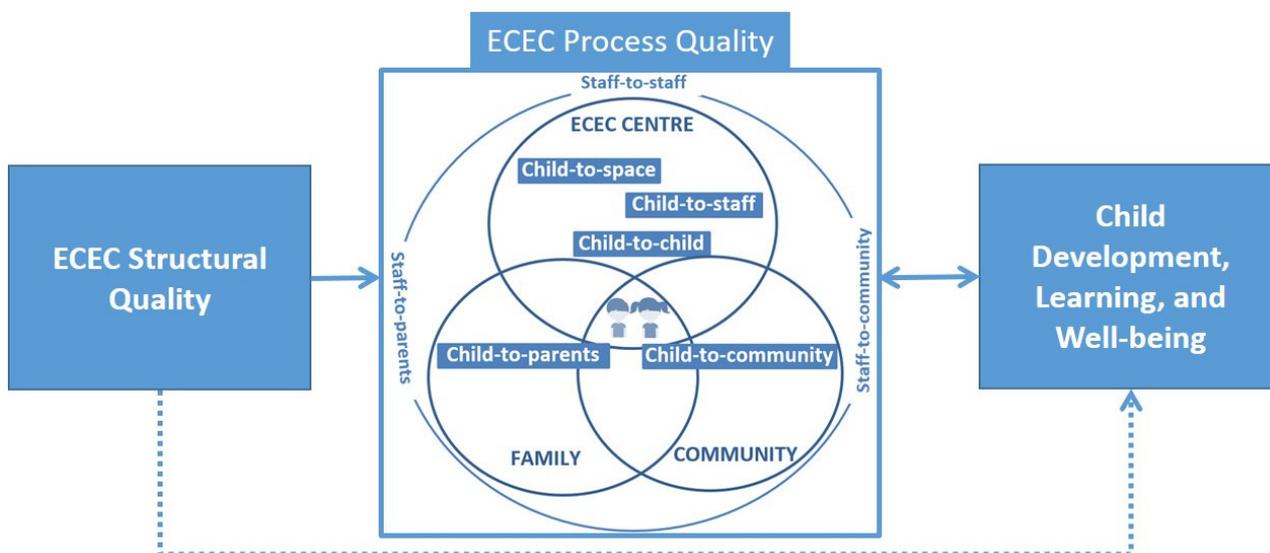


Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care

Participation in at least one year of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is now nearly universal in most OECD countries. Increasingly, policymakers recognise the importance of early childhood, informed by growing evidence on the benefits of high-quality ECEC experiences. However, growing participation in ECEC does not guarantee that all children have access to high-quality ECEC. We know that the quality of ECEC services matters for children’s development, learning and well-being. We also know that quality of ECEC is multi-faceted, including both structural aspects (e.g. child-staff ratios, staff education requirements) and process aspects. ECEC process quality is comprised of the interactions children have with staff, other children, space and materials, their families and communities. Research shows that structural quality supports process quality, which is the primary driver of gains in children’s development and learning through ECEC.

Relationship between structural quality, process quality and child development, learning and well-being



ECEC staff are essential for the quality of settings and ensuring children’s well-being. Stronger pre-service qualifications and ongoing opportunities for in-service training are both associated with more positive staff-child interactions. Yet, more information is needed on the best ways to support other aspects of process quality. For example, children’s interactions with their peers or the ways curricula and materials can support learning and development are core aspects of their ECEC experiences, but limited data are available to suggest how policies can best support these areas.

How is the OECD supporting policymakers and practitioners to build high-quality early care and education opportunities for all children?

The OECD has been conducting reviews of countries’ ECEC policy innovations and challenges for more than 20 years. These reviews are documented in the Starting Strong series volumes I through V (2001-2017), offering an international perspective on ECEC systems, advancing policy analysis and developing new data to provide valid, timely and comparable information to help countries improve their ECEC systems. The OECD continues to advance its work on ECEC and analyses of what works for young children through the following activities:

OECD Early Childhood Education and Care Network

For the development and implementation of its work, the OECD has worked closely with the OECD ECEC Network since 2007, aiming to assist countries in developing effective policies and practices in ECEC by:

- sharing information on policies, practices and research;
- identifying areas where further research and analysis is required;
- assessing the need for new data development.

The Network consists of representatives from OECD countries, and also welcomes observers from partner countries and economies, as well as relevant international organisations. The Network meets once or twice a year.

