Starting Strong VI

Supporting meaningful interactions in early childhood education and care

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Enrolment in ECEC and primary education for children aged 3 to 5 is on the rise

In Japan, 92% of children aged 3 to 5 were enrolled in ECEC in 2018

Percentage of children enrolled in early childhood education and care (ISCED 2011 Level 0) or primary education (ISCED 2011 Level 1), 3-5 year-olds
Meaningful interactions define high-quality early childhood education and care

Importance of children’s daily interactions with other children, staff and teachers, for their development, learning and well-being

Known as process quality
Main question of the project: Are **policies** in OECD countries **supportive of meaningful interactions** in ECEC settings?

**Framework:**
5 policy levers with a focus on 2 of them that are the closest to children’s interactions within ECEC settings.

Transition matters

Key for strong transition and for quality ECEC:
• Shared goals
• Curriculum alignment, with comprehensive approach to child development
• Coordination and alignment across different stages of education
In many countries, complexity is a feature of the organisation of ECEC

- Responsibilities often at a sub-national level
  
  26 countries and 41 jurisdictions answered the policy questionnaire

- A multiplicity of settings in many countries - Childcare, crèches, kindergarten, integrated centre-based ECEC, home-based settings

  Information on more than 120 different types of ECEC settings (3 types of settings in Japan: Kindergarten, Day care centre, Integrated Centre for Early Childhood Education and Care)

- A multiplicity of approaches

  Information on 56 different curriculum frameworks (3 curriculum frameworks in Japan related to the 3 types of settings)

To enable international comparisons, the study uses standardised age groups: 0 to 2; 3 to 5/primary school; 0 to 5/primary school (integrated approach)
Curriculum frameworks are powerful tools to shape ECEC staff’s interactions with children and parents

- More likely to be **mandatory for children aged 3 to 5** than those aged 0 to 2
- In almost 25% of participating countries and jurisdictions, **more than one curriculum in place per age group**
- In 14% of participating countries and jurisdictions, **no curriculum framework for the youngest age group**, aged 0 to 2

The absence of curricula for the youngest children can make transitions to pre-primary education more difficult

Multiple curricula for the same age group can result in differences in the quality of ECEC across settings
Features of the organisation of curriculum frameworks in Japan

- All ECEC ages are covered by at least one curriculum framework.
- There is no common curriculum framework across age groups and settings.
- Some age groups are covered by different curriculum frameworks depending on the type of setting.
Specification of developmental and learning goals for children in curriculum frameworks adapt to children’s age

Curriculum frameworks covering children aged 0 to 2

Curriculum frameworks covering children aged 0 to 5/primary school

Curriculum frameworks covering children aged 3 to 5/primary school
Curriculum frameworks specify multiple pedagogical approaches adapted to children’s age

Percentage of curriculum frameworks specifying the following pedagogical approaches, all countries/jurisdictions, by age group, 2019

In Japan, the 3 curriculum frameworks specify all approaches except the Didactic/direct instruction approach.
More types of stakeholders could be involved in the design of curriculum framework

Percentage of curricula that involved the following categories of stakeholders in the development of the most recent version, all countries/jurisdictions, by age group, 2019

In Japan, parents and community groups were included in the design of curriculum frameworks.
Curriculum framework implementation **not always externally monitored**

Percentage of curriculum frameworks for which implementation is monitored in the following frequencies, by age group, 2019

- At least once a year
- Less than once a year
- Depends on last monitoring results
- Not applicable

Age 0 to 2

Age 3 to 5/primary school entry

Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Monitoring of curriculum frameworks’ implementation focusses on interactions between ECEC staff and children and less so on other types of interactions.

In Japan, external monitoring includes all types of interactions and is mandatory for the day care centres and integrated centres for ECEC.
Curriculum framework implementation is more likely to be included as a topic in teachers’ initial training for settings for children aged 3 to 5.

Percentage of settings for which the inclusion of curriculum framework in teachers’ initial education and training is regulated, common practice or not regulated/required, by age group, 2019.

