



**EARLY Survey**  
**Descriptive Analysis for Germany**  
**March 2023**

**Introduction and Background**

In this working paper, we present the descriptive analysis of the survey sent out to mostly the Teaching staff of children 0-7 years old and their parents. It was an online survey designed by the EARLY team and translated into German. The 68 answers were collected between 17.02.2023 and 1.4.2023.

*Table 1. Participants Profile*

Variable		n	%
Role	Parent / family member / carer of a child or children 0-7 years old	43	61.54
	Teaching staff of children 0-7 years old	25	38.46
	Support staff of children 0-7 years old	0	0
	Board or administration of centers for children 0-7 years old	0	0
	Initial teacher education student	0	0
Country	Germany	68	100
Gender	Male	11	15.38
	Female	57	84.62
	Transgender	0	0
	Non-binary/non-conforming	0	0
	Prefer not to respond	0	0

The participants are parents/family members (62%) and teaching staff of children. The majority of them are female (85%)

*Table 2. Parents/families/carers Profile*

Variable	ni	fi(%)
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<b>Number of children</b>	1	27	57,45
	2	17	36,17
	3	3	6,38
	4	0	0
	5	0	0
<b>Year/s of birth of children</b>	2013	0	0
	2014	1	1,56
	2015	2	3,13
	2016	2	3,13
	2017	13	20,31
	2018	21	32,81
	2019	12	18,75
	2020	9	14,06
	2021	4	6,25

The total number of children raised by the participants is 64.

As shown in Table 2, most of the parents have one child (58,14 %). There are no families with 4 and 5 children. Most families have children born in 2017 and 2018. The mismatch between the number of children and the years of the children stems from children born after 2021.

#### Teaching Staff

All teaching staff is working with children between 3 and 7 years old. This is the range for children in almost all German kindergartens.

#### Remote Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

There was one general lockdown for public schools in the federate state during the COVID 19 pandemic. 12 participants (17,65%) answered that there were two or more different periods of general lockdowns, while the other stated that there was only one. Table 3 shows the longest stay at home period, which was between one and two months. Some children didn't have to stay at home, because there was emergency childcare during the general lockdown.

*Table 3: Duration of longest stay at home*

	ni	fi%
There wasn't any long stay at home	5	6.90
Around two weeks	0	6.90
Around one month	19	3.45
Around one to two months	44	17.24

More than two months	0	65.52
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*Table 4: National strategy for remote learning in Early Childhood Education in 2020-21*

	ni	f%
There was no remote learning	48	70,59
We had remote learning but no national strategy for Early Childhood Education	7	10,29
There was general guidance for remote learning in Early Childhood Education	0	0
There was a national strategy with specific orientations for remote learning in Early Childhood Education	0	0
I don't have the information to answer this question	13	19,12

Most participants report that there was no remote learning.

*Table 5: Contact between teachers and children during lockdowns*

	ni	f%
Early Childhood Education teachers kept in communication with families/carers but not with the children directly	2	2,94
Early Childhood Education teachers had contact with the children directly but mostly in group	30	44,12
Early Childhood Education teachers had contact with the children directly both in group and more individually	33	48.53
I don't have the information to answer this question	4	5,88

*Table 6: Platforms reported for supporting communication between ECE and families/carers (multiple answers)*

	ni	f%
WhatsApp	7	10,29
E-Mail	40	58,
others	63	91,18

Only 2 platforms were used for communication between ECE and families/carers, most communication happened with E-Mail, other was mainly by telephone, other messenger services and mail.

*Table 7: Frequency of suggestions by ECE teachers of activities to be developed at home*

	ni	f%
Once per month there were suggestions	2	2,94
Once per week there were suggestions	57	83,82
More than once per week there were suggestions	7	10,29
There were daily suggestions	0	0

There were no suggestions	0	0
I don't know	1	1,47

*Table 8: Difficulties that impacted the experience for children regarding activities sent by teachers to be developed by families/carers*

	was not relevant / didn't have an impact		was somewhat relevant / had some impact		was relevant / had an impact		was very relevant / had a great impact		I don't have information to answer this question	
	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%
Lack of time from families/carers due to remote work	12	17,65	18	26,47	37	54,41	11	16,18	0	0
Lack of resources available at home for developing the activities	10	14,71	52	76,47	6	8,82	0	0	0	0
Activities that were suggested were too structured or too formal for young children	47	69,12	14	22,06	3	4,41	4	5,88	0	0
Families/carers were insecure about knowledge about the topics of the activities	33	48,53	28	41,18	4	5,88	0	0	3	4,41
Families/carers were insecure about how to engage children in activities	59	86,76	7	10,29	1	1,47	0	0	2	2,91
Families/carers had no experience in using digital educational platforms	60	88,24	3	4,41	2	2,94	0	0	3	4,41
There were too many suggestions being presented to families/carers	68	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The activities were not aligned with children's interests	4	5,88	45	66,12	6	8,82	2	2,91	1	1,46
The learning to be developed with the activities was not evident	66	97,06	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2,91
The activities were not challenging for the children	58	83,82	7	10,29	2	2,94	0	0	1	1,46
Other - please specify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Table 9: Frequency of synchronous times with children that involved shared activities*

