

Systems for supporting children’s learning and development (0-18 years)

Partner	Chance B
Country	Austria
<p>Background info to the educational system (e.g. https://www.european-agency.org/)</p>	<p>The Austrian Education System</p> <p>School attendance is compulsory for all children permanently resident in Austria irrespective of their nationality, and lasts for nine years.</p> <p>Pupils are free to choose whether to attend a state or a private school, attendance of a state school, however, is free of charge.</p> <p>Compulsory schooling starts on the first of September following the child's sixth birthday. Children who celebrate their sixth birthday between September 1 (start of the academic year) and December 31, may start primary school prematurely, provided they are mentally and physically mature enough to follow lessons.</p> <p>Compulsory schooling either starts with a pre-school year or a four-year attendance of an elementary school (years 1 to 4 of a primary or a special needs school). Primary school is the general compulsory school for pupils aged 6-10.</p> <p>Years 5 to 8 may be completed at a new secondary school (Neue Mittelschule) or a lower level of secondary academic school (Allgemein bildende Höhere Schule) or a senior special needs school</p> <p>The 9th year may in turn be completed by attending a pre-vocational year, a secondary academic school or a technical and vocational school or college. Pupils may choose among a variety of secondary academic, technical and vocational schools and colleges.</p> <p>Special needs support in compulsory school</p> <p><i>Special needs support/inclusion in general education schools</i></p> <p>Inclusive education for pupils with special educational needs is currently legally regulated in primary, lower-</p>

secondary school, and in the lower grades of schools in general secondary education. Three models of joint education are applied:

- Inclusive classes: pupils with and without special educational needs are instructed in all lessons by a team of teachers.
- Classes with support teachers: mainstream classes where one or two pupils with special educational needs (SEN) receive extra support from a special school teacher for a few hours per week (depending on their disability).
- Co-operation classes: primary, lower-secondary and pre-vocational school classes are generally separate from special school classes in terms of organisation. The teachers involved agree upon a plan according to which pupils are taught together, either some of the time or all the time.

The co-ordination tasks of Special Education Centres

Special Education Centres have the task of providing and co-ordinating all special needs education measures to ensure through inclusive education that children with SEN can be educated in mainstream schools in the best possible way. These tasks include:

- The issuing of expert opinions to identify SEN (special needs opinion).
- Co-operation with regional compulsory education schools, other Special Education Centres, school authorities, the district school inspector, the special school inspector, regional non-school institutions, etc.
- Supporting inclusive education through educational and organisational counselling, assistance for establishing teacher teams.
- Information for parents, public relations, exchange of experience and further training.
- Administration.

Co-operation with other institutions

The Special Education Centres are responsible for co-operation with other institutions to support children and their parents in the best possible way. For example, if other institutions require additional assistance, therapy, training programmes, diagnoses, etc., the Special Education Centre establishes contact with the competent bodies and

	<p>procures the respective provisions.</p> <p>Special needs support in special schools</p> <p>Special schools have the task of supporting children with physical or psychological disabilities according to their type of disability, and giving them – as far as possible – a level of education which corresponds to primary school, lower-secondary school or pre-vocational school, and – in the case of the job preparation year – preparing them for integration into the labour market.</p> <p>There are ten different types of special schools with a focus on different types of disabilities (for example, special schools for children with learning disabilities, visual or physical disabilities, etc.). Specially trained teachers instruct their pupils in smaller classes; the curriculum, methods and materials are adapted to the children’s abilities.</p> <p>In these schools, pupils are either educated according to the primary or lower-secondary school curriculum, or to a curriculum of the respective special school type.</p> <p>Special schools that follow the primary or lower-secondary school curriculum have to enable children – depending on their interests, orientations, talents and abilities – to carry on in upper-secondary schools.</p> <p>Education in special schools comprises compulsory schooling (nine years of school attendance). However, if necessary, it is possible to prolong attendance at a special school to a maximum of 12 years.</p> <p>The maximum number of pupils per class is between 8 (for example, in a special school for children with hearing disabilities) and 13 (general special school).</p>
<p>Methodological approach (Please give information about how you got the information provided below)</p>	<p>The information provided below is based on an interview with Johanna Zingl, the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <p>Some information also comes from: www.european-agency.com www.bmb.gv.at www.webgate.ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Bacher, Pfaffenberger, Pöschko (2007): “Arbeitssituation und Weiterbildungsbedarf von Schulassistent/innen”</p>