ECEC policy review: Quality beyond Regulations (Starting Strong VI)

The aim of this policy review is to support jurisdictions to better understand the different dimensions of quality in ECEC and the policies that can enhance process quality in particular. It is the first international comparative review of policies to support process quality.

The first phase of the project took place in 2017-2018, leading to the publication of *Engaging Young Children*, a literature review and meta-analysis on quality in ECEC. The second phase of the project, taking place in 2019-2020, includes:

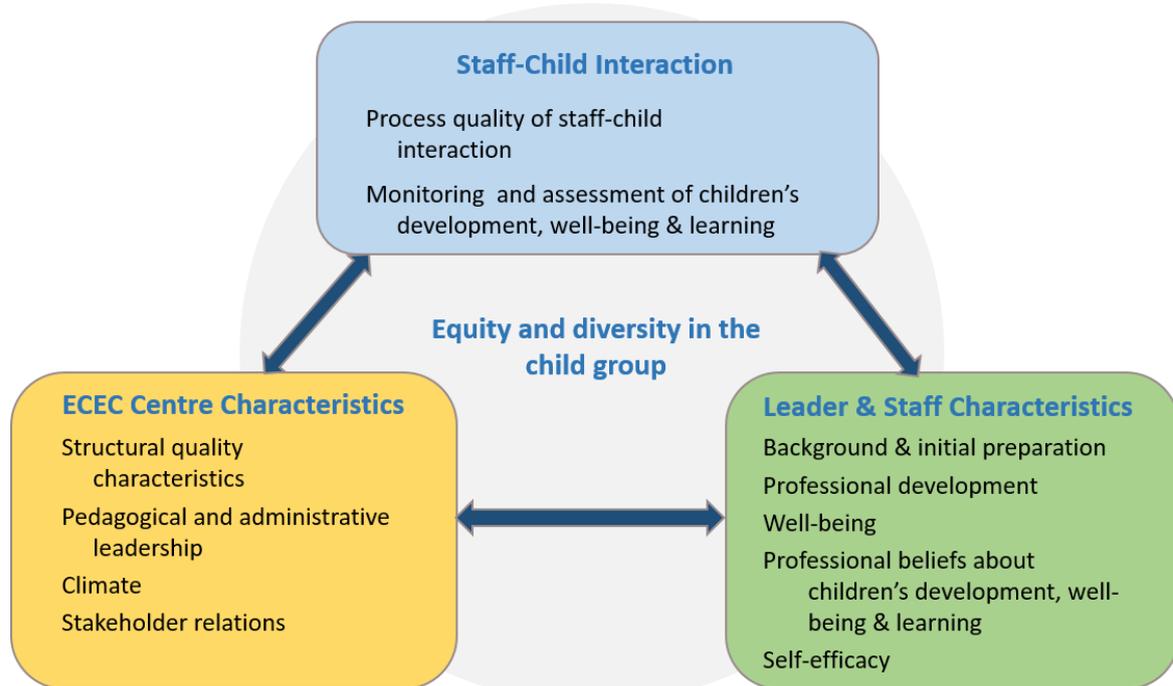
- A **policy review framework** to set out a conceptual model of the links between policy levers and structural and process quality of ECEC, in support of child development, learning and well-being.
- A **policy questionnaire** collecting **in-depth information on curriculum and pedagogy and workforce development, with a cross-cutting emphasis on family and community engagement.**
- **Country background reports** to be prepared by countries, with guidelines from the OECD Secretariat, to document approaches to building quality in ECEC.

The conceptual work, data collection efforts and supporting literature reviews will result in a **multidimensional matrix on quality** to be released late in 2020 and, ultimately, the publication of *Starting Strong VI* in 2021.

TALIS Starting Strong Survey

This comparative study on staff quality and the quality of the learning and well-being environments took place in nine countries in 2018. As the first international survey of staff and leaders in the ECEC sector, it provides insights to characteristics of this workforce and their pedagogical and professional practices. The survey covers several broad themes that can inform ECEC policy.

TALIS Starting Strong Survey conceptual model of the ECEC environment for children's development, learning and well-being



The TALIS Starting Strong Survey includes perspectives of staff in ISCED 02 settings (i.e. “pre-primary education,” typically attending to children ages 3-5) as well as staff in settings serving children under the age of 3. Data from the survey will fill knowledge gaps on what quality ECEC means for children in these different age groups, giving attention to how process quality can be defined for both policy and research.