- Age 0 to 2
- Age 3 to 5/primary school entry
- Integrated for age 0 to 5/primary school entry
Practicum more often required for teachers and settings for children aged 3 to 5

Percentage of settings that require a practicum, by age groups and staff type, 2019

In Japan, initial training programmes for teachers include a practicum. Assistants are only present in day care centres and no practicum is required as part of their training.
Staff whose pre-service programmes included a “practicum” covered more areas of training

(TALIS Starting Strong 2018)

Average percentage of pre-primary staff covering each thematic area in their pre-service education or training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme included a practicum</th>
<th>Programme did not include a practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playful learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child health or personal care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring/documenting child development, well-being and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with parents or guardians/families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom/playgroup/group management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage values for each thematic area vary, with some areas showing higher coverage when a practicum was included in the pre-service programme.
Professional development adapted to staff initial preparation, experience and role can help them effectively engage in meaningful interactions

- Several countries have **requirements for participation in professional development** (e.g. mandatory number of hours; certification conditional to training)
- Most countries **do not regulate the monitoring of quality** of professional development
- The assessment of staff **professional development needs**, and **barriers to participation** is **not a common practice** in several participating countries and jurisdictions

In Japan, participation of staff in professional development is **required for staff in day care centres and integrated centres for ECEC**. The assessment of professional development needs and barriers to participation is **common practice**.
### Top three professional development needs

(TALIS Starting Strong Survey 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-primary education</th>
<th>Centres for children under the age of 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children with special needs</td>
<td>Dual language learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany*</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Turkey³</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark**</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
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Protected time for activities without children not available in all settings and more likely for **teachers** than for **assistants**.

The protection of time for activities without children is not regulated in Japan.
Drivers and implications of strong ECEC leadership: What do the data from TALIS Starting Strong say?

In most participating countries:

- Distributed leadership and pedagogical leadership go together
- Staff who perceive leadership as being more distributed collaborate more frequently and report higher satisfaction with their job
- Pedagogical leadership is positively associated with staff attitudes and practices linked to quality in ECEC settings
- Leaders whose initial preparation focused on early childhood and/or pedagogical leadership report more engagement in pedagogical tasks
Training in pedagogical leadership is common but not universal among leaders, especially in settings for the youngest children.

Percentage of settings for which pedagogical leadership is regulated, common practice or not regulated/required as part of initial training, by age group, 2019

Information not available for Japan
## Barriers to professional development for ECEC centre leaders (TALIS Starting Strong 2018)

Percentage of ECEC centre leaders who reported that they “agree” or "strongly agree" with the following barriers to professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I do not have the pre-requisites</th>
<th>Professional development is too expensive</th>
<th>Professional development conflicts with my work schedule</th>
<th>No time because of family responsibilities</th>
<th>No relevant professional development offered</th>
<th>No incentives for professional development</th>
<th>Not enough staff to compensate my absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-primary education (ISCED 02)</strong></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>86</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark**</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centres for children under age 3</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>8</td>
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</table>
• In Japan, 92% of children aged 3 to 5 were enrolled in ECEC in 2018, which is above the OECD average, and 30% of children under age 3 were enrolled in some form of ECEC. In the past five years, public funding was increased to support staffing and operational expenses but the average expenditure per child aged 3 to 5 is below the OECD average.

• Three compulsory curriculum frameworks are in place, covering all children of ECEC age in three corresponding types of settings.

• Curriculum frameworks put process quality at their core. They have broad goals, place a strong focus on the use of play, and aim to support children’s interactions with peers, adults and space and materials, for which they provide guidance.
Key findings for Japan

• Teachers working in regulated settings are required to have an ISCED 5 qualification. The renewal of a working licence is mandatory every ten years for teachers in pre-primary settings (kindergartens), which requires their participation in professional development.

• Protected time for participation is not secured, and time and financial incentives may be limited.

• Different entities ensure monitoring and quality support, depending on the type of setting. Monitoring of curriculum frameworks implementation is compulsory except for day care centres. A wide breadth of interactions is monitored in all settings.
Thank you!

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