When Young Children Have Difficulty Attending Early Childhood Education: A knowledge guide to good collaboration and solutions in practice		
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Theme:	☐ Ageing & Care ☐ Asylum & Migration ☒ Young People ☒ Support for Children & Families ☐ Community Care ☐ Integrated Care & Support ☐ Co-Production ☐ Disability ☐ Housing & Homelessness ☐ Artificial Intelligence ☐ Digitalisation ☐ Quality Care	☐ Labour Market Inclusion ☒ Social Inclusion ☐ Technology ☐ Workforce and Leadership ☐ Social Benefits ☐ EU Funding ☐ Social Services' Resilience ☐ Mental Health ☐ Person-Centred Care ☐ Research & Use of Evidence ☒ Management & Planning ☐ Other, please specify:
Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:	☒ 1. Education, training, life-long learning ☐ 2. Gender equality ☒ 3. Equal opportunities ☐ 4. Active support to employment ☐ 5. Secure and adaptable employment ☐ 6. Fair Wages ☐ 7. Transparent employment conditions ☒ 8. Social dialogue ☐ 9. Work-life balance ☐ 10. Healthy, safe work environment	☒ 11. Childcare and child support ☐ 12. Social protection ☐ 13. Unemployment benefits ☐ 14. Minimum income ☐ 15. Old age income and pensions ☐ 16. Health care ☐ 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities ☐ 18. Long-term care ☐ 19. Housing and assistance to homeless ☐ 20. Access to essential services
Current status of the practice:	☐ Concept and Design Phase ☐ Testing or pilot phase ☐ Temporary practice that has terminated ☐ Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date ☒ Established and ongoing practice ☐ Scaling Up and Transformation Phase ☐ Other (please specify):	
Summary:	The practice is an early, preventive, and collaborative approach to children who have difficulty attending early childhood education, recognising that absence is rarely simply a matter of motivation or behaviour but reflects an interaction between the child, the environment, and the adults around them. It combines systematic identification and understanding of the child's difficulties with coordinated action between early childhood settings, parents, and relevant professionals such as educational-psychological and family services. The aim is to create sustainable, child-centred solutions that strengthen wellbeing,	

	participation and attendance before difficulties develop into more persistent patterns of absence.
Context/social issues addressed:	The practice addresses the growing concern that some young children struggle to attend early childhood education because of difficulties related to wellbeing, relationships, participation, or the environment around them. When these difficulties are not identified and addressed early, absence can become a persistent pattern that may further affect the child's development, learning, and sense of belonging. The practice therefore seeks to shift the focus from the child's absence as an individual problem to understanding and changing the conditions that make participation difficult.
Objectives:	1. Identify and understand early signs of difficulties with attendance and participation from a child-centred and contextual perspective. 2. Strengthen coordinated collaboration between the child, parents, early childhood professionals, and relevant support services to develop appropriate responses. 3. Promote wellbeing, belonging, and sustainable participation in early childhood education by addressing barriers before absence becomes persistent.
Activities:	The practice is organised around a structured process for understanding and responding to young children's difficulties with attending early childhood education. The activities are designed to ensure early identification, a shared understanding of the child's situation, and coordinated action across the child's everyday environments. • Early identification and assessment: Staff observe and document patterns in the child's attendance, participation, and wellbeing and identify situations in which participation becomes difficult. Rather than focusing solely on the child's behaviour or absence, the process explores possible contributing factors in the child's relationships, daily routines, learning environment, and broader context. • Collaborative exploration of the child's situation: Early childhood professionals engage in dialogue with the child and parents to understand the child's experiences, needs, strengths, and perspectives. Relevant professionals are involved when needed, enabling a broader understanding of the factors affecting the child's participation. • Joint planning supported by an overall coordinator of supportive measures: Based on the shared understanding, the adults identify concrete changes and supports that can make attendance and participation more manageable for the child. This may include adjustments to routines, transitions, relationships, activities, the physical environment, or the way adults respond to the child. • Implementation and follow-up: Agreed measures are implemented in the child's everyday setting and followed up systematically. The child's wellbeing, participation, and attendance are revisited to assess whether the measures are helping and to adjust the approach when necessary. • Strengthening professional collaboration: The practice promotes a shared responsibility for the child's wellbeing rather than placing responsibility for attendance on the child or family alone. Collaboration across early childhood education, parents, and relevant support services creates coherent and sustainable support around the child.
Outcomes:	The practice is currently supported by practice-based experience rather than formal outcome research. In the case examples described in the guide, the approach has contributed to improved collaboration, a shared understanding of the child's needs, clearer coordination, and concrete changes in the child's everyday environment; in one case, the child's wellbeing improved noticeably and attendance increased to three days per week after the interventions were implemented. Progress is evaluated continuously through shared goals, weekly follow-up on short-term objectives, and regular interdisciplinary

	meetings, while the guide acknowledges that systematic research-based evaluation of the practice is still needed.
Funding source:	EU Funds: ESF+ ☐ INTERREG ☐ ERDF ☐ ERASMUS☐ RRF ☐ other ☐ ☐ National Government Funds ☐ Regional Government Funds ☐ Local Government Funds ☐ Private Sponsorship / Public-Private Partnership ☐ Financial contribution of People using Services ☒ Other, please define: The practice is situated within the Danish publicly funded welfare system and is developed and delivered by the Department of Communication and Disability (IKH) of the Regional Government of Central Denmark.
Links to supporting documents:	https://www.ikh.rm.dk/siteassets/tilbud-ydelser/tilbud-til-born-og-unge/mistrivsel-blandt-smaborn/guide_when-young-children-have-difficulty-attending-early-childhood-education_english_ikh_2026.pdf
Comments and tips:	Successful implementation requires more than introducing a new tool or procedure; it requires a shared mindset and clear organisational support. We recommend starting early, establishing a clear coordinator and an interdisciplinary team, and ensuring that parents' and the child's perspectives are involved from the outset. The model should be adapted to the local context, roles, and support structures, while maintaining its core principles: a holistic understanding of the child, curiosity towards different perspectives, early preventive action, and shared responsibility. Leadership commitment, time for collaboration, and clear agreements about roles and follow-up are essential for sustainable implementation.