

- emigration, particularly from the sixties onwards, and the 1961/1974 colonial wars;
- the enhancement of the place of children in society and in the family with the consequent increase of educational expectations.

In the last decades two concurrent factors contributed to the redrafting of Ministry of Education policies on pre-school education: emigration to foreign countries and migration from the rural interior to the industrialised coastal areas, where population density has increased substantially. It is especially the younger generation with young children that move to the coast in search of work and better living conditions. The older generations tend to remain in the interior. Consequently, the demand for pre-school education in the rural areas of the interior has decreased whilst in the highly populated coastal zones it has increased dramatically. Such demographic changes have had a considerable weight on the Ministry's decision to establish a pre-school network as a means of regulating and distributing resources according to demand.

The Portuguese system met these social challenges in two ways: one, in the form of social support and assistance through the former Ministry for Social Affairs; the other, predominantly of an educational nature, through the Ministry of Education, since the 1973 Reform of the Education System Act.

As mentioned before, public Jardins de Infância directly dependent from the Ministry of Education only started to operate in 1978. The distribution of pre-school contexts in the country was as follows:

- Social care contexts directly dependent from the Ministry of Social Affairs were predominantly established in industrial urban areas;
- Pre-school educational contexts, directly dependent from the Ministry of Education were, as a rule, set up in vacant primary school classrooms in the rural areas, to meet the requirements of policies which gave priority to areas deprived of educational resources.

3. The status of women in Portugal

All through the twentieth century, particularly during the sixties, women from all social strata gained access to education, including higher education, as well as to the labour market. During the sixties and later on under the strong influence of the social developments brought about by 25 April 1974 Revolution, women took upon themselves the task of enhancing their own status and in so doing imposed profound changes in society. The 1976 Constitution represents a fundamental step in the conception of equal rights for men and women. All citizens enjoy equal rights and any form of discrimination is rejected.

Enjoying a higher social and educational status, women became more demanding insofar as their children's education is concerned. It should be noted that in Portugal, traditionally, mothers are the privileged link between families and schools.

Comparative data studies on the *educational levels*, particularly in Higher Education, attained by women up to 1994/97 show that:

- in 19960/61 women did not even fill the majority of university places in the areas traditionally considered as being best suited for them (47% in Arts, 35% in the Exact and Natural Sciences, 30% in Medicine); by 1979/80, 71% of places in Arts faculties, 70% in Exact and Natural Sciences faculties and 53% in Medical and Paramedical Sciences faculties were filled by women (Morais, Maria M, Carvalho e José E., 1993, p.7);
- by 1994/95, places in all areas but Architecture and Urban Studies, Mathematics and Information Science, Engineering, Religion and Theology, were predominantly filled by women. In 1997, of all Portuguese University graduates less than 30 years of age 59.7% were women (Commission for Equality and the Rights of Women, High Commissioner for Equality and Family, 1998, p.94).

As far as PhDs are concerned, in the sixties, only 5.1% were awarded to women; in the seventies that figure rose to 18.1% and in the eighties to 33.7%. It should be noted that between 1960 and 1990, 42.4% of PhDs in the Exact and Natural Sciences were awarded to women whereas in the Social and Human Sciences only 29.9% were.

With respect to female *employment* and *unemployment* the following tables published in 1998 by INE, National Statistics Institute, provide a basis for analysis:

Some General Indicators

	men %	women %
Activity rate	57.0	43.6
Unemployment rate	3.9	6.2
Rate of female employment		44.5
Rate of female unemployment		56.6

Source: INE, Inquérito ao Emprego, 1998

Table 1: Work situation, 1998

Work situation	<i>1000</i>	
	Total	Women
Total population	9 967.8	5 168.2
Active population	4 986.8	2 250.9
Employment	4 738.8	2 110.5
Unemployment	-	-
Non-working population	4 968.0	2 917.4
Students	1 757.6	890.5
At home	740.0	735.0
Retiered	1 344.0	725.9
Other	1 126.4	565.9

