



## RESULTS FROM TALIS STARTING STRONG 2018

The OECD Starting Strong Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS Starting Strong) is an international large-scale survey of early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and leaders conducted in nine OECD countries. This note presents the findings from the first volume of results on TALIS Starting Strong 2018, *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care*.

### Korea

#### Key findings

Practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development and practices that facilitate children's numeracy development are both used frequently by staff in Korea, suggesting a holistic approach to children's learning and development.

Compared to other participating countries, Korea stands out as having a large share of highly educated staff, who receive ongoing professional development at high rates (97%).

Korea is one of the participating countries where the lowest percentage of staff are satisfied with their jobs (79%). At the same time, Korea is similar to other countries in the share of staff who feel valued in society (47%) and although satisfaction with salaries is low (37%), it is among the highest in participating countries.

A large majority of leaders in Korea (78%) report having an inspection regarding process quality at least once every year, which is higher than in most other participating countries. Leaders report that changing requirements from authorities is their most important source of work-related stress. Government regulation and policy is also reported as a top barrier to their effectiveness according to leaders.

90% of ECEC leaders in Korea – more than in any other participating country – report that their centre provided workshops or courses for parents during the 12 months prior to the Survey.

Korea is the only participating country in which staff do not rank working with children with special needs among their top three professional development needs. In most centres there is also a low share of children with special needs, compared to other countries.

#### Highlights and policy implications for Korea

##### ***Promote practices that foster children's learning, development and well-being***

TALIS Starting Strong data show that staff with more education and training specifically to work with children report using more practices that can facilitate children's learning and development in a large range of areas. Compared to other participating countries, Korea stands out as having a large share of staff with education above secondary level (96%), although the shares of staff having received a practical training (82%) and having been trained specifically to work with children (79%) are somewhat less strong. Leaders are relatively well-educated (87% with a bachelor's degree or higher). The share of staff participating in professional development activities is nearly universal and higher than the share in other participating countries (97%).

In most participating countries, larger shares of staff report using practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development rather than practices that facilitate children's numeracy development. In Korea, the gap between these different practices is relatively small. However, when ranking the importance of abilities or skills to prepare children for life in the future, staff in Korea attribute less importance to numeracy skills compared to staff in other countries, while attributing high importance to children's ability to co-operate with others.

On average in Korea, staff work with groups of 16 children. This is similar to the average group size in several other countries. More than half of staff (51%) indicate that having too many children in the group is an important source of stress. Staff in Korea who feel more stress related to the size of their groups also report using more group management strategies (e.g. calming children) compared to staff in Korea who feel less of this stress.

Practices for engaging parents/guardians (e.g. providing workshops or informing parents about daily activities) are common across countries and particularly in Korea. Staff in Korea report high rates of training on working with parents/guardians and families, both through their formal education and as part of ongoing professional development. In addition, 90% of ECEC leaders in Korea – more than in any other participating country – report that their centre provided workshops or courses for parents during the 12 months prior to the Survey.

Korea has a low share of leaders who report that their centre is in communication with primary school teachers (40%) among participating countries. However, training on facilitating children's transitions is relatively common in staff formal education (72%) and is also covered for a moderate share of staff in ongoing professional development activities (40%).

### ***Attract and retain a high-quality workforce***

Korea is one of the participating countries where the lowest percentage of staff are satisfied with their jobs (79%). At the same time, Korea is similar to other countries in the share of staff who report feeling valued in society (47%) and although satisfaction with their salaries is overall low (37%), it is among the highest in participating countries. In line with these findings, improving salaries is indicated as a top spending priority by staff. Korea also has a low share of permanent contracts for staff (24%).

Professional development can help staff keep motivated at their job but can also facilitate career progression. In Korea, despite widespread participation in ongoing professional development, large shares of staff indicate that a lack of staff to compensate for absences is a barrier to participation in professional development (88%). Other common barriers to participation in professional development reported by staff in Korea include a conflict with their work schedule and a lack of incentives for participation.

### ***Give a strong start to all children***

Most centres in Korea include a moderate share of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes, although publicly managed centres serve more children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes than privately managed centres. Staff report having received training to work with children from diverse backgrounds at moderate rates, compared to other countries. Similarly, Korea is around the middle among participating countries in terms of the percentages of staff who report using practices on diversity (such as through the use of books and toys).

