring that kindergartens offer environments that support early learning while safeguarding children's well-being (Dardanou and Gamst-Nergård, 2020; Flöter et al., 2024; OECD, 2017).

Comparative research on ECE policies in Europe could identify best practices for improving the transition experience for toddlers, particularly by examining flexible admission standards and tailored support mechanisms (Urban et al., 2012). Future research should take an interdisciplinary approach, integrating child development, education policy, and social sciences to create admission frameworks aligned with children's developmental capacities (Woodhead, 2006). A paradigm shift is necessary to bridge the gap between institutional expectations and developmental readiness, ensuring that admission standards support both child wellbeing and family needs in a holistic manner (Brooker, 2008).

Limitations

This study is limited by its focus on the Czech Republic and Slovakia, reducing generalizability to contexts with different ECE systems. Reliance on self-reporting may introduce response bias, as teacher perspectives do not capture the views of children, parents, or policymakers. While rigorous statistical methods were applied, the use of mainly closed-ended questions may have limited response depth. The low response rate in Slovakia (3%) may affect representativeness. Structural aspects such as kindergarten capacity and teacher working conditions, though crucial to admission policy, were not directly addressed. Qualitative methods could offer further insight.

Conclusion

This study, conducted among kindergarten teachers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, used Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1994) to explore perceptions of toddler admission standards. The findings indicate widespread reservations about enrolling two-year-olds, largely due to concerns about their self-sufficiency, emotional regulation, and group readiness.

Current admission criteria-focused on self-care, hygiene, and socio-emotional independence-often exceed typical toddler capabilities. These findings highlight the need to align admission expectations with the developmental capacities of young children. Overly demanding criteria for two-year-olds may limit access and increas

pressure on families. International research stresses that reducing inequalities in ECE requires flexible, inclusive, and child-centred approaches, especially for the youngest children (OECD, 2025). This calls for competent ECE systems that support equity and ensure high-quality practices (Urban et al., 2012).

The analysis highlights inconsistencies in admission procedures stemming from the absence of national frameworks, leading to varied institutional practices, undue pressure on families, and unequal access to ECE. Limited kindergarten capacity and challenging working conditions for teachers further hinder the implementation of inclusive policies. In Bronfenbrenner's model, teachers' expectations (microsystem) are shaped by institutional (exosystem) and societal (macrosystem) factors, revealing a misalignment between policy demands and developmental realities. Addressing these challenges requires more flexible, developmentally appropriate standards, stronger teacher training, and improved school–family communication.

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