Source: INE, Inquérito ao Emprego, 1998

Table 2: Activity rate, by sex and age group — 1998

Age Group	Men %	Women %
TOTAL	50.7	43.6
15 - 24	92.9	44.5
25 - 34	92.9	80.5
35 - 44	95.3	77.3
45 - 54	91.0	65.8
55 and more	42.5	23.3

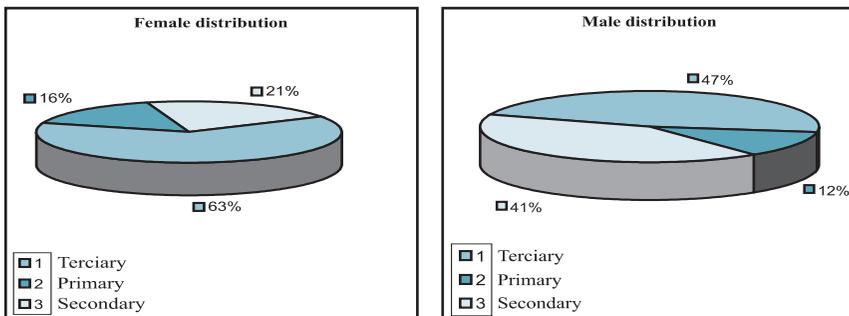
Source: INE, Inquérito ao Emprego, 1998

Table 3: Activity sectors with more female employment — 1998

Activity sectors	% of total female employment
Agriculture	15.1
Textile and shoe industries	9.9
Commerce and retail	10.6
Education	9.9
Health and social work	7.7
Other activities and services (including domestic work)	4.3

Source: INE, Inquérito ao Emprego, 1998

Table 4: Female and male distribution as a function of activity sector — 1998



Source: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres (ed.), 1998, p. 102

From the above figures it can be inferred that in the last decades women have been strongly committed to their training and professional occupation while caring for their families and children. Conciliation of family life with work is not easy. Today society sees it as a problem, which should be faced by all involved. The role of the State is decisive in the creation of family support measures fostering conciliation.

For example, all through March 1999, the Commission for Equality and the Family organized a wide media campaign illustrating effective parity in the management of family life.

4. General conceptualizations concerning childhood and early childhood

According to the Portuguese Constitution and in order to safeguard their balanced development, children have the right to enjoy protection from the State and Society especially against all forms of abandonment, discrimination and oppression as well as abuse within the family and all other institutions. The State extends special protection to orphans, abandoned children and to all children who for one reason or another are deprived of a normal family environment.

In addition, the framework guiding the intervention of the State and Society in all cases involving children under age, a framework which is defined through established norms concerning the family, fatherhood and motherhood, highlights special responsibilities towards children whose safety, health and moral and educational development are at risk or whose interests are not being properly safeguarded (Articles 1918 and 1978 of the Civil Code and Article 19 of Decree-Law 314/78 of 27 October).

In Portugal, children become of age at their 18th birthday. In this respect there is no difference between Portuguese Law and the

Convention on the Rights of Children since Portugal was one of the first countries to undersign the Convention. The Document was fully ratified and has been enforced since 21 October 1990. The Convention enjoys the status of Law since it was approved for ratification by Parliament. The guiding principles for State intervention are:

- The principle of non-discrimination;
- The principle safeguarding the highest interest of the child;
- The right to life, survival and development;
- Respect for the opinion of children.

Current legislation recognises the right of the child and of the young person to be heard on all important matters related to them. However, difficulties still remain which, on the whole, are linked to cultural conceptions concerning the value of children's opinions and the place of children within the family structure. It is well known that in Southern European countries the weight of parental authority is far heavier than that of children's opinions.

