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Support for Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Sam Drabble

The research described in this report was prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

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Summary

Mutual learning and the sharing of best practice on the provision of support for children with SEN are lacking at the European level. This is complicated by a marked absence of pan-European data on the prevalence of SEN, attributable to varying definitions of SEN between countries and divergent methods of SEN identification. Correspondingly, there is a case to be made for a harmonised classification framework of SEN in Europe. A political consensus has emerged on the importance of inclusive education, reflected by a general trend towards placement of children with SEN in mainstream education, and away from special schooling. Many Member States have made good progress in developing coherent, localised and inclusive early intervention strategies, which provide for consultation with affected families. Information on the support mechanisms available to parents of children with SEN is incomplete, although examples of good practice exist for replication.