In contrast, in most centres there is a low share of children whose first language is different from the language(s) used in the centre and a low share of children with special needs. Staff also report having received training to work with dual/second language learners and with children with special needs at moderate rates, compared to other countries. Korea is the only participating country in which staff do not rank working with children with special needs as among their top three professional development needs.

### ***Ensure smart spending in view of complex governance and service provision***

A moderate to large percentage of leaders indicate having responsibilities for the budget allocation within the centre and the appointment and recruitment of staff. More than three-quarters of leaders indicate receiving inspections regarding process quality at least once every year, more than in most other countries.

Changing requirements from authorities and a lack of support from local authorities are the most important sources of work-related stress for leaders in Korea. Along these same lines, government regulation and policy is the top barrier to their effectiveness according to leaders.

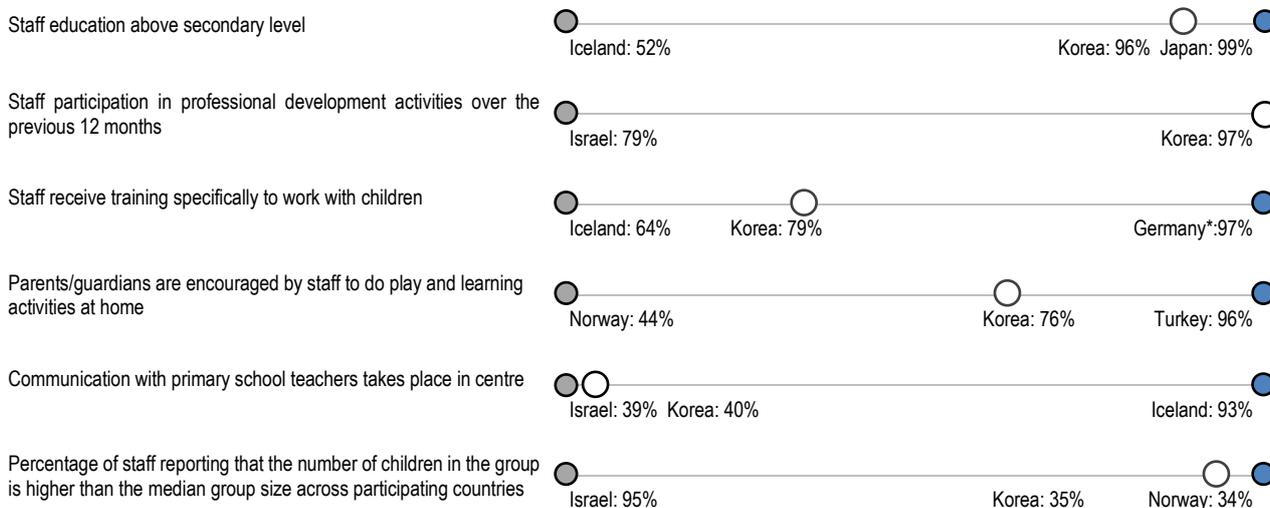
## How does Korea compare?

Indicators, pre-primary education (ISCED 02):

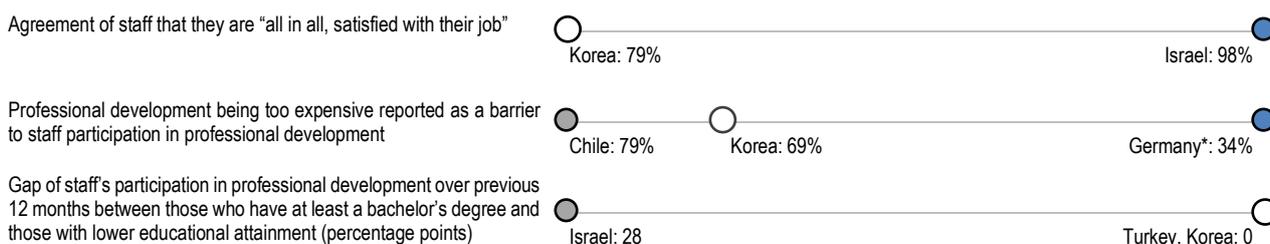
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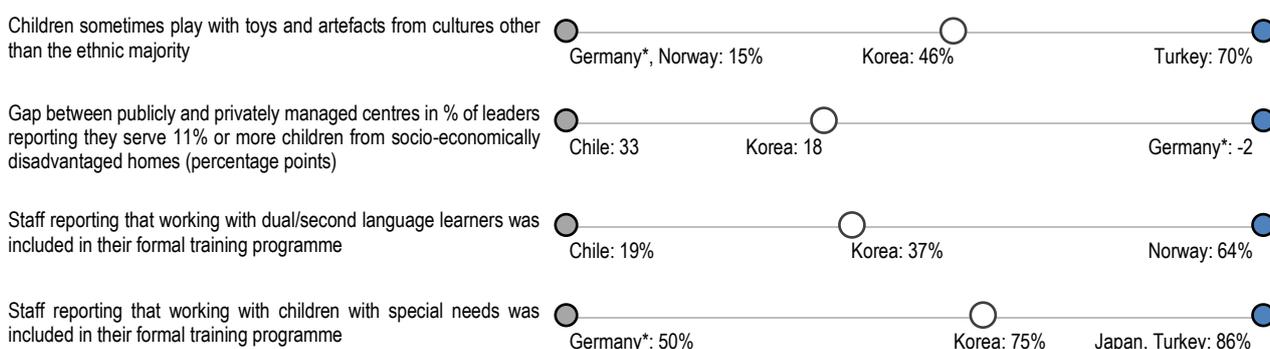
### Promote practices that foster children's learning, development and well-being