The family and its weight in the education of children. The Constitution prescribes that it is the duty of the State to protect the family and to cooperate with parents in the education of their children. The family is recognised as the fundamental element of the social fabric enjoying the right to be protected by Society and the State. Maternity and paternity are viewed as eminent social values that must be supported by the State. However, problems subsist within a society, which often adopts a romantic and idyllic stance of childhood failing to recognize children as rightful social actors. Studies on children, albeit rare exceptions (Iturra, 1997) have generally "been negligent of the voice of children and have underestimated their capacity for attributing meaning to their actions and their contexts" (Pinto & Sarmiento, 1997, p.21). Some authors believe that it is essential that the "worlds of children" are studied, since nowadays children are put through a growing institutionalization process which controls their daily lives, a process which involves the school, the extra

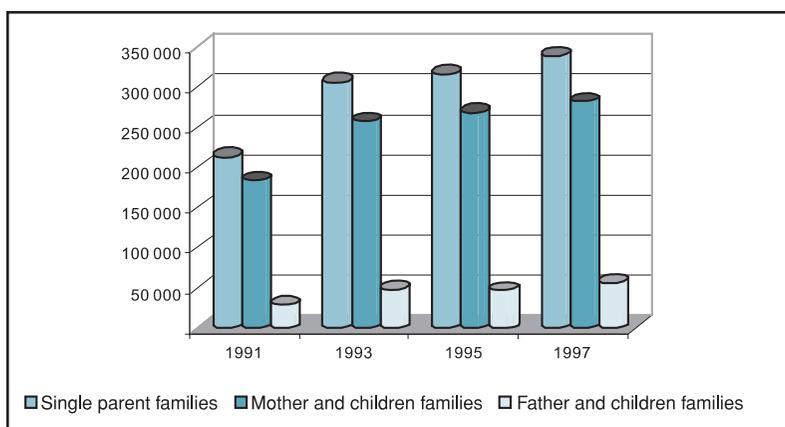
school care activities and family practices (including child labour exploitation) (Pinto & Sarmiento, 1997; Iturra, 1997).

5. Policies and support measures extended to children and families

Socio-economic characterisation of families

The predominant family structure is still the "couple with children" type. In 1997, 51% of all families fell into this category. Nevertheless, and as in other countries of the Union, the proportion of single parent families, particularly "mother and children" family has been increasing.

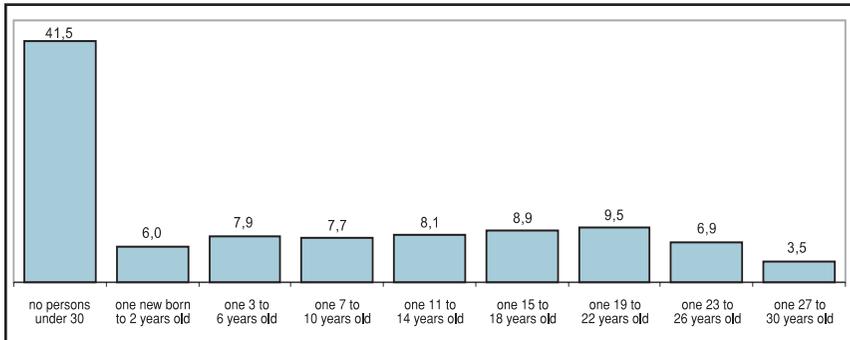
Table 5: Evolution of single parent families, 1991,1993,1995 and 1997



Source: INE, Inquérito ao Emprego, Recenseamento da População

Another aspect that should be highlighted concerns the increasing weight of the single child family, which in 1997 comprised 52.6% of families. For the same year "youngest in the family" figures show that 6.0% of families (205,000) had at least one new born to two year old child, and in 7.9% of the families (267,000) the age of the youngest child was between three and six.