	ni	fi%
Once per month there were synchronous moments	37	54,41
Once per week there were synchronous moments	22	32,35
More than once per week there were synchronous moments	0	0
There were daily synchronous moments	0	0
There were no synchronous moments	5	7,35
I don't know	4	5,88

*Table 10: Difficulties that impacted the experience for children regarding synchronous times that involved shared activities*

	was not relevant / didn't have an impact		was somewhat relevant / had some impact		was relevant / had an impact		was very relevant / had a great impact		I don't have information to answer this question	
	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%
Lack of time from families/carers due to remote work to be present during the synchronous moments	16	23,53	40	58,82	12	17,65	0	0	0	0
Families/carers lacked the technology to participate in synchronous moments	15	22,06	14	20,59	34	50	5	7,35	0	0
Families/carers had no experience in using digital educational platforms	30	44,12	17	25	17	25	4	5,88	0	0
Children were not used to interacting through technology (e.g. videoconferencing)	15	22,06	20	29,41	38	55,88	0	0	0	0
The synchronous moments were too long	44	64,71	20	29,41	4	5,88	0	0	0	0
The synchronous moments were not focused on interacting with children one-on-one	7	10,29	39	57,35	12	17,65	5	7,35	5	7,35
The activities during the synchronous moments were not engaging for the children	30	44,12	17	25	20	29,41	1	1,47	0	0
Children were shy during the interactions	24	35,29	27	39,71	12	17,65	2	2,94	4	5,88
Other - please specify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## 2. Learning from the remote experience

Table 11: Resources for ECE created during the lockdown (multiple answers)

	ni	fi%
Websites with interactive games	38	55,88
E-books about COVID-19 and related topics	5	7,35
Websites or e-books with activities suggested for families/carers to do at home with children	61	89,71
Interactive storytelling websites	11	16,18
Other - please specify	0	0
I don't know	7	10,29

Table 12: Current provision for children in isolation (multiple answers)

	ni	fi%
There is no provision	0	0
Teacher stay in contact with families/carers	63	91,18
Teacher send activities to be developed at home	57	83,82



### 3. Views on distance learning for professional/personal development

Table 14: Experience with distance learning in the past 3 years

	ni	f%
I haven't had the experience.	16	23,53
Just once	12	17,65
Two to five times	40	58,82
More than five	0	0

Table 15: Perspectives about distance learning

	Totally disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Totally agree		I don't have information to answer this question	
	ni	f%	ni	f%	ni	f%	ni	f%	ni	f%
I feel comfortable participating in distance training.	15	22,06	17	25,00	25	36,76	11	16,18	14	10,91
I believe I can learn through distance education.	16	23,53	18	26,47	24	35,29	10	14,71	11	10,91
I am enthusiastic about participating in distance education as part of my professional development.	16	23,53	23	33,82	22	32,35	7	10,29	11	10,91
I think that it is helpful to have professional development as distance education.	14	20,59	19	27,93	23	33,82	12	17,65	13	10,91

#### 4. Views on CT and educational robotics in ECE

*Table 16: Perspectives about computational thinking in Early Childhood Education*

	Totally disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Totally agree		I don't have information to answer this question	
	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%
I believe children in ECE should have experiences with computational thinking.	16	23,53	25	36,76	18	26,47	9	13,24	0	0
I am enthusiastic about computational thinking in ECE.	21	30,88	23	33,82	18	26,47	6	8,82	0	0
I think that it is helpful to have activities connected to computational thinking in ECE.	13	19,12	21	30,88	22	32,35	5	7,35	0	0
I feel comfortable promoting activities for children with computational thinking in ECE.	26	38,24	29	42,65	12	17,65	1	1,57	0	0

*Table 17: Perspectives about educational robotics in Early Childhood Education*

	Totally disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Totally agree		I don't have information to answer this question	
	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%	ni	fi%
I believe children in ECE should have experiences with educational robotics.	2	2,94	17	25	37	54,41	12	17,65	0	0
I am enthusiastic about educational robotics in ECE.	3	4,41	19	27,94	39	57,35	7	10,29	0	0
I think that it is helpful to have activities connected to computational thinking and robotics in ECE.	3	4,41	17	25	38	55,88	10	14,71	0	0
I feel comfortable promoting activities for children with educational robotics in ECE.	4	5,88	30	44,12	24	35,29	10	14,71	0	0