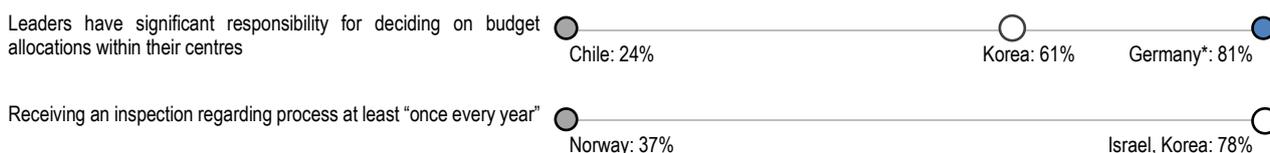
### Attract and retain a high-quality workforce



### Give a strong start to all children



### Ensure smart spending in view of complex governance and service provision



Top spending priority indicated by staff in case of a 5% budget increase: **Improving ECEC staff salaries**

Top barrier to leaders' effectiveness in their centres, according to leaders: **Government regulation and policy**

Note: \* Estimates for sub-groups and estimated differences between sub-groups in the TALIS Starting Strong 2018 data need to be interpreted with care. Source: TALIS Starting Strong 2018 database.

## Policy pointers for Korea

- Include a work-based learning component in all pre-service ECEC programmes.
- Review ECEC staff financial packages to ensure that they can attract and maintain a high-quality workforce in the sector.
- Engage in dialogue with ECEC professionals to identify sources of work stress and develop strategies to alleviate them.
- Ensure consistent quality across public and private ECEC centres and support access to both types of settings for all families.
- Ensure that policies and regulations do not create an excessive burden to leaders that prevent them from exerting the various aspects of leadership.

## What is TALIS Starting Strong and how does it apply in Korea?

TALIS Starting Strong is an international, large-scale survey of staff and leaders in early childhood education and care (ECEC). TALIS Starting Strong uses questionnaires administered to staff and leaders to gather data. Its main goal is to generate robust international information relevant to developing and implementing policies focused on ECEC staff and leaders and their pedagogical and professional practices, with an emphasis on those aspects that promote conditions for children's learning, development and well-being. TALIS Starting Strong data are based exclusively on self-reports from ECEC staff and leaders and, therefore, represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and accounts of their activities.

TALIS Starting Strong 2018 includes nine countries: Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway and Turkey. All of these countries collected data from staff and leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) settings typically serving children aged 3 to 5. In addition, four of the nine countries (Denmark, Germany, Israel and Norway) collected data from staff and leaders in settings serving children under age 3. Only data on centre-based provision are reported in the first report volume and this country note.

The Survey aims to obtain a representative sample in each participating country of staff and leaders for each level of ECEC in which the country participated. In Korea, 927 staff members and 188 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) settings completed the TALIS Starting Strong questionnaires.

TALIS Starting Strong covers the following ECEC settings in Korea: kindergartens for children aged 3-5 and childcare centres for children aged 0-5.

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**Note regarding data from Israel:** The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## References

OECD (2019), *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/301005d1-en>.

**For more information on TALIS Starting Strong 2018** visit <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/oecd-starting-strong-teaching-and-learning-international-survey.htm>.

Data can be found also on line by following the **StatLinks**  under the tables and charts in the publication.

**Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using:** <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/>.

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