Table 6: Percent families as a function of the youngest child, 1997

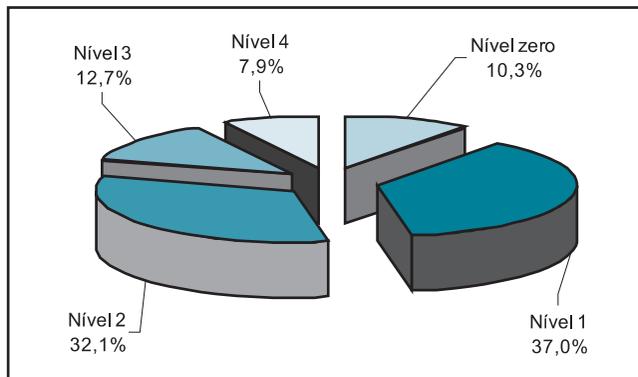


Source: EUROSTAT, Inquérito às Forças de Trabalho

In spite of recent improvements, 19.2% of the population of 15 years of age and older do not hold a certificate for any education level, a figure still influenced by people of or older than 65 among whom 53.8% do not possess any qualifications (1997).

In literacy terms, the results of a Survey carried out in 1994 placed 70% of 15 to 64 year olds in medium/low levels (levels 1 and 2).

Table 7: Percent distribution of 15 to 64 year olds as a function of literacy levels, 1994



Source: Benavente et al (1996), A Literacia em Portugal

In 1994/95, estimates of the annual net family salary aggregate place it at 2 529 136 Escudos, that is 902 393 Escudos per capita, whereas in 1989/90 it was 2 043 940 Escudos and 698 047 Escudos respectively (indexed at 1995 current prices). (Source: INE, National Statistics Institute).

Policies and support measures extended to the child and the family

The Ministry of Labour and Solidarity is the institution responsible for policy, coordination and technical and normative support within the social security areas. However, the Ministry of Education, through approved legislation, is responsible for the payment of allowances to support meal and education charges in respect of children and young people whose parents are social security beneficiaries; the Ministry of Education is also required to meet the costs incurred with specific pedagogic or therapeutic support measures required by disabled children. The amounts of family allowances are updated on a yearly basis. Eligible families can receive the following allowances:

- family allowance for children and young people
- supplementary subsidy for disabled children and young people
- care to third party allowance
- special education school allowance
- monthly paid life allowance

Family allowance for children and young people

Monthly allowances in respect of each child were revised in 1999. Increases in the allowances were for the first time indexed to family income and lower income families were able to benefit from proportionately higher allowances than those attributed to the other beneficiaries.

Monthly allowances, per child, are as follows:

First Income Band:

- a) Children up to 12 months of age: Esc. 14 730\$00 to 22 100\$00 for families with one or two children, and families with more than two children, respectively;
- b) Children older than 12 months: Esc. 4 420\$00 to 6 630\$00 for families with 1 or 2 children, and families with more than 2 children, respectively.

Second Income Band:

- c) Children up to 12 months of age: Esc. 11 450\$00 to 15 400\$00 for families with one or two children, and families with more than two children, respectively;
- d) Children older than 12 months: Esc. 3 070\$00 to 4 170\$00 for families with 1 or 2 children, and families with more than 2 children, respectively.

Third Income Band:

- e) Children up to 12 months of age: Esc. 7 450\$00 to 9 690\$00 for families with one or two children, and families with more than two children, respectively;
- f) Children older than 12 months; Esc. 2 840\$00 to 3 690\$00 for families with 1 or 2 children, and families with more than 2 children, respectively.

In the case of disabled children and young people an extra allowance is added to the allowances mentioned above, as follows:

- Up to 14 years of age _____ Esc. 8 470\$00
- From 14 to 18 years of age _____ Esc.12 330\$00
- From 18 to 24 years of age _____ Esc.16 510\$00

In this context reference should be made to the **Programa do Rendimento Mínimo Garantido** (Guaranteed Minimum Income

Programme) which has been fully implemented since July 1997. The aims of the Programme are: (1) to reduce social exclusion; (2) to redress situations which cause the citizen to drop out of the society to which he rightfully belongs; (3) to promote social, economic and professional reintegration. The programme is a family support plan with two components: social welfare and social reintegration, a programme aimed at restoring the autonomy of the family. The Guaranteed Minimum Income Programme is a priority measure in the fight against social exclusion. Thus, the implementation of the Programme involves the State, the Private Social Solidarity Institutions, local government and citizens.