*Table 18: Topics signaled for further learning*

	ni	fi%
Computational and algorithmic thinking: features and types	58	85,29
Computational and algorithmic thinking: benefits for children and learning	60	88,24
Educational robotics: benefits for children and learning	62	91,18
Methods and strategies for developing CT	50	73,53
Coding tools that can be used to develop CT in ECE	45	66,18
Physical programming and CT with robotics in ECE	52	76,47
Plugged and unplugged activities about CT and curricular areas for ECE	52	76,47
Education for young children in emergency situations	68	100
Distance education for ECE	60	88,24
Educational robotics for inclusion	58	85,29

## 5. Conclusions and implications for EARLY

The collected sample gives a general overview of the distance education situation during the COVID-19 pandemic in the surveyed federal state. As the closure of educational institutions became part of the COVID-19 measures, the discussion in Germany followed three main arguments: (1) a closure of on-site education would most effectively protect young children from an infection, given the generally high rate of infections in kindergartens (2) a closure of on-site education would jeopardize the education of children, which might be more harmful than a COVID-19 infection (3) a closure of on-site education would require parents/caretakers to care for the children themselves, resulting in deficits in the economic sector. The relatively short amount of closure (4 weeks, extended to 6 weeks) of kindergartens is a representation of these arguments. The following paragraph summarizes the results through adding information provided in interviews with parents/caregivers and educators from ECE institutions.

During the closure of on-site education, ECE institutions in general provided games, tasks, stories, handicraft instructions etc. on a weekly basis, mostly delivered via mail or electronic mail. While parents/caregivers were mostly able to use the provided material, there was a mismatch between the amount provided and the activities that would have been done on-site. Overall, the provided material was deemed to be efficient, appropriate and actionable. In many cases teachers relied on already existing material, adapting it for homeschooling purposes. Synchronous activities were rare and infrequent. Two main reasons reduced the number of synchronous activities: technical requirements on both sides, as well as an unease with the digital means of technology, especially in terms of suitability. Digital synchronous activities were mostly used with older children (5-7).

While the participants are eager to learn about robotics and see it as an interesting topic for ECE, they are more skeptical about CT. Suitability of technology, digital content, time spent in front of screens etc. are still main arguments in the discussion regarding the use of digital tools for (early-childhood) education. The younger the children are, the more critical parents/caregiver and teachers are. These arguments also determine the social and parts of the scientific discussion about ECE. From a German perspective, the critical stance toward digitalization has to be considered in combination with the general view of playful ECE.

German Translation:

Die gesammelten Ergebnisse geben einen guten Überblick über die Situation in der frühkindlichen Erziehung während COVID-19. Es kam zu einer verhältnismäßig kurzen Schließung von Einrichtungen. Die initiale Schließung wurde von 4 auf 6 Wochen verlängert. Für besondere Fälle wurde eine Notfallbetreuung eingerichtet. Die Ergebnisse der Umfrage werden im folgenden

zusammengefasst und durch Informationen aus direkten Gesprächen mit Erziehungsberechtigten und Erzieher:innen ergänzt. Während der Schließung von Einrichtungen wurden von Erzieher:innen Spiele, Aufgaben, Bastelanleitungen etc. in der Regel auf wöchentlicher Basis zur Verfügung gestellt. Versendet wurden die Materialien per Post und E-Mail. Synchroner Aktivitäten waren selten und unregelmäßig. Gründe dafür waren die fehlenden technischen Voraussetzungen und Ungewissheit über die Angebrachtheit digitaler Kommunikation mit den entsprechenden Zielgruppen, insbesondere bei jüngeren Kindern. Die besten Erfahrungen wurden mit älteren Kindern (5-7 Jahren gemacht).

Erziehungsberechtigte und Erzieher:innen sind offen gegenüber dem Einsatz von Robotics und eher kritisch gegenüber CT im Kontext frühkindlicher Erziehung. Dies spiegelt die allgemeine Diskussion zum Einsatz digitaler Technologie im Kontext der frühkindlichen Erziehung bzw. Bildung wider. Die Angemessenheit von Inhalten, der eingesetzten Technologie, Bildschirmzeit etc. bestimmt die Diskussion um Digitalisierung im Bildungswesen weiterhin, insbesondere bei jüngeren Kindern. Diese Themen sind auch in der Medienlandschaft und der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion weiter vorrangig. Die kritische Haltung gegenüber Digitalisierung muss im Sinne einer vorrangig spielerischen frühkindlichen Bildung berücksichtigt werden.