Starting Strong IV
Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood
Education and Care Country Note

OECD

NETHERLANDS

Summary

The Netherlands has a split Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system with two different authorities in charge of ECEC: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (*Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid*) is responsible for children in childcare and playgroups up to the age of 4; and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen*) is responsible for children aged between 4 and 6 in kindergartens (pre-primary education), as well as for all targeted ECEC programmes for disadvantaged children aged 2 to 4. There are no prescribed curricula in the Netherlands: each ECEC setting can develop and choose its own curriculum based on the children's needs and the objectives of the setting. Development goals/competencies guide the early education and care of children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years.

Monitoring ECEC settings is a shared responsibility between the national (central) government and regional authorities. The municipal health offices, under the responsibility of the National Inspection of Health (*Inspectie voor de Gezondheidszorg*), monitor all childcare and child minding settings, as well as playgroups, while pre-primary education is monitored by the Inspectorate of Education (*Inspectie van het Onderwijs*). Targeted ECEC programmes are monitored by both Health and Education Inspectorates. Service and staff quality are monitored in all ECEC settings for accountability purposes, to inform public policy, to improve the level of service quality, and to enhance staff performance. Inspections and self-assessments are commonly used to monitor service and staff quality; these are complemented by parental surveys. Inspections of service quality focus mainly on regulatory aspects, materials in use and time management and planning. Staff quality inspections focus on whether staff have the minimum qualifications, planning and time management, and the use of materials, as well as on teamwork and knowledge of subjects. Widely used tools during inspections are surveys, observations, rating scales, checklists, interviews, and results of self-evaluations when inspecting staff quality. Monitoring child development starts in childcare, mainly through observations. Language, literacy, socio-emotional and motor skills are commonly monitored, and attempts are undertaken to monitor children's well-being. Although the Netherlands implement a range of monitoring practices in ECEC, several challenges remain. Firstly, children's views are not widely monitored in the Netherlands while this can provide some useful information on how children experience ECEC. And secondly, ensuring ECEC staff have a high level of quality can be challenging. Evaluating staff based on their performance and providing specialised support to staff to help them improve, can contribute to better quality pedagogies and practices.

The monitoring quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) country note for the Netherlands is based on findings presented in the report of OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies. A separate OECD (2016) *Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: Netherlands* provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in the Netherlands.

For more information on Early Childhood Education and Care, visit www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood.

Key messages

- **The Netherlands has a split ECEC system, with different ministries responsible for ECEC. Responsibilities for monitoring and minimum standard setting are at the national level,** while responsibilities for financing and funding ECEC are at both national government and regional authority level.

- **Service quality and staff quality are monitored in the Netherlands** for accountability purposes, to inform policy-making, to improve the level of service quality and to enhance staff performance. In the Netherlands, staff and service quality are monitored once a year although the frequency can be reduced when monitoring results are very positive.

- **Inspections are used to monitor service and staff quality in childcare and pre-primary education.** Targeted ECEC programmes are subject to inspections, and staff also undertake self-evaluations. Inspectors and internal evaluators receive evaluation training as part of their pre-service education programme, and can receive on-the-job or in-service training.

- **A range of tools can be used during inspections, including: observations, rating scales, checklists, interviews and surveys.** As inspections focus on both staff and service quality, similar tools are used for monitoring, although results of self-evaluations may also be taken into account during staff quality inspections. Checklists are the most commonly used tool in self-evaluations in the Netherlands.

- **Staff and service quality inspections monitor time management, planning of staff and staff qualifications**, as well as addressing process quality, knowledge of subjects, and teamwork amongst staff. During inspections and self-evaluations in targeted ECEC programmes, overall quality of staff and implementation of the curriculum is monitored.

- **The Netherlands commonly uses observational tools when monitoring child development.** The Netherlands monitors language and literacy, socio-emotional skills and motor skills, and numeracy skills.

- **There are several monitoring challenges in the Netherlands.** Children's views are not yet widely monitored. Children can be included in monitoring practices and evaluations to understand how they experience ECEC, which can provide valuable inputs for improving quality. In addition, the Netherlands experiences challenges in ensuring staff meet the quality standards and thus, have a certain minimum level of quality. To overcome this challenge, support can be provided to staff in how to improve their practices and pedagogies. Also, staff performance can be rated during their evaluations and training needs can be identified on this basis. Such measures may improve the quality of ECEC staff.

Introduction

The data and information in this country note for the Netherlands are based on findings from the OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* report that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies, and the OECD Network on ECEC's Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development that was conducted in 2013 and validated in 2014/15.[1] A separate OECD (2016) *Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: Netherlands* provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in the Netherlands

This country note primarily aims to provide opportunities for peer-learning by highlighting the Netherlands' policies and practices for monitoring quality in ECEC settings, and by describing what other countries are doing in this area. It informs policy makers and the general public of the current international standing of the Netherlands regarding key areas of monitoring quality in ECEC, and of the types of challenges the Netherlands faces when monitoring quality, which have been identified by the OECD ECEC team in close consultation with the Dutch colleagues. It also provides insights from other countries on the various approaches and practices used for monitoring quality.

This note distinguishes between the monitoring practices of three key aspects of quality: 1) service quality; 2) staff quality and performance; and 3) child development and outcomes. Some jurisdictions monitor all three aspects and some monitor only one. Sometimes aspects are integrated into the monitoring tool of another aspect, for example, curriculum implementation can be monitored when evaluating quality at a more general service level, or when assessing staff performance; and monitoring general staff performance can be part of the service quality evaluation procedure. Therefore, aspects of ECEC quality that are monitored are not mutually exclusive (see also Litjens, 2013). In line with previous reports from the Starting Strong series, the term Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) "includes all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content" (OECD, 2015: 19). Regarding the Netherlands, the information refers to childcare centres for children from birth until compulsory schooling age, childminding for children up until the age of 5 years, playgroups for all children from 2 to 4 years (when free pre-primary education starts in the Netherlands), and targeted ECEC programmes for children aged 2 to 4 years from a disadvantaged background.

The Netherlands is being compared with Finland, Germany and New Zealand in this country note. In Finland, there are five types of ECEC setting: one is home-based family daycare for all children below the age of 6, and there are four types of centre-based ECEC provision, including: group family day care for all 0 to 6 year-olds, daycare centres for 0 to 6 year-olds, open ECEC settings for 0 to 6 year-olds, and pre-primary education for 6-year-olds. Regarding Germany, the information and data in this note regards daycare centres for all children under the age of 6 years. For New Zealand, the information refers to centre-based provisions (including education and care services for 0-5 year-olds and kindergartens for 2-5 year-olds), playcentres for 0-5 year-olds, and home-based care for 0-5 year-olds. All data and information for countries refer to their most commonly or generally used practices and tools, unless indicated otherwise, as monitoring practices are not usually implemented nationally.

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1. For the purpose of comparability across all participating countries the information collection underlying this report focused on the mainstream provision and therefore – in line with the work on ECEC by the European Commission (Eurydice) – excludes the information on settings providing services to children with special needs only, settings integrated into hospitals (and all other ECEC services targeting children with disabilities attributable to organic pathologies), orphanages or similar institutions. Responding countries and jurisdictions were asked to use, where possible, the school year starting in 2012 as a reference year for reporting statistics and data. Further information about the questionnaire and compiling procedures can be found in the full report (see OECD, 2015).

This country note first provides a review of key findings from the research literature, focusing on studies that examine how monitoring practices contribute to quality improvement, specifically in the areas of service quality, staff quality, curriculum implementation and child development and outcomes. The remaining sections focus on the Netherlands' monitoring policies and practices, in comparison with Finland, Germany and New Zealand. These three countries were selected by the Netherlands for specific country comparison. These sections address how quality is defined, the purposes of monitoring quality, areas and scope of monitoring, responsibility for monitoring, and approaches and procedures. The final part of the country note looks at the challenges for the Netherlands and policy approaches that other countries have taken when tackling these issues.

Monitoring matters: Overview of research findings

- There is a significant body of research that shows the benefits of quality ECEC for child development (OECD, 2006). This body of research emphasises that the benefits of high quality ECEC are important for all children's outcomes, with evidence especially strong for disadvantaged children.

- Definitions of "quality" may differ between countries as it is a value- and cultural-based concept, and any definition of quality is subject to change over time (Kamerman, 2001). Service quality is usually defined by a set of structural (e.g. staff-child ratios) and process indicators (e.g. the quality of staff-child interactions) that contribute to practices that are markers of settings and staff performance.

- Staff quality is often linked to pre-defined criteria or professional standards (Rosenkvist, 2010). Child development encompasses various domains such as socio-emotional skills, health, motor skills, early numeracy, literacy and language skills. Quality indicators for children's development may be linked to pre-defined outcomes for different ages, learning standards, developmental goals or curriculum objectives. These outcomes can also be used over time to define the effectiveness of a setting and its staff (Rosenkvist, 2010).

- Service quality (including curriculum implementation), staff quality and child outcomes can be monitored using various practices and tools. It is often difficult to elicit the causality between monitoring and actual quality improvements; for instance, improvements in service quality are more likely to be the result of numerous policy developments.

Effects of monitoring service quality

Overall, research supports the idea that monitoring and evaluation contributes to improvements in the quality of ECEC services (Litjens, 2013). Without monitoring, it is difficult to ensure that services are meeting their goals and aims (Cubey and Dalli, 1996). Studies show that monitoring quality can be associated with increased programme quality, for example, adopting higher standards can lead to improved ratings for settings (Office of Child Development and Early Learning, 2010; RAND, 2008).

There are a number of tools that can be used to monitor service quality, such as checklists, parental surveys, and rating scales. In the United States, ratings scales are frequently used to monitor quality. Some research has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of rating scales, for example, the validity of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) (a rating scale) has been studied for its role as a tool to improve childcare quality. The study found that among providers using QRIS, service quality improved over time (Zellman et al., 2008). However, others studies have suggested that extensive co-ordination across services, agencies and data systems is required to attain this goal (Tout et al., 2009).

The effects of monitoring curriculum implementation are complex and although some studies indicate that such practices can lead to better staff quality and staff-child interactions (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2012), there is a clear gap in the research about how the monitoring of curriculum implementation interacts with other monitoring practices of service and staff quality (OECD, 2012, Østrem et al., 2009).

Effects of monitoring staff quality

The literature indicates that the quality of staff and their pedagogical activities have a large impact on children's well-being and development. It also suggests that the effective monitoring of staff quality is central to their professional development and improvement of ECEC services (Fukkink, 2011; OECD, 2012). From this research, however, it is difficult to draw wider conclusions about the impacts of monitoring staff quality (Litjens, 2013).

Monitoring staff quality usually involves observations or self-evaluations, in combination with the use of rating scales, checklists or portfolios, and can be part of monitoring service quality (Isoré, 2009). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in centre-based pre-school classrooms. It was found that the CLASS observation tool can help teachers and schools improve the quality of their interactions with students as it identifies what interactions are rated higher and provides an opportunity to identify what practices they can improve (CASTL, 2011).

Studies show that self-evaluation can be an effective tool to support professional development and increase the quality of the service (Picchio et al., 2012). Self-reflection processes enable staff to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses (Isoré, 2009; Cubey and Dalli, 1996), and lead to a greater awareness of ongoing activities and pedagogical processes (Sheridan, 2001).

In Belgium, a process-orientated self-evaluation instrument for staff in care settings contributed to staff professional development and teamwork. However, findings from research in the United Kingdom were more ambiguous, concluding that there needed to be more emphasis on how providers implement self-assessment procedures and initiate changes in their practice (Munton, Mooney and Rowland, 1997).

Effects of monitoring child development outcomes

Research indicates that monitoring child development and outcomes can play an important role in improving teacher practices and service provision. Researchers emphasise the need for age-appropriate monitoring tools and for the assessment of development to be ongoing rather than at a particular point in time. This is because the development of young children evolves at a rapid pace and ongoing monitoring can more accurately capture how a child is developing (Meisels and Atkins-Burnett, 2000; NICHD, 2002).

The results from monitoring child development can foster staff interactions with children and facilitate the adaptation of curricula and standards to meet children's needs (Litjens, 2013). There is some evidence of positive relationships between the use of non-formal monitoring practices, such as observation, documentation through portfolios or narrative assessments, and improved child outcomes (Bagnato, 2005; Grisham-Brown, 2008; Meisels et al., 2003; Neisworth and Bagnato, 2004).

Capturing children's skills and abilities at a single moment in time is a challenging proposition (Zaslow, Calkins and Halle, 2000). Brain sensitivity is higher and development more rapid in the period from birth to age eight than at later periods. To assess individual children's abilities in different domains, it is recommended that child outcomes are based on multiple sources of information, rather than single tests or monitoring practices, especially if assessment results are used for high-stakes decisions and tracking at an early age (NAEYC, 2010; Waterman et al., 2012).

Representing children's views in monitoring

The importance of considering the view of the child in monitoring the quality of ECEC provision has been established, but more research and reflection on the validity of instruments and results and their effective implementation is needed (Meisels, 2007; NAEYC, 2010; Neisworth and Bagnato, 2004). Research on children's self-perception suggests that their perceptions can provide information on their development in areas such as: academic competence, achievement motivation, social competence, peer acceptance, and depression and aggression, which are also important areas for staff evaluations and monitoring of their performance (Measelle et al., 1998).

Summary

The literature indicates that it is critical to monitor quality at both system and service level. Recent research studies provide some indication that monitoring the quality of settings, staff and children's outcomes can lead to higher quality service provision. However, the literature also reveals some gaps and complexities in making causal links between monitoring practices and quality improvements. Further research into the effectiveness of monitoring tools across the three monitoring areas will provide a greater evidence base to help countries enhance quality in these areas.

Monitoring quality: Where the Netherlands stands in international comparison

How quality is defined in the Netherlands

Quality encompasses all the features of children's environments and experiences that are assumed to benefit their well-being and development (Litjens, 2013). These features include the use of a curriculum, staff characteristics, teacher or caregiver behaviours and practices, and staff-child interactions, often referred to as process quality. Quality also includes structural features of ECEC settings, such as space, group size and safety standards (OECD, 2006; 2012). The literature points out that the definitions of quality differ between countries as it is a value- and cultural-based concept, meaning that definitions of quality tend to change over time (Kamerman, 2001). Most jurisdictions that participated in the Starting Strong IV study set out their definition of ECEC quality in their curricula or legislation. Alternatively they may set out quality expectations through minimum requirements or educational or developmental objectives for staff to achieve. The Netherlands is an exception internationally, as quality is mainly defined through national standards, which are monitored through inspections. There is no national curriculum in place, unlike in other countries. Different quality standards exist for health and education inspections, and both monitor different aspects. The health inspection (which concerns all childcare facilities) focuses on the structural quality of the facility and the staff, while the education inspection places greater emphasis on pedagogical and educational aspects.

In Finland, quality is also defined through the minimum regulatory standards in place. Finland sets high expectations for the level of quality in ECEC and has high minimum staff qualifications, one of the most favourable staff-child ratios in OECD countries (OECD, 2012), and, overall, high requirements for safety, health and hygiene. In addition, Finland sets out its objectives for ECEC in their curriculum frameworks: the national curriculum guidelines for early childhood education and care (for 0 to 6 year-olds) and the core curriculum for pre-school education for 6-year-olds. These frameworks aim to provide uniform principles for high-quality activities and have a strong focus on staff and what is expected from them. The guidelines also aim to enhance parental engagement in ECEC and stimulate co-operation with other early childhood services. Based on these frameworks, each municipality drafts its own specific guidelines and local curriculum to meet the needs of their municipality and population (STAKES, 2005). These frameworks complement the regulatory standards in setting out how quality in ECEC is defined in Finland. In Germany, a definition of quality ECEC has been developed through law, a curriculum framework and state-level curricula, and through an initiative that sets out quality criteria. Expectations of ECEC (as part of the general child and youth welfare system) is provided in Social Code Book VIII (*Sozialgesetzbuch*), where the federal law stipulates that all young people have the legal right

to be supported in their development and encouraged to become independent and socially competent personalities. It also states that ECEC providers are obliged to equally support the education, care and upbringing of children, and take into account children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Children's individual interests and needs, and their ethnic background, also have to be considered. In addition to the Social Code Book, all 16 *Länder* (regions) have developed their own ECEC curriculum. The overarching document for these curricula is the Common Framework of the Federal States for Early Education in ECEC Centres, which is an agreement on the most important basic principles that guide curriculum development. This framework emphasises the importance of a holistic approach whereby education, care and upbringing are considered inseparable elements of pedagogical practice. The framework indicates that a curriculum has to take into account the interests of children and should be relevant to their lives. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, together with 10 *Länder*, launched the National Quality Initiative in ECEC (*Nationale Qualitätsinitiative im System der Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder*) in 1999. Its aim was to define quality using a set of quality criteria (21 quality areas) and to develop instruments for internal and external evaluation within five sub-programmes.

In New Zealand, regulations indicate that all ECEC settings in the country have to implement the Te Whāriki early childhood curriculum framework. The regulations, in combination with the curriculum framework, provide an indication of how quality is defined in New Zealand. The early childhood curriculum framework describes outcomes for ECEC settings in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and gives staff pedagogical guidance on how these can be achieved.

Not all countries define quality at the national level or through national legislation or a national curriculum; in some countries, municipalities may define quality at the local level.

Why countries monitor the quality of services, staff and child development

Countries reported various reasons for monitoring ECEC service and staff quality. Common reasons included: accountability with and without sanctions or rewards, informing policy making, informing the general public, improving the level of service quality, improving staff performance, identifying learning needs for staff, and enhancing child development and identifying children's learning needs. In all countries, improving service quality is the main purpose for monitoring both service and staff quality, followed by informing policy making. Monitoring service and staff quality is not usually conducted in order to identify learning needs for children or for accountability purposes without any sanctions or rewards. It is common to monitor service quality to inform the general public, including the users of ECEC settings, while this is fairly uncommon in monitoring staff performance (see Figure 1 and 2).
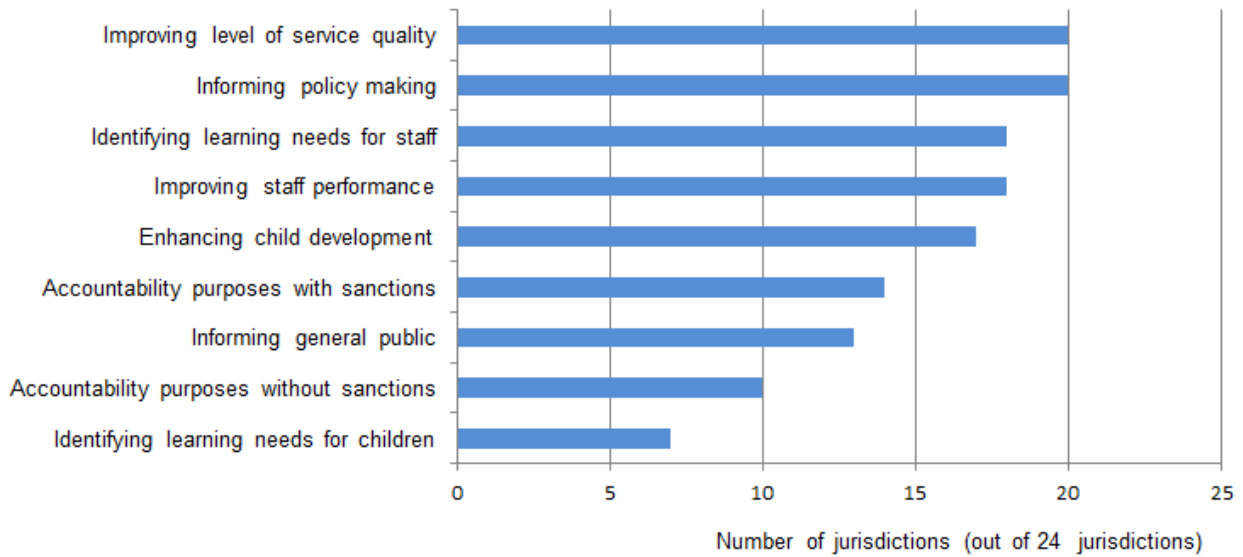
Figure 1: Purposes of monitoring service quality

Note: Purposes of monitoring service quality are ranked in descending order of the number of times they are cited by jurisdictions.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 3.1, OECD Publishing, Paris http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243059.

Service quality is monitored in the Netherlands for accountability purposes, and sanctions may be attached to monitoring results. In addition, inspections and evaluations are conducted to inform policy makers, enhance the level of quality in ECEC, and to enhance staff quality. Finland and New Zealand monitor service quality for similar purposes, although no sanctions or rewards are attached to monitoring results in Finland, where they also monitor to enhance child development. New Zealand also monitors service quality to inform the general public. In Germany, quality is mainly monitored to improve service and staff quality and to inform the general public about the level of quality provided. Finland is the only country out of the four compared in this note to monitor service quality with the goal of identifying the learning needs of young children and staff (OECD, 2015).

The purposes for monitoring service quality are similar to those for monitoring staff quality in the Netherlands and Finland, as staff quality is monitored as part of the quality inspection. In New Zealand, the main reason for monitoring staff quality is to improve staff performance and to identify the learning needs of staff; in Germany it is to enhance service and staff quality.
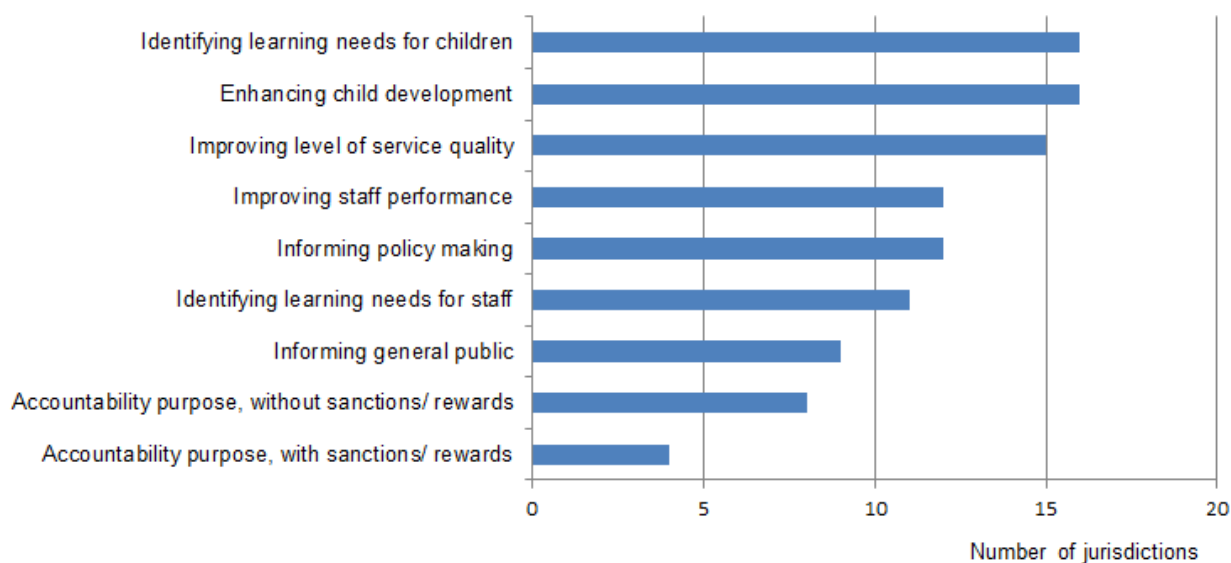
Figure 2. Purposes of monitoring staff quality

Note: Purposes of monitoring staff quality are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC),* OECD Publishing, Paris, Table 4.1: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243203

While the research literature suggests that child development outcomes are not usually used as a way of monitoring quality, many countries do monitor child development for various purposes. In line with the potential benefits suggested by research, the most commonly named reason for monitoring child development and outcomes is to enhance child development (16 jurisdictions out of 24), to identify the learning needs for children (16) and to improve the level of service quality (15).

The Netherlands, Finland, Germany and New Zealand all monitor child development. Germany, Finland and New Zealand do so to identify whether staff have additional training needs; Finland and New Zealand aim to improve the overall quality of the setting and identify children's learning needs; while Germany and Finland do so to improve staff performance and enhance child development (see Figure 3 for a complete overview).

Figure 3. Purposes of monitoring children's development

Note: Purposes of monitoring child development are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 5.1, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243334.

Monitoring practices

Countries use various approaches and practices for monitoring service quality, staff quality and child development (see Table 1). The practices used for monitoring service and staff quality can be either external or internal. The external monitoring of quality is done by an external agency, evaluator or office that is not part of the ECEC setting being monitored.

In the Netherlands, municipal health offices inspect all childcare settings and playgroups, as well as all ECEC services for disadvantaged children, which are also monitored by the Inspectorate of Education. In Finland, due to the decentralised system where responsibility for monitoring is at the regional and municipal levels, regional state administrative agencies conduct inspections alongside the municipalities and settings. In Germany, where the responsibility for monitoring is also at the regional and municipal levels due to the federal system, local authorities are responsible for conducting inspections. In New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO), a national agency, is responsible for conducting external evaluations or inspections of all ECEC settings.

External inspections and internal self-evaluations are the most common ways of monitoring service and staff quality. All four countries make use of both methods, although inspections are only used to monitor service quality in New Zealand, and internal self-evaluations are only used to monitor staff quality in Finland and the Netherlands (see Table 1). Parental surveys can be used to monitor service and/or staff quality in the Netherlands, Germany and Finland (only for service quality in Finland). Peer reviews are commonly used to monitor staff quality in New Zealand.

Table 1. Monitoring practices for service and staff quality

	External practices			Internal practices		
	Inspections	Surveys	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Tests for staff	Self-assessment/ evaluation
Netherlands	X	X				X (Staff)
Finland	X	X (Service)				X (Staff)
Germany*	X	X (Service)				X
New Zealand*	X (Service)			X (Staff)		X

Notes: * In Germany, surveys to monitor quality are only used in monitoring service quality.
* In New Zealand, external inspections of service quality, but not staff quality, are conducted. Peer reviews refer to staff appraisal reviews of ECEC staff conducted by leaders and/or managers.

Sources: OECD (2013), Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development, Network on ECEC, OECD, Paris. OECD (2015); *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC),* OECD Publishing, Paris, Table 3.2 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243065 and Table 4.2 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243213.

When monitoring child development, direct assessments, observational tools or narrative assessments are commonly used. Direct assessments assess children's development through, for example, testing at a certain point in time, while narrative assessments, and usually observational tools, monitor children's development on an ongoing basis. Finland, Germany and New Zealand commonly use narrative assessments; in Finland Germany they are used in combination with observational tools. New Zealand focuses on using narrative assessments such as learning story frameworks and portfolios. The Netherlands makes most commonly use of observational tools. Germany is the only country out of four where direct assessments can also be used to monitor children (OECD, 2015).

Areas and scope of monitoring

There are a number of different *aspects* or areas that can be monitored in relation to service[2] and staff quality.[3] When monitoring child development, other aspects more directly related to outcomes, skills, and aptitudes a child can develop are monitored. These include language and literacy skills, numeracy skills, socio-emotional skills, motor skills, autonomy, creative skills, practical skills, health development, well-being, science skills, and ICT skills.

Service quality

All jurisdictions indicated that regulatory aspects of service quality are monitored during inspections. Safety regulations are most frequently monitored (in 23 out of 24 jurisdictions), followed by health and hygiene regulations (22) and staff qualifications (22). Staff-child ratios (21) and space requirements (19) are also commonly monitored. Working conditions are not frequently monitored as part of service quality.

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2. For service quality, these aspects are: staff-child ratios, indoor/outdoor space, health and/or hygiene and safety regulations, learning and play materials, minimum staff qualifications, planning of work and staff, the working conditions for staff, implementation of the curriculum, human resource management and financial resource management.

3. For staff quality, these aspects are: staff qualifications, process quality, use of materials, time management, knowledge of subjects, overall quality of teaching/caring, team work and communication skills, communication between staff and parents, management and leadership, working conditions, professional development opportunities and child outcomes.

Table 2. Aspects of service quality monitored through inspections

Jurisdiction	Type of setting	Staff-child ratios	Indoor/ outdoor space	Health and/or hygiene regulations	Safety regulations	Learning and play material in use	Minimum staff qualifications	Planning of work/ staff	Working conditions	Curriculum implementation	Human resource management	Financial resource management
Netherlands	All ECEC settings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Finland	All ECEC settings	X		X	X		X					
Germany	Child day-care centres and family day-care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
New Zealand*	All ECEC settings	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

Note: * For New Zealand, data on inspections refer to the inspections conducted by ERO and do not refer to the inspections conducted by the Ministry of Education for licensing purposes. The aspects monitored through inspections for licensing purposes cover different aspects. In New Zealand, ERO has evaluation indicators in place for its reviews of education and care centres, kindergartens and playcentres. ERO also has separate evaluation indicators for its reviews of Kōhanga Reo (Māori language family programme). ERO has recently revised its evaluation indicators for reviews of home-based services and is in the process of revising its indicators for hospital-based early childhood services.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC),* Table 3.3, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243071.

Inspections in the Netherlands and Finland have a strong focus on regulatory aspects. All four countries monitor staff-child ratios, health and hygiene regulations, safety requirements and minimum staff qualifications. Inspections in the Netherlands also commonly focus on space requirements, as do inspections in Germany, which also look at materials in use and planning of staff, as does New Zealand. Inspections in Germany and New Zealand have a broader focus than in Finland and the Netherlands. In New Zealand, 9 (of 11) aspects of service quality are monitored across all settings through inspections conducted by ERO. The only aspects not monitored by ERO are indoor/outdoor space (although space is monitored by the Ministry of Education for licensing purposes) and staff working conditions. In Germany, all aspects listed in Table 2 are monitored, except for human and financial resource management. Self-assessments of quality usually monitor slightly different aspects to external inspections. For example, more attention is given to communication among staff members and with parents, and collaborations (OECD, 2015).

Staff quality

The Netherlands uses inspections and self-evaluations to monitor staff quality. Inspections have a narrower focus than self-evaluations and address the following aspects: staff qualifications; process quality; the use of materials; time management and planning; teamwork among staff; and staff knowledge of the subjects they teach. Self-evaluations also address the implementation of the curriculum and overall staff quality. Germany monitors similar aspects as the Netherlands, with the exception of staff knowledge of subjects. Staff quality inspections in Germany focus more on communication with parents, and management and leadership skills. Finland's inspections commonly focus on process quality, materials in use, staff qualifications, overall quality of teaching, curriculum implementation, time management and planning, staff knowledge of subjects, working conditions, and the professional development of staff. In New Zealand, ERO monitors the systems and processes used by early childhood services for the performance management of staff, including staff appraisal. However, ERO does not

conduct individual staff assessments, which are conducted internally in ECEC settings. When ERO conducts an inspection of the performance system in an ECEC setting, the procedure focuses on implementation of the curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and instruction, teamwork and communication, communication between staff and parents, management and leadership, and overall process quality (OECD, 2015). Self-evaluations of staff in New Zealand focus on the overall quality of staff, process quality, curriculum implementation and communication between staff and parents, as well as how well the person works with colleagues and management and leadership skills. Germany's self-evaluations tend to have a similar focus as their inspections but do not commonly monitor staff qualifications or overall staff quality. Peer reviews in New Zealand have a similar focus as their self-evaluation procedures (OECD, 2015).

Child development and outcomes

Among the participating countries, the most common aspects of child development monitored are language and literacy, socio-emotional skills and motor skills. Language and literacy skills are more commonly monitored through direct assessments than socio-emotional and motor skills. Observations and narrative assessments, rather than direct assessments, are more widely used to assess children's development. In the Netherlands, the focus of child development monitoring is on literacy and numeracy skills, socio-emotional skills and motor development. This is also the case in Germany, where autonomy, creative skills, practical skills and children's well-being are also commonly monitored. In Finland, all areas listed in Figure 4 are commonly monitored, with the exception of ICT skills. In New Zealand, the areas assessed vary by setting and within settings.

Figure 4. Areas of early child development monitored, by monitoring method
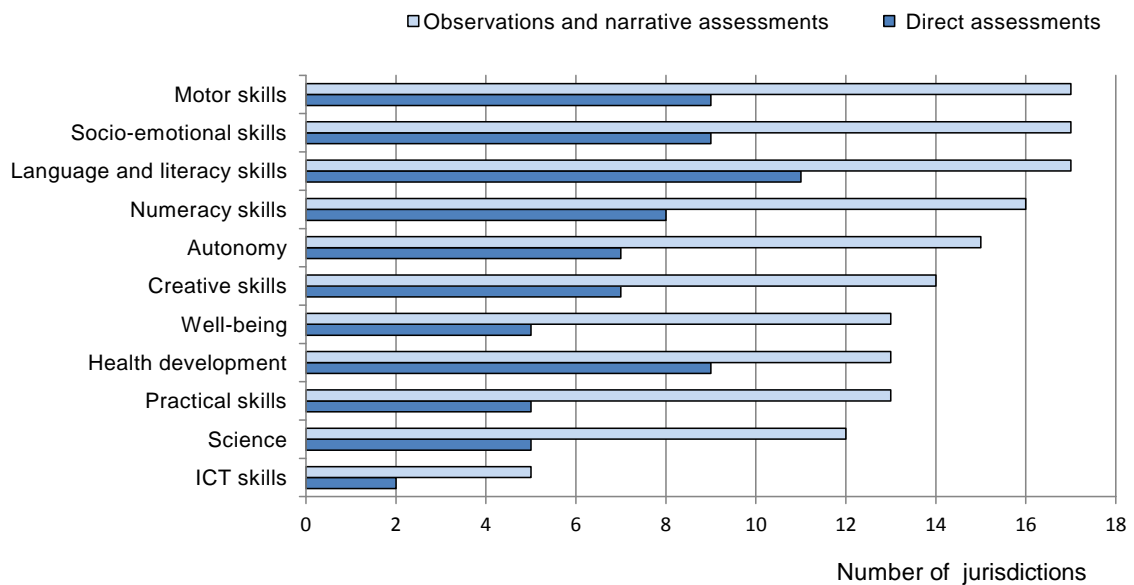
Notes: Developmental areas are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited observations and narrative assessments to monitor development areas.
Information on the use of direct assessments and observations and narrative assessments to monitor developmental areas is based on 21 jurisdictions.

Sources: OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, OECD Network on ECEC, Table A5.1, OECD, Paris; OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC),* Chart 5.3, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243423.

Monitoring system design, responsibilities and evaluator training

Design

Various stakeholders are involved in the design and monitoring of ECEC services. These generally involve the ministry in charge of ECEC (national or regional); an independent national agency, and/or local authorities.

In the Netherlands, the monitoring system is a co-operation between government, sector-based partners, scientists, inspection services and enforcement services. In New Zealand, ERO designed the monitoring system in consultation with the Ministry of Education. ERO is charged with evaluating and publicly reporting on the quality of education and care of children in all New Zealand schools and early childhood services. ERO has an ongoing programme to review its evaluation methodologies. In 2012-13, it revised its methodology for centre-based services, and it has recently reviewed its methodology for reviews of home-based education and care services. It is currently revising how hospital-based education and care services, which are a small but unique part of its ECEC sector, are reviewed. In Finland, there is no one single monitoring system in place; instead, municipalities are responsible for developing their own monitoring system. In Germany, local authorities are also responsible for developing a monitoring system for their municipality, meaning that there is no national monitoring system in place. The Child and Youth Welfare Statistics (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistiken)* in Germany generate data that allow policy makers to evaluate quantitative growth, staff, and employment conditions, as well as other structural features of the ECEC sector, such as opening hours, age and ethnic background of children. In addition, as part of Germany's National Quality Initiative *Nationale Qualitätsinitiative im System der Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder*), several instruments for the internal and external evaluation of quality in ECEC have been developed by different groups of ECEC researchers. These have been on the initiative of, and with funding from, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*). These instruments have served as a blueprint for provider-specific adaptations.

Responsibility

Among the 24 participating countries and jurisdictions, half have integrated systems of governance for ECEC, and half have split systems of governance. In integrated systems, the responsibilities for childcare and early learning are within one ministry or authority, and ECEC services generally provide integrated care and education. In split systems, the responsibilities for childcare (usually for children 0 to 3 years) and early education (generally for children aged 3 or 4 and above) are split between different ministries or authorities. There also tend to be different providers for childcare and early education. The Netherlands has a split ECEC system, with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (*Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid*) responsible for children in childcare and playgroups up to the age of 4; and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen*) responsible for children in kindergartens (pre-primary education) aged 4 and older, as well as for all targeted ECEC programmes for disadvantaged children. In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible for ECEC at the national level, although most responsibilities for ECEC are decentralised to the state-level and local authorities. In Finland, it is the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*), and in New Zealand the Ministry of Education who are responsible for ECEC.

Monitoring in the Netherlands is mainly a national responsibility, while ECEC financing comes from national and regional authorities. Minimum regulatory quality standards are set at the national level, but as there is no national curriculum framework in the Netherlands, curricula are mostly developed at the setting level. Instead of a national curriculum framework, developmental goals have been set for children aged 2.5 years and older, and targeted ECEC programmes are required to use programme-specific curricula that are known to stimulate early child development. In Finland, standard setting is done at the national (central) level, while responsibilities for financing are shared between national and

municipal levels. The curriculum framework in Finland is designed at the national level, but municipalities are expected to adapt the guidelines and frameworks to the needs of their area. In Germany, financing and monitoring responsibilities are shared between the regional state and local authorities, while standards and curriculum development are developed at the state level. In New Zealand, responsibility for aspects of ECEC quality, such as financing, minimum standard setting, curriculum development and monitoring of quality, are held at the central government level. Funding for monitoring ECEC services in OECD countries comes from a mix of public and private sources. Public funding can be from national, regional or local/municipal governments. In some countries, the funding sources for monitoring quality differs depending on the type of setting. In the Netherlands, monitoring is funded by the national government and local authorities, whereas in Germany, the monitoring of family daycare and child daycare centres is funded through local authorities, complemented by private funding for child daycare centres. In Finland, local public funding can fund monitoring, although monitoring quality is not regulated at the national level, and municipalities can decide whether or not to use funding for monitoring. In New Zealand, the funding for monitoring comes from the national government (OECD, 2015).

Qualification and training of evaluators

Research suggests that evaluators need to receive training to apply monitoring practices and tools to ensure these are properly understood and that practices result in consistent and objective judgments (Waterman et al., 2012).

In the majority of the 24 jurisdictions, pre-service education or training, on-the-job training or other types of training are offered to evaluators. Two-thirds of jurisdictions (16) reported that external assessors/evaluators receive on-the-job or in-service training. Training for assessors/evaluators can focus on various skills or aspects of ECEC. Finland is the only country out of the four compared in this note that does not provide specific training on monitoring for either external or internal evaluators (see Table 3). External inspectors and internal evaluators, such as ECEC staff and managers, are trained on the topic of evaluation in their pre-service education programme and through professional development training. In Finland, some evaluators have specific formal training, but it is not systematic. In New Zealand, ERO evaluators receive pre-service training and participate in on-the-job or in-service professional learning and development. In addition, evaluators have the opportunity to undertake further tertiary-level study in evaluation. ECEC professionals and managers with evaluator roles also receive training on evaluation, although this differs from the training for ERO evaluators. Inspectors in Germany participate in a pre-service education programme, but there is no training on evaluation in particular for staff and managers conducting (self-) evaluations (OECD, 2015).

Table 3. Training of external and internal evaluators

		No, not specifically	Yes, through pre-service education/ training	Yes, through on-the-job or in-service training
Netherlands	External assessors		X	X
	Internal assessors		X	X
Finland*	External assessors	X		
	Internal assessors	X		
Germany	External assessors		X	
	Internal assessors	X		
New Zealand	External assessors		X	X
	Internal assessors			X

Note: * In Finland, some evaluators have some evaluation training, but the training is not systematic at the national or municipal levels.

Sources: OECD (2013), *OECD Network on ECEC's Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, OECD, Paris; OECD (2015) *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, OECD Publishing, Paris, Tables A2.4 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243001 and Table A2.6 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243026.

Implementation of monitoring practices

Monitoring tools (instruments)

Service quality

The main practices used to monitor service quality are external evaluations/inspections, parental surveys, and internal self-evaluations. There are various tools that can be used to carry out these practices.

In the Netherlands, surveys taken by inspectors, rating scales, checklists, observations, and interviews are common tools used during inspections of childcare centres, playgroups and targeted ECEC programmes. Inspections in German daycare centres commonly use observations, interviews, and the analysis of internal documentation, as well as results of self-evaluations, checklists, surveys with parents and/or ECEC staff and management, and rating scales. In Finland, no data collection instruments are prescribed, and these therefore differ between municipalities or ECEC settings. Some of the tools used in New Zealand are similar to those used in Germany during external inspections or evaluations, these include: observations, interviews, results of internal evaluations, and the analysis of settings' internal documentation, although some differences occur across settings in New Zealand. ERO has evaluation indicators in place for its reviews of education and care centres, kindergartens and playcentres, and has separate evaluation indicators for its reviews of Maori language nests (Kōhanga Reo). ERO has recently developed evaluation indicators for reviews of home-based education and care services and is in the process of developing evaluation indicators for reviews of hospital-based services (OECD, 2015).

Internal evaluation is often used in combination with external evaluation/inspections to monitor service quality, as is the case in German childcare settings and in New Zealand.

The most common self-evaluation tools used across countries are: self-reported questionnaires/surveys (12), self-reflection reports/journals (12), checklists (11), and portfolios (8). Video feedback is used in three jurisdictions: the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. Germany uses self-reflection journals, self-reported questionnaires, checklists and portfolios. The data collection processes or instruments used to carry out internal evaluations in New Zealand vary across settings (OECD, 2015).

Staff quality

In many countries, staff quality is monitored in the same way as service quality and includes a mix of external and internal practices. However, there can also be differences in the focus, aspects monitored and instruments used.

External monitoring and evaluation practices of staff quality include inspections, parental surveys, and peer reviews. Similar to the monitoring of service quality, inspections (external evaluations) of staff quality are undertaken in all 24 jurisdictions. In the Netherlands, similar tools are used to inspect staff and service quality: observations, interviews, surveys, checklists, and rating scales. In targeted ECEC programmes, results of self-evaluations may also be used. In Germany, observations, interviews and analysis of internal documentation are most commonly used during inspections; self-evaluations, checklists and rating scales are also used. In Finland, no instruments or tools are prescribed, and the municipalities or settings decide which instruments to use during inspections.

Checklists are commonly used during self-evaluations in the Netherlands, while in Germany and Finland, each setting can decide on the tools and instruments to use for staff self-evaluations. Monitoring of individual staff quality in New Zealand is conducted at the setting level, and teacher criteria indicate which requirements staff should meet. The evaluation processes for peer reviews in New Zealand are:

observations, results of the staff member's self-evaluation, analysis of staff documentation, and portfolios prepared by staff. Portfolios are also used in New Zealand during staff self-evaluation, together with self-reflection reports or journals (OECD, 2015).

Child development

Across participating countries, monitoring child development and outcomes is mostly done through internal practices, with an important role also taken by external agencies. This is in line with the fact that in many countries, the monitoring of child development and outcomes takes place more frequently than in other areas, often on a continuous basis or several times per year. The three main tools used to monitor child development are: 1) direct assessments (tests of children and screening); 2) narrative assessments (storytelling and portfolios); and 3) observational tools (rating scales and checklists). As Table 4 shows, there is some variation in the combination of tools used.

The majority of jurisdictions use observational tools (primarily checklists), however these often vary by type of ECEC setting. Narrative assessments are also common, while direct assessments through testing and screening are less common. The Netherlands commonly makes use of checklists, which are very frequently used in OECD countries. Finland and Germany report using both narrative assessments and observational tools when monitoring children in pre-primary school. In Germany, direct assessments, such as screening to detect language arrears, may also be used. New Zealand mainly uses only narrative assessments, including storytelling frameworks and portfolios (OECD, 2015).

Table 4. Monitoring child development tools in place

Country	Direct assessments		Narrative assessments		Observational tools	
	Tests for children	Screening	Story-telling	Portfolios	Rating scales	Checklists
Netherlands						X
Finland*			X	X	X	X
Germany	X	X	X	X	X	X
New Zealand			X	X		

Notes:* In Finland, all monitoring tools/instruments of child development may be used, but municipalities decide what to use, and there is no standard national test for children.

Source: OECD (2015), Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), Table 5.2, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243347.

Frequency

Service quality is generally monitored a set number of times by the responsible monitoring body. Frequency of monitoring often varies across different types of ECEC. In the Netherlands, all settings are, in principal, monitored once per year. When a pre-primary school performs well, the frequency of Education Inspectorate visits can be reduced to once every four years. In Germany, there are no regulations regarding the frequency of monitoring, except in Berlin, where the Berlin Education Programme (*Berliner Bildungsprogramm*) requires that an external evaluation in ECEC centres is conducted every five years. Internal evaluations are seen as a continuous (yearly) process. The frequency of monitoring in Finland varies by municipality. In New Zealand, the frequency of ERO's external evaluation depends on the previous monitoring result. In centre and home-based services, ERO judges "how well placed the service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children". If the service is very well placed, the next ERO review is in four years; if well placed, it is in three years; if the service requires further development, a review will take place within two years; and if it is not well placed, the Ministry of Education will be asked to re-assess the service's license. The process for determining the frequency of reviews differs for home-based care, where reviews occur every 3 years or 12 months, depending on the previous review result. Staff in New Zealand ECEC settings are usually internally evaluated once per year. In the Netherlands and Berlin, internal evaluations are seen as a continuous

(yearly) process. Child development is, in general, monitored on a more frequent basis, usually continuously through observations and/or contributing to portfolios (OECD, 2015).

Use of results and consequences

The results from monitoring have to be made public in most jurisdictions (16 out of 24), however, not always for all types of ECEC. In the Netherlands and New Zealand, external evaluation results are made public. In New Zealand, ERO's national evaluation reports also have to be made available to the public. These national evaluation reports provide system level information in relation to specific topics, inform policy decisions, and provide ECEC services with examples of good practice. Feedback indicates that the findings of these reports are used to inform practice and as a basis for self-review in early childhood services. In Germany, the provider decides whether monitoring results are made available to the public. Service providers in Finland also have discretion over whether or not results are made available, although they are usually published. National evaluation results in Finland are commonly shared.

Countries take various actions or impose consequences when the results from monitoring service quality do not meet the minimum standards set by the service or body responsible. Actions can include funding cuts, follow up inspections, obligatory staff training, or closure of services. There can also be positive outcomes for services from monitoring results, for example, services can have a competitive advantage compared to other services, or remuneration can be increased in line with monitoring outcomes. In the Netherlands, underperforming settings can be required to take measures to address shortcomings. Management/staff may be obliged to participate in training, or a follow-up inspection may be planned. In severe cases, a setting can be closed and a license revoked. In New Zealand, the potential consequences from a poor ERO evaluation result are, at first, a follow-up evaluation. ECEC services that underperform are required to address their issues and work with the Ministry of Education to develop an action plan. Only when no improvement is shown, or when settings frequently do not meet the ERO standards, does the Ministry re-assess the setting's license and decide on the closure of the service. In Germany, underperforming settings also have to take measures to improve their level of quality. In Finland, staff are usually required to take up training, or follow-up inspections are planned.

Challenges and policy options

All countries face challenges in monitoring, some of which are shared by different countries. The practices that these countries have implemented to overcome these, provide food for thought to overcome their monitoring quality challenges. The Netherlands' challenges include:

1. The monitoring of children's views. This is currently not undertaken, however, it could help provide policy makers and ECEC management and staff new insights into how to further improve ECEC quality.

2. Ensuring staff provide strong pedagogical quality and meet high quality standards.

Policy approaches that other countries have taken when tackling these issues are presented to provide some examples for the Netherlands in how their challenges can be addressed.

Challenge: Monitoring children's views

Research suggests that children's voices can be considered competent and that they can provide useful information about their experience in ECEC, as well as wider societal issues (Clark, 2005; McNaughton, 2003; Sorin, 2003). Quantitative studies of children's self-perception suggest that their perceptions can provide information on their development in areas such as academic competence, achievement motivation, social competence, peer acceptance, and depression and aggression, which are convergent with the ratings of carers and teachers (Measelle et al., 1998). Box 1 provides a case study of one of the few countries that currently monitors children's views: Finland. The involvement of children in monitoring practices can provide valuable insights into how children experience certain pedagogical practices, which contributes to improved child development experiences.

Box 1. Monitoring children's views in Finland

Finland provides an interesting example of how monitoring children's views can be used to inform policy making. In 2013/2014, a large survey of parents was conducted by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture to inform the preparation of a new law on the ECEC sector. The process also included interviews with children to ensure that their voices were being heard; the first time this had ever been done in the preparation of a new law. Finland reports that the emphasis put on hearing children's opinions stems from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To inform the revision of the legal framework, 48 children across the country were interviewed in their ECEC setting, either by their own teachers or other staff. The interviews sought to reveal information about how children experience their days and practices in ECEC and what meaning they attribute to its different aspects. To express their opinions, children used photographs they had taken and drawings they had made to discuss with staff what they appreciated in ECEC and what they did not like and wanted to change.

Finland reported that children emphasised the importance of being able to participate in activities with their friends. They particularly liked being allowed to play and move. They also enjoyed games involving physical activities. On the question of the ECEC environment, they considered their bed and the sleeping room unpleasant, i.e. the rooms where activities and free movement are restricted. Long sedentary periods were also seen as unpleasant. Children reported that they expect personalised care from adults and that they mediate when differences in group situations emerge. While overall children enjoy being in ECEC, they asked for more time for play, movement and physical activities, as well as to be able to make use of modern technology. Activities regarded as important by staff and adults, such as long morning meetings in a circle, were not regarded by children as meaningful and important.

For the ministry, this represents valuable feedback from the users of the ECEC services under their responsibility that can contribute to their evaluation. The findings also encourage Finland to involve children more often in the development of practices.

Sources: Draft case study provided by the Finnish Government and edited by the OECD Secretariat;
OECD Network on ECEC, "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November 2013 .

Other countries have also implemented measures to collect information on children's experiences.

- In the **Czech Republic**, children's views in public settings are taken into account as part of the school external evaluation, when children's well-being is assessed. Based on these reports, a comment about the atmosphere in the school is included in the public school inspection report. Internally, schools may also monitor children's well-being and happiness when conducting their self-assessment.

- In the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, children's views are monitored in both family daycare settings and daycare centres. Although not compulsory, tools have been developed to enable these settings to assess children's experiences. The Self-Assessment Instrument for Care Settings (SiCs) starts with a scanning of well-being and involvement, and helps to identify factors in the environment that may affect children. MyProfile – originally developed as ZiKo-

Vo for family daycare providers – helps practitioners in all kinds of settings for young children to monitor children's development. Both instruments help the settings to monitor each child and tailor their approach to the child's individual needs. For pre-school children (3-5 year-olds), there is also a more extensive monitoring system available: POMS, the Process-Oriented Monitoring System.

Challenge: 2.   Ensuring staff provide strong pedagogical quality and meet high quality standards.

Not all staff may meet the standards regarded by authorities as high quality, or possess important pedagogical skills to stimulate children's development from an early age. However, research indicates that the staff in ECEC settings are crucial for ensuring that children's development is enhanced, and that ECEC has beneficial effects on a wide range of skills, including cognitive, language and socio-emotional skills (OECD, 2012). In several countries, such as Chile, ECEC staff are evaluated and rated based on their performance. Such evaluation methods can illustrate the development of staff over time, and identify the need for training in certain areas. In other countries, such as the Czech Republic, ECEC managers are held accountable for the performance of their staff. This may stimulate managers to ensure that all staff are well trained and have the appropriate set of skills. These, and other options, are presented below.

- In **Chile**, staff are evaluated by a number of different monitoring instruments, which are used to produce an overall score for each teacher. Depending on this score, staff may, in extreme cases, be dismissed; be required to attend additional training; or be offered an opportunity to take a test and, depending on the test score, receive an increase in remuneration. This evaluation system is known as the *Evaluación Docente* (teacher evaluation). Teachers rated "basic" are evaluated every other year; and teachers rated "unsatisfactory" are evaluated the following year. As of 2011, if a second consecutive "unsatisfactory" rating is given to a teacher, he or she is removed from the teaching post. Under the 2011 Quality and Equality of Education Law, school directors are authorised to dismiss up to 5% of the teaching staff annually, among the teachers rated "unsatisfactory" in their most recent evaluation. Evaluations can thus lead to improved staff performance and quality provision.

- In the **Czech Republic**, the pre-school head is responsible for the quality of education, under the Education Act. For internal assessments, self-evaluations are used, and heads adopt measures for quality improvements and discuss possible strategies with all teachers in the setting. For external assessments, the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká Školní Inspekce*) produces an inspection report. If the report identifies deficiencies in quality, schools must take action to rectify them within a set period, for example, by providing teachers further training. The inspector pays close attention to schools where issues have been identified and implements follow-up inspections. If no action has been taken, heads of settings can be fined, or potentially removed from their post.

- In **Ireland**, in settings where the *Síolta* Quality Assurance Programme has been implemented, staff begin with a baseline assessment of how good their practice is and then plan for improvement. As a follow-up measure, they must show how they have improved the quality of their practice through a portfolio of evidence.

- In the **French Community of Belgium**, the Department for Birth and Childhood (*Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance*) has created a special role for pedagogical counsellors (*conseillers pédagogiques*). Their task is to supervise and assist practitioners to reflect on their practices based on the results of inspections in pre-primary schools. The aim is to help staff improve their practices, and thus the level of quality, by providing care professionals with information and answers to their questions on a regular basis.

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GLOSSARY

Autonomy: The ability of a child to undertake activities, tasks etc. without the help of others (mastery of skills), to make his/her own decisions, and to express his/her own opinions or ideas, feel secure and have confidence in his/her own ability.

Appraisal: The review of a preschool teacher's or educator's work by the centre management, an external inspector or by his or her colleagues. This appraisal can be conducted in a range of ways, from a more formal, objective approach (e.g. as part of a formal performance management system involving set procedures and criteria) to the more informal, more subjective approach (e.g. through informal discussions with the teacher).

Assessment: Judgement on individual progress and achievement of goals. It covers classroom/playroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external assessments and examinations and refers to the process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner and staff (adapted from OECD, 2013). Assessment can be direct or indirect and its use formative or summative.

- **Direct assessment:** Assessments that look at concrete outputs of learning, i.e. the measurable and demonstrated knowledge and skills of children/staff.

- **Indirect assessment:** Assessments that examine indicators of learning and gather information through feedback, e.g. in surveys or interviews (adapted from Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2007).

- **Formative assessment:** Assessments that frequently or continuously (not at one point in time only) and interactively assess child development and progress with the purpose of understanding and identifying learning needs and adjust instruction and teaching methods accordingly (adapted from OECD, 2005, and Litjens, 2013).

- **Summative assessment:** Assessments that measure learning results at the end of a certain time period to obtain summary statements. These can be used e.g. for holding staff and settings accountable for providing quality ECEC or as a method to identify whether children have learning disadvantages (adapted from OECD, 2005, and Litjens, 2013).

Assessor (or evaluator): A person or organisation/company that conducts assessment or evaluation on the effectiveness or the level of quality of someone or something, e.g. level of service quality, staff performance, effective curriculum implementation, child development/outcomes.

Checklist: A list of items, tasks or steps to be taken in a specific order to be checked or consulted. In ECEC, this can be used to assess or evaluate the developmental status of children, staff performance and the quality of ECEC services by observing compliance with regulations. This may also include a series of tasks, skills and abilities to assess children's development or knowledge, such as "Child can count to five" or "Child is able to play independently" (OECD, 2012).

Creative skills (e.g. art, music, dance, imagination)**:** Children's capacities and competencies to generate ideas and feelings, use imagination and convey thoughts and experiences in many forms of expressions, including artistic skills (e.g. painting, drawing, handicrafts, etc.), musical skills (e.g. singing,

playing an instrument, recognising songs, etc.). It also refers to the capacity to observe and reflect; explore on their own, and search for their own answers and solutions.

Curriculum implementation: The actual use in practice (practical application) of the curriculum by ECEC staff, managers and children. This refers to the way in which the concepts of the curriculum are put into effect, and how they are used in practices and activities by staff and children, how they are interpreted, how they are used in development and learning, and how they influence teaching, caring and interactions between staff, and between staff with children.

ECEC setting: A place where ECEC is delivered. Also referred to as ECEC centre or provision. With regard to ECEC settings, two types of provision can be distinguished: **centre-based/school-based** and **home-based** (as defined by Eurydice, 2013).

Evaluation: Judgements on the effectiveness of ECEC settings or ECEC systems, policies and programmes (adapted from OECD, 2013).

Evaluator: See definition of **assessor**.

External monitoring practices: See definition of **monitoring practice**.

Government: The entirety of the executive at all levels of governance, at national, state, regional and local level.

Health development: The physical health status of a child, encompassing physical well-being only (adapted from WHO definition, 2006). Mental, emotional and social development are in this definition excluded – these are included in the definition of **socio-emotional skills**.

Information and communications technology (ICT): The teaching and learning of technological and digital skills. Creating and developing the capacity to use digital and technological environments for development, communication and knowledge creation. Digital environments refer to computers (including laptops, tablets, iPads, netbooks, smart boards etc.) and computer games, the Internet, television and radio, among others.

Inspection: The process of assessing (inspecting, investigating) the quality and/or performance of institutions, staff, services and programmes by those (inspectors) who are not directly involved in the ECEC settings being monitored, and who are usually specially appointed to fulfil these responsibilities.

Instrument (or **tool**)**:** A means used for monitoring or material that is used to conduct the monitoring process. Examples of instruments or tools for monitoring include checklists, rating scales and surveys.

Integrated system: The responsibilities of ECEC services are under one (leading) authority (at the national and/or regional level), e.g. the education Ministry, Ministry of social welfare or another authority.

Internal monitoring practices: See definition of **monitoring practice**.

Language and literacy skills: Children's productive and receptive language skills on all levels: syntax (ability to form sentences), morphology (ability to form words), semantics (understanding the meaning of words/sentences), phonology (awareness of speech sounds), pragmatics (how language is used in different contexts), vocabulary. It also refers to children's (precursor) literacy skills, that is to say, all the skills related to reading and writing, such as recognising and writing letters and words, understanding pictures, etc.

Local level or local authorities: The local level is a decentralised level of ECEC governance. It is located at city/town level in the vast majority of countries. In some countries, the municipalities take the main responsibility for ECEC.

Minimum quality standards: The minimum benchmark for structural aspects of ECEC settings to ensure a minimum level of quality. These are often aspects of ECEC that can be regulated relatively easily (e.g. staff-child ratio, space, group size and qualifications of ECEC staff).

Motor skills: The ability to perform complex muscle and nerve acts that produce movements, the ability to co-ordinate the body. It refers to both fine and gross motor skills and awareness of their own body. Fine motor skills include small movements such as drawing and writing, crawling or putting shoes on. Gross motor skills are large movements like walking and kicking, running and cycling.

Monitoring: The process of systematically tracking aspects of ECEC services, staff, child development and curriculum implementation, with a view toward data collection, accountability and/or enhancing effectiveness and/or quality.

Monitoring practice: The main activity/ies involved in monitoring, such as inspections or self-assessments. There are two different types of monitoring practices:

- **External monitoring practices**: Any monitoring practices conducted by evaluators/assessors/ actors who are not part of the ECEC service that is being monitored. These can include inspections, surveys completed by people who are not employed by the ECEC setting that is being monitored, or peer reviews conducted by external staff (peer review of a person working in one ECEC setting by a person not working in that ECEC setting).

- **Internal monitoring practices**: Any monitoring practices conducted by evaluators/assessors/ actors who are part of the ECEC service that is being monitored. These can include self-evaluations of staff working in ECEC settings (teachers, managers, care givers, etc.) or peer reviews conducted by internal staff (among colleagues in the same setting).

Narrative assessments: Descriptions of the development of a child through narratives/stories. Narrative assessment is a more inclusive approach to assessing child development, as it involves not only professionals but also the children's work, and can also include inputs or feedback from parents. It is a combination or package of what a child has done and learned, such as examples of drawings and exercises, feedback from staff, and staff planning or example practices. Portfolios or storybooks of children's development are well-known examples of narrative assessment practices (see also **portfolio** and **storytelling**).

National level/national authorities (also referred to as **central level or central authorities**): The authorities responsible for ECEC within a single country that is at the highest level of governance. Depending on the governance structure of the country, such as a federal structure of education governance, those authorities may or may not exert the key power of decision over ECEC policies and implementation. Examples for such authorities include the United Kingdom and Belgium.

Numeracy: The ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts and understand numbers. Basic numeracy skills consist of knowing and recognising space, shapes, location and direction, the basic properties of sets, quantity, order and number concepts, time and change, being able to count, to comprehending fundamental mathematics like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Observation: Observation is a method to collect information on a subject from an outsider's perspective. It can be used for a specific purpose (e.g. inspection, peer review) or can be open-ended (e.g. to document a child's progress for parents).

Peer review: an assessment process of a colleague's work and practices. This can be done internally (by an internal colleague or a manager) or externally (by a colleague or a manager not working in the same setting).

Portfolio: A collection of pieces of work that can tell a story of child/staff progress, or achievement in given areas.

Practical skills: Skills that involve active involvement of a child and refer to only those skills that children need in daily life such as lacing shoes, brushing teeth, etc.

Process quality: What children actually experience in their programme – what happens within a setting, such as interactions between educators and children. It also consists of the relationships with parents, available materials and professional skills of staff.

Rating scale: A set of categories designed to elicit information about a quantitative or a qualitative attribute. A common example is the 1-10 rating scale, in which a person (evaluator or assessor) selects the number that is considered to reflect the perceived quality or performance of the subject being monitored.

Regional level/regional authorities: A decentralised level of governance. It is located at state or province level in the vast majority of countries, and can be referred to as e.g. communities, *Länder*, cantons, states, etc. Regional authorities in federal countries are often responsible for ECEC in their particular region. Examples for regional level authorities are England, Scotland and the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium.

Regulations/recommendations: Different kinds of official documents containing guidelines, obligations and/or recommendations for ECEC institutions. **Regulations** are laws, rules or other orders prescribed by public authority to regulate conduct. **Recommendations** are official documents proposing the use of specific tools, methods and/or strategies for teaching and learning. Their application is not mandatory (as defined in Eurydice, 2013).

Review: The process of examining, considering and judging a situation or process carefully in order to see, for example, if changes are necessary, analyse strengths and weaknesses, and look for improvement.

Science skills: All scientific subjects such as geography and natural science, as for example interest in and understanding of different cycles in nature, but also in the development of scientific knowledge, question scientific phenomena and the ability to draw conclusions about scientific subjects. Science also refers to the development of awareness of how science and technology shape and affect our material, intellectual and cultural environments and the ability to understand that we all are a part of nature's cycles.

Screening: A tool designed to identify problems or delays during normal childhood development. Usually involves a short test to tell if a child is learning basic skills when he or she should, or if there are delays. It can include some questions the professional asks a child or parent (depending on a child's age) or can involve talk and play with the child during an examination to see how he or she plays, learns, speaks, behaves and moves. Screening is often used to identify delays or problems, including learning disabilities, speech or language problems, autism, intellectual disability, emotional/behavioural conditions, hearing or vision impairment or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Self-evaluation (or self-assessment): The process in which an ECEC setting evaluates its own performance regarding the accomplishment of certain goals or standards, or a process in which staff members assess their own skills and capabilities as a way to monitor progress, attain goals and foster improvement.

Sensitivity: The quality of understanding how a child feels and the staff member's responsiveness to children's needs and emotions. The ability of a person (in this case a staff member) to respond and interact in a way appropriate to the age of the child and with care, warmth and attentiveness (adapted from Macmillan, 2014).

Service quality: The level of quality at setting/provision level. It is the level of quality provided by an ECEC setting, and refers to all the features that are regarded by a country/region/local authority to be of importance for quality, children's environments and experiences that are presumed to be beneficial to their well-being. This most often includes the use of a curriculum, staff characteristics, teacher or caregiver behaviours and practices, and the staff-child interactions that form the core of children's ECEC experiences, referred to in the literature as process quality. In addition, quality in most countries involves structural features of the setting, such as space, group size and other standards or regulations, e.g. safety standards (NCES, 1997; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012).

Socio-emotional skills: The emotional and social development of a child. It includes children's ability to express and regulate emotions, children's relations with others (including peers), play with others (including peers), self-concept, development of personality identity, self-efficacy and the personality of a child, which shapes his/her thinking, feeling and behaviour. It also refers to co-operation and solving problems together. Examples of socio-emotional development include the forming and sustaining of positive relationships, experiencing, managing and expressing emotions, and exploring and engaging with the environment.

Split system: ECEC services are governed by different ministries or authorities at national/regional level. In many countries with a split system, policies for "care" and "early education" have developed separately and fall under the responsibility of different authorities. Child care and early education is provided as two different services and for different age groups. For instance, "child care" for younger children refers most commonly to children of under age 3 and "early education" most commonly to children of 3 years or older.

Staff-child ratio: The number of children per full-time member of staff. This can be a maximum (regulated) number, which indicates the maximum number of children that one full-time member of staff is allowed to be responsible for, or an average, that is, the average number of children a full-time staff member can be responsible for. Ratios can be either for main staff only (such as teacher or caregiver), but can also include auxiliary staff, such as assistants.

Standardised test: A test designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures and interpretations are consistent and administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner (OECD, 2012; Zucker, 2004). This means that the same test is given in the same way to all test takers. Standardised assessments are usually administered to large groups of children, and mainly for the purpose of measuring academic achievement and/or comparing members of a cohort (Rosenkvist, 2010) (see also **test***).

Structural quality: Quality aspects that consist of "inputs to process-characteristics that create the framework for the processes that children experience". These characteristics are not only part of the ECEC location in which children participate, but part of the environment that surrounds the ECEC setting, e.g. the community. They are often aspects of ECEC that can be regulated, although they may include variables that cannot be regulated.

Test: A formal assessment, often administered on paper or on the computer, intended to measure children's knowledge, skills and/or aptitudes. Tests can be either standardised or not (see also **standardised test**).

Tool: See definition of **instrument**.

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