In 1995 the Directorate General for Social Work, a department under the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, set up the **Being a Child Programme** (Programa Ser Criança) with the following objectives:

- to facilitate the balanced development of children and the improvement of parental and family competence;
- to promote family and social reintegration;
- to improve children's and families' self image;
- to promote the systematic detection of children at risk and children suffering from disabling conditions as well as their causes.

In relation to the protection and support extended to children at risk, at the municipal level in all parts of the country, there are Commissions for the Protection of Minors to meet the requirements of situations involving child protection and rights. The members of these Commissions are all childhood professionals from diverse backgrounds. Whenever parents oppose the intervention of the Commissions, cases are reported to the Family and Minors Tribunals.

The dispositions of n° 3, article 18 of the Convention on Children's Rights are enforced by Social Security structures through a network of services and equipment made available to provide day care to

children while their parents are at work. Social Security recognises the role of Childminders, Family Creches, Creches and Jardins de Infância, all of which are described later on in the Report.

*The articulation of policies in support of children and families has proved difficult in spite of the ongoing efforts on the part of services and other involved entities. The number of the various departments and services involved and the diversity of the measures adopted in this area may be among the factors causing problems. As a follow-up to the UN World Child Summit in 1990, the **Programa Nacional de Acção - PNA** (National Action Programme) was introduced to coordinate all child welfare activities. The PNA represents an important initiative aimed at achieving articulation between all child and family policies at the national level.*

The **Alto Comissário para a Igualdade e Família** (the High Commissioner for Equality and Family) was also set up as a national structure. The main aim of this Commission is to coordinate the various public administration services working in the areas of Equality and Family in close cooperation with private social solidarity institutions and family associations.

At the High Commissioner's initiative the **Conselho Nacional da Família** (The National Council for the Family) was created. Council members include ministerial representatives, public figures of repute, NGO and local government representatives. The **Comissão Nacional dos Direitos da Criança** (National Commission for the Rights of the Child) was created to provide systematic follow-up to legislation concerning Children's Rights.

The **Comissão Nacional de Protecção das Crianças e Jovens em Risco** (National Commission for Protection of Children and Young People at Risk), under the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, provides follow-up and support to all the Commissions for the Protection of Minors operating countrywide.

Appendix 1 includes a chronological list, as exhaustive as possible, of support projects and programmes directed to the child and the family (Vd. Appendix 1).

6. Health support measures within ECEC

Equipas de Saúde Escola - ESE (School Health Teams) of qualified health staff, provides school health care. Health Centres of the Regional Health Administrations employ the teams. The **Programa de Saúde Escolar** (School Health Programme) should include all parties involved in local pre-school and school education i.e. pupils and students, teachers and families, especially parents or guardians.

The general *aims* of the Programme are:

- to assist with the creation of a school environment leading to the balanced development of children and students, reinforcing their self-esteem and providing the conditions for school and educational success;
- to promote learning of relevant information for the adequate use of health services and thus reduce inequalities in this respect;
- to give learners opportunities to discover and discuss matters concerning their own health vis-à-vis the challenges posed by their environments and thus promote the spread of healthy life styles based on autonomous and well informed individual decisions;
- to assist in the balanced integration of children with special health and educational difficulties;
- to support the participation of parents, strengthening the function of the school in the overall development of children;
- to support innovative pedagogical initiatives aimed at correcting psycho-affective disfunctions;
- to improve the environmental and ecological quality of educational contexts as well as their safety.

School Health Intervention is under the responsibility of the Director of the Health Centre. The Director allocates human and equipment resources. School Health Teams should coordinate their action plans

with teachers to achieve a multidisciplinary approach in their activities making full use of the various types of resources available in the community. School Health Teams develop individual, group and environmental activities.