Please fill out the dimension boxes in a narrative way. (for example see: p2i)

GENERAL	
<p>Financial Framework of the services (Who is financing the service?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> In Styria 60% of the service is financed by the state community and 40% by the respective municipality. The hourly rate, which the social service provider is allowed to account, is 24,50€. Only actual work hours can be accounted. For example, if the child or the assistant is ill, the hours can't be accounted by the country.</p> <p>Decisions can be issued by two different resorts, dependent on the law (§35a or §7). So there are also two ways of commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ §35a-> the Municipality (=school provider) gets the decision and is responsible and asks a social service provider to support the child. Or the Municipality employs an assistant themselves. ○ §7-> individual decision – the parents can choose a social service provider or employ an assistant themselves. <p>Every federal state in Austria has a different financial system. In Upper Austria, for example, the state community funds in some cases 90% and the rest is to be paid by the parents or in some cases the state community funds 100%.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> The salary of the school assistants is very low.</p>
<p>Organization/Admin of the service (Who is offering the service?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> In Styria the service is offered by social service providers (such as Chance B) or the responsible municipality employs somebody who supports the child. It's also possible that parents themselves employ an assistant for their child.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>

<p>Cooperation of the supporters with other staff (teachers, parents, therapists etc.)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> The cooperation with teachers, parents or therapists varies from case to case. In some schools the assistants become part of the teaching staff, and work very intensive and well with teachers. They are intimately involved and get a workplace in the conference room. In other schools they are only tolerated, the cooperation isn't good and they have to wait in the wardrobe. The contact with parents depends on the impairment of the child and also on the parents themselves. Sometimes there is a lot of exchange, sometimes less. When the child has a highly physical impairment a good handover in the morning is especially important. Furthermore the assistants sometimes work with the therapist of the child. If helper conferences are needed, they are participating.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> School assistants have to do their work at school, not at home, so they don't need to cooperate with educational support. Some of the assistants do, but it's not their job. Also, it is important to have contact with the parents but in most cases it isn't necessary that the assistants tell the parents every day how things have been going at school. Sometimes it happens that parents "monopolize" the assistants and call them for example at 7 pm or stand in front of their door to ask them why their child got a bad mark. If this happens the head of the social service intervenes. After all, it is not the job of the assistant to manage the educational career of the child.</p>
<p>Target groups of supporters (With whom they are working?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> The assistants work with children with all forms of disabilities (behavioral syndromes, physical or sensory impairment) in special needs schools and in mainstream schools. The children are in the compulsory schooling age (6-max. 16 years).</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p>

	<hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> Officially, the assistants should work in 1:1 support. But in practice it is different. There are only few children who in fact need 1:1 support. So the assistants are being encouraged by the head of the school assistance to support the other pupils in class as well. School assistants should be responsible for all children in an educational institution and not only for e.g. one child with a disability.</p>
<p>Qualification requirements (What are the official requirements that someone can work as a supporter?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> There are no official qualification requirements. One exception: If the child has to catheterize or probe, the assistant needs a special qualification (graduate nurse).</p> <p>Informal qualification requirements depend on the social service provider. At Chance B the qualification of the assistant has to guarantee that he/she can work well with the respective child. Depending on the impairment different forms of professional care assistance are required. For example, a child with a wheelchair and high level of care needs a care assistant.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> If the child has to catheterize or probe and the assistant hasn't a qualification for this (like in most cases) the home nursing service can come into school to perform the respective tasks.</p>
<p>Legal status (Which laws are affected?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> There are two paragraphs for school assistance in the Styrian law. One is to be found in the "Pflichtschulerhaltungsgesetz" (§35a) and the other in the "Styrian Disability Law" (§7). They are both regulating care and support. The law in other federal states in Austria is different.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p>