Three reports using the TALIS Starting Strong Survey data will be released in 2019-2020:

Volume I: Ensuring quality learning environments in ECEC centres

Providing the first look at data from this ground-breaking survey, this report will describe the within- and between-country variation in the main features and determinants of quality in ECEC.

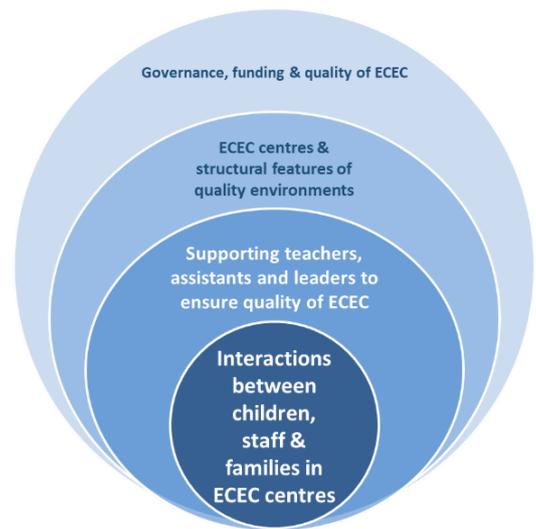
Thematic report on staff and centres for children under the age of 3

Very young children have unique developmental needs, yet ECEC for those under age 3 tends to be less regulated and monitored than provisions for older children: This thematic report will examine these differences across settings serving the youngest children and those serving older children. In addition, the report will draw on data collected from staff in home-based settings.

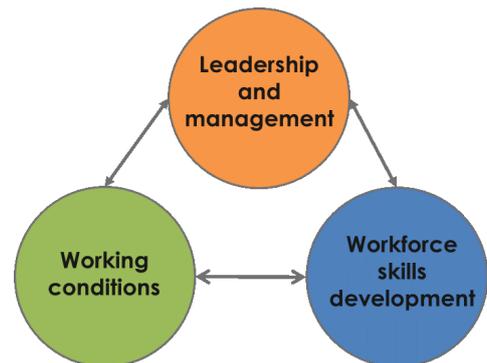
Volume II: Building a high-quality ECEC workforce

This report will look in-depth at three major areas contributing to a high quality ECEC workforce: working conditions, skills development, and leadership and management. These aspects are crucial to attract, develop and maintain a high quality workforce and support children’s development and well-being.

Structure of Volume I



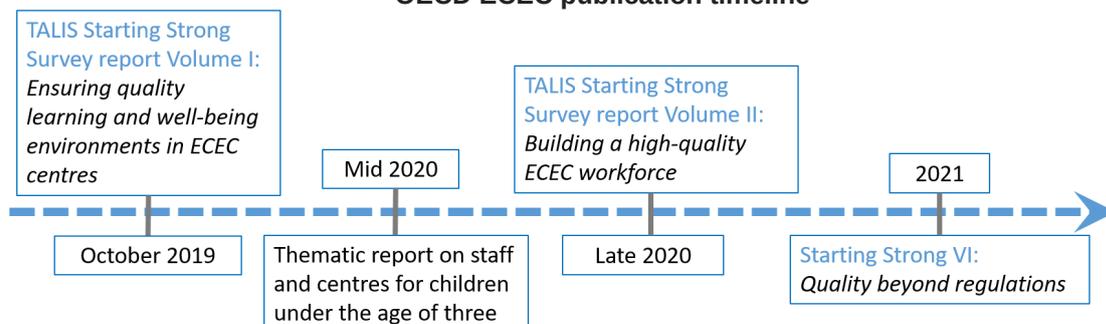
Themes of Volume II



Country policy reviews and country notes

The OECD ECEC Team also provides countries with policy advice and in-focus comparative data. These projects take place on an ongoing basis, offering tailor-made, independent reviews of countries’ policies and practices in response to individual country priorities and/or overviews of OECD ECEC data for the selected country in international comparison. Timelines for such work are negotiated bilaterally.

OECD ECEC publication timeline



For any questions or further information on the OECD’s work on early childhood education and care, please contact ecec@oecd.org and visit:

<http://www.oecd.org/education/school/earlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm>