Evaluation in pre-primary education is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and completed by the education authorities of the Autonomous Communities. The latter define pupils' evaluation process for their respective regions, although some Autonomous Communities do it for the two cycles and some others only regulate evaluation in the second cycle.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training establishes that:

- the evaluation of pre-primary education has a global, continuous and educational nature
- evaluation at this stage helps to identify and assess pupils’ development processes and their learning, always according to their personal characteristics. To that end, the evaluation criteria for each curricular area of the second cycle, established at central level and completed by the Autonomous Communities for their respective regions, are used as reference points
- the main evaluation technique is direct and systematic observation, which is a class teacher’s competence, supported by professionals who work with pupils as a group or individually.

The evaluation process has different stages:

- the initial individual evaluation starts during the adaptation period of each child to the school and is defined by each school in its school development plan
- the continuous evaluation implies monitoring each child on a daily basis according to the objectives and evaluation criteria set
- the final evaluation specifies to what degree abilities and basic skills have been acquired by the end of the school year.

The education authorities establish at least three formal evaluation sessions per school year:

- results are expressed in qualitative terms, including the progress made by pupils and, where appropriate, the remedial and adaptation measures introduced
- at the end of each evaluation session, families receive a written report. These reports, together with the different evaluation documents, help to improve coordination between the two cycles of the stage
- in order to ensure a smooth transition from pre-primary to primary education, schools providing pre-primary education also establish mechanisms to coordinate with the new schools.

Due to the nature of pre-primary education, the purpose of evaluation at this stage is not the grading of pupils or their progression from one year to next and into primary education, which is automatic.

Exceptionally, staying another year at the stage can be authorised by the education authorities in the case of pupils with special educational needs. As for highly gifted pupils, the duration of the second cycle can also be reduced by authorising the early commencement of schooling in primary education.
For more information, see Special education needs provision within mainstream education [1].

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