	<p>“Steirisches Behindertengesetz”, §7a, Erziehung und Schulbildung, Abs. 1 „Pflichtschulerhaltungsgesetz“, §35, Betreuungspersonal, Abs. 1ff</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>
TASKS	
<p>Aims and Tasks of supporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles/ official guidelines (What are they supposed to do?) 	<p><i>Current state:</i> There are no official guidelines as to assistants’ precise tasks. It is only defined that they have to care for and support the child and that they are not allowed to do educational work.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practical (What are they really doing?) 	<p><i>Current state:</i> In the field the assistants are doing educational work. They are doing everything the child needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ supporting requirements of daily life (e.g. picking them up from the bus, helping, taking off clothes, ...) ○ supporting primary care (e.g. going to the toilet, meal, ...), ○ supporting educational needs, ○ supporting therapeutic measures, ○ providing emotional support, ○ establishing a relationship with parents and the teacher, ○ meetings with the class teacher, ○ etc. <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> -Interview with the head of school assistance of Chance B. -Bacher, Pfaffenberger, Pöschko (2007): “Arbeitssituation und Weiterbildungsbedarf von Schulassistent/innen” (Survey)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>

<p>Access to information (Which information they get?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> All information comes from the parents. Which particular information these are depends on what the parents want to share with the assistants. The assistants have no right to see the school's data on the child.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>
<p>Hierarchy (Who is the boss?)</p>	<p><i>Current state:</i> The formal superior of the assistants is the head of the service. Informally, however, they mainly have to report to the pedagogues (teacher, headmaster).</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> It is very important that the head of the service have rapport with the pedagogues. Often the head of the social service has to solve problems.</p>
<p>JOB SITUATION</p>	
<p>Status and Responsibilities in educational systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal 	<p><i>Current state:</i> Official the assistants have to help the child to get an educating and schooling.</p> <p>There are no official quality standards throughout Austria.</p> <p>The status of the assistants can be very different - it reaches from "tolerated" to "deeply esteemed". It depends on school, teaching staff and the headmaster.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p>

	<hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal 	<p><i>Current state:</i></p> <p>Responsibilities of the assistants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to support and accompany the child, - to cooperate with teachers and special pedagogues <p>The social service provider has to ensure the quality of its services. The quality management of Chance B contains a good choice of assistants, a matching allocation and regular consultation with parents, teachers and the headmaster.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p>Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>
<p>Continuing professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the chances for career development? 	<p><i>Current state:</i></p> <p>In the field of school assistance there are no opportunities for career development.</p> <p>If the assistant is a pedagogue he/she has the possibility to become a teacher. Also, the assistant can build a career in other fields. Chance B provides a variety of social services and assistants can gain further experience within the structure of the organization.</p> <p>Chance B offers the whole school assistance team advanced education on special topics two days per year. Further trainings have to be paid by the assistants themselves.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p>Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p>A lot of assistants at Chance B do extra occupational social worker training; after their job as school assistants, some also build</p>

	careers in other fields of chance B.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are supporters supported to deal with the challenges of the job? 	<p><i>Current state:</i> The assistants are supported by the head of the service. They can phone, mail, or send her a message anytime. And the assistants network with other colleagues to discuss their problems. Once a month a regular's table takes place. It's akin to informal supervision. If it is necessary, the head of the service can also organize formal supervision.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> An exchange with colleagues is very important for assistants.</p>
<p>Job security and career progressive description/profile of workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality profile (gender, impairment, age, ethnicity, migrant status) 	<p><i>Current state:</i> The job security is very low because of the 1:1 support. For example, if the supported child moves away the assistant has to leave her/his job.</p> <p>The majority of the assistants at Chance B is female with an Austrian nationality, at the age between 35 and 45 years and has no impairment. Assistants mostly do this job for 2-3 years.</p> <p>Other providers of this service have a different profile of workforce. One of them, for example, only employs students.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i> Interview with the head of the school assistance of Chance B</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i> School assistance is most often a temporary job for: returners, people who don't immediately get a job in their real field, mothers who only want to work before midday, people who study or need a practicum, people who don't like to work more.</p>

	<p>There are always special reasons why people work as school assistants.</p> <p>The head of the school assistance prefers people with (life- or job-) experience, because the assistants have to be able to work independently in school. Moreover, young assistants who have just finished their education are often insecure.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contractual situation 	<p><i>Current state:</i></p> <p>The assistants at Chance B have fixed-term contracts. The contract starts with the beginning of the school year and runs until the end of the school year.</p> <p>The assistants work about 12-37 hours per week (depends on the impairment, the school, the age and if the children go to the afternoon care).</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p>Interview with the head of school assistance of Chance B.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>