Health specific projects and programmes

School Health Teams may form partnerships to develop wider-reaching health and education community programmes. This is the case of the **Programa de Educação para Todos - PEPT 2000** (Education for All Programme) and the **Programa de Promoção e Educação para a Saúde - PPES** (Health Education Promotion Programme). Other more specific programmes are also being promoted such as Oral Hygiene in School Health.

Particular reference should be made to the **Health Education Promotion Programme - PPES** extended so far to 100 Jardins de Infância. The one hundred Jardins de Infância are developing health promotion projects with the children, involving parent and community participation. The aim is to extend PPES to all schools of the education system by the end of 1999.

Data for 1996/97 concerning the development of school health programmes with 3 to 6 year olds attending Jardins de Infância show that:

- number of children in school health programmes - 63.597 about 60% of enrolled children;
- number of children medically tested - 54.796 about 88% of children in school health programmes;
- percent children with special health requirements attending the public Jardins de Infância network - 0.6%;
- percent children with special education requirement - 1.2%;
- percent children who suffered accidents at school and in transit to and from school public Jardins de Infância network - 3.0%.

Table 8: Percent school health cover

	Number of pupils	%
Pre-school	63 597	14.3
1 st cycle	23 3031	52.5
2 nd cycle	55 718	12.6
3 rd cycle	64 248	14.5
Secondary	23 833	5.4
Other	3 082	0.7

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

Table 9: Total number of accidents at school

Accidents	Number of pupils
Deaths	4
Hospitalization	137
Hospital Treatment	4 362
School/home treatment	7 891
TOTAL	12 397 (3%)

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

Table 10: Distribution of accidents per level of education

Level of education	%
Pre-school	15.5%
1 st cycle	34.2%
2 nd cycle	19.4%
3 rd cycle	29.0%
Secondary	1.8%

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

Table 11: Distribution of SN pupils per level of education

Level of education	Number of pupils	%
Pre-school	237	9%
1 st cycle	1 838	70%
2 nd cycle	317	12%
3 rd cycle	135	5%
Secondary	97	4%
TOTAL SHN	2624	100%
TOTAL SEN	5674	100%

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

Table 12: Number of schools which develop accident prevention programmes

Level of education	Number of pupils
Pre-school	219
1 st cycle	578
2 nd cycle	29
3 rd cycle	37
Secondary	14
TOTAL	877

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

Table 13: Schools who developed other programmes

	Dental Protection	PEPT	PPES	Other
Pre-school	6	4	21	104
1 st cycle	446	83	73	218
2 nd cycle	1	47	15	24
3 rd cycle	2	42	16	16
Secondary		16	13	10

Source: DGS, Ministério da Saúde, 1997

SN - Special Needs
 SHN - Special health needs
 SEN - Special educational needs

7. Aims and objectives of ECEC. Target-populations

Children from 0 to 3 years of age

The specific **objectives** of childcare provided for children from birth to three years of age are:

- to provide for the well being and balanced development of the children in an affective and physically safe environment through individualized care and attention while the children are temporarily out of their family environment;
- to collaborate closely with the family in the sharing of care and responsibilities towards the children;
- to collaborate in an efficient manner in the early detection of any problem related to inadaptation or disability ensuring adequate special services provision for the children.

Care for children of this age group aims at (1) supporting families with their children's education; (2) providing each child with opportunities for global development promoting social integration.

Children from 3 to 6 years of age

According to the Law of the Bases of the Education System (Law 46/86 of 14 October) and the Framework Law 5/97 of 10 February, pre-school education in Portugal starts at the age of three and ends at the start of basic education at the age of six. Pre-school education is the first stage of a lifelong education process, complementary to the educational function of the family with whom close collaboration should be established.

Pre-school education attendance is optional since the family is recognised as the party solely responsible for the education of the child in this phase. The State, however, should actively contribute to the widespread availability of pre-school education.

The *objectives* of pre-school education are set as follows (3 to 6 year old children):

- to promote child personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship;
 - to promote children's integration in diverse socio-cultural groups facilitating progressive awareness of their roles as members of society;
 - to contribute to equal opportunities in school access and learning success;
 - to stimulate the overall development of each child by shaping behaviours which favour meaningful and diversified learning, in full respect for the child individual characteristics;
 - to develop children's expression and communication skills through the use of multiple language to enhance interpersonal communication, information processing, artistic sensitivity and understanding of the world;
 - to stimulate inquisitiveness and critical thought;
 - to provide all children with conditions leading to their well-being and safety, namely in the area of individual and collective health;
 - to motivate families to participate in the educational process and establish relations of effective collaboration within the community.
- (Law 5/97, of 10 February)

The *aims* of pre-school education are:

- (1) to support families with the education of their children
- (2) to give each child the opportunity to become autonomous, socially integrated and intellectually developed;
- (3) to promote each child's balanced integration in society; and
- (4) to prepare each child for successful schooling. The school should be understood as a place where learning and multiple skills are acquired.

The *beneficiaries* of pre-school education are all children resident in Portuguese territory without exception.

8. Age groups: ECEC and compulsory schooling

ECEC covers a school population of children between birth and 6 years of age. Three month to three-year-old children can attend Crèches. Pre-school education covers children from 3 years of age to the age of access into compulsory basic education, i.e. at the age of six. Normally, children start basic education at six or five if their 6th birthday occurs on or before 31 December and their parents so wish (Decree-Law 301/93 of 31 August). However, children with special educational needs may start compulsory education one year later as long as the parents or guardians (Diploma 611/93 of 22 June) make a formal request. The same Diploma foresees the possibility of globally gifted children starting compulsory education one year earlier than the normal age of access. Parents or guardians for consideration can formally present well-documented requests.

There is generalised consensus concerning the age of access into compulsory schooling. The central services of the Ministry of Education establish every year a calendar of activities for each school, which is adapted by each school in accordance with joint decisions between parents, teachers and other representatives of the community.

9. Types of educational provision

The *types of ECEC educational care* for children from birth to school age are as follows:

Three months to three year old children

Informal types: care provided by the family, friends and neighbours; in-house dailies and non-licensed nannies and baby-sitters.

Formal types

- *Nannies* are defined as independent helpers who receive remuneration to look after one or more children with whom no blood or affinity ties exist, for a period of time corresponding to parents working hours or other parental impediment;
- *Creches* are providers of daily care and educational environments for 3 months to 3 year old children during parents' working hours, offering children adequate conditions for their balanced global development in cooperation with the family. Creches are normally open from 4 up to 11 hours daily, five days a week;
- *Mini-Creches* are small contexts providing family-like environments;
- *Family Creches* are groups of nannies, not less than 12 or more than 20, residing in the same geographical area, who are given technical and financial support by the Social Security Regional Centres, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (an important charity) or other Social Solidarity institutions. The family creches look after and implement activity programmes for children from birth up to the start of basic education during nannies normal working hours.

The organization of a crèche depends upon the age of the children as follows:

- from 3 months to walking age - maximum of 8 children per teacher and one teacher's helper;
- from walking age to 2 years of age - maximum of 10 children per teacher and one technical support staff;
- from 2 to 3 years of age - maximum of 15 children per teacher and one technical support staff.

Table 14: Children from birth to 3 years of age, 1996

Type of offer	Age group	Number of contexts	Total number of Children*	%
Creche	0 to 3 years	1 343	33 788	11.1
Ama	0 to 3 years	604	2 315	0.8
Mini-creche	0 to 3 years	9	141	0.05
Creche familiar	0 to 3 years	74	2 118	0.70

Source: Estatísticas da Segurança Social, Instituição de Gestão Financeira Social , 1996

* Children with less than 3 years old, were not considered