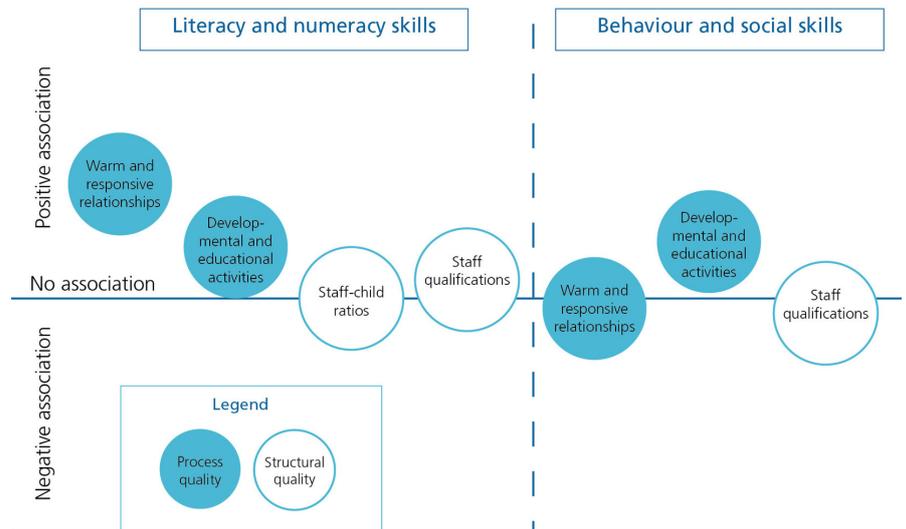


OECD Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Review: Quality beyond Regulations

Investing in high-quality early childhood education and care pays dividends in terms of children's short- and long-term learning and development. Many OECD countries recognise this and have increased public spending, particularly to expand access to these services.

However, a growing body of research suggests that only high-quality early childhood education and care is associated with children's development and learning, with especially strong evidence in the case of disadvantaged children.

Structural aspects of quality, such as staff-child ratios and group size are the most commonly used tools for improving early childhood education and care (ECEC) quality. However, there is consensus that **process quality**, i.e. the children's everyday social, emotional, physical and instructional interactions with staff and other children, is the **primary driver of gains in children's development**.



Source: OECD (2018), *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, Starting Strong, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264085145-en>.

How can the policy review on Quality beyond Regulations contribute to the improvement of early childhood education and care provision?

Policy makers face complex decisions in investing in affordable high-quality provision. With limited budgets, is it more important to raise qualification levels of staff or decrease group size with lower levels of training? How can countries and jurisdictions address quality issues while also facing access issues?

Policy makers need to be informed of the evidence base regarding what quality elements are most important to provide both affordable and high-quality provision that will ensure children's development, learning and well-being.

To bridge these gaps in the evidence base, the OECD Policy Review on "Quality beyond Regulations" will support countries to better understand different quality dimensions in ECEC with a particular **focus on the dimensions that can be addressed through policy**, and that can ensure better child development, learning and well-being. This project will build on the OECD's prior work conducting reviews of countries' ECEC policy challenges for 20 years, which resulted in the Starting Strong series volumes I through V (2001-2017).

Why participate in this policy review?

- The Quality beyond Regulations project will give countries and jurisdictions the opportunity to participate in the first **international comparative review of process quality** and engage in peer learning activities with other countries.
- The review will help countries and jurisdictions monitor, collect and interpret system-, staff- and child-level data on the quality of early childhood education and care, and develop a **better understanding of quality in ECEC in a multidimensional approach**.
- The review is part of the OECD's long-term strategy to develop early childhood education and care data and will serve as the foundation for future **analyses of what works for young children**.

Did you know?

- Process quality is a powerful predictor of children's development and learning.
- Apart from in-service training, other investments in structural changes, such as group sizes, do not seem to be directly linked to child development and learning.
- Peer interactions in ECEC centres and a broader set of domains of development, such as creativity, are often overlooked in research.
- Current research on curriculum and curriculum implementation was found to be too limited and imprecise.

Key milestones and timeline

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|-------------------------------|--|
| March 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, report co-funded by the European Union and released as a result of the project's on-going desk-based research and conceptual work. |
| First semester of 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional international literature review(s) to address selected knowledge gaps, complementing the findings from the Engaging young children report.• A draft policy review framework to set out the conceptual model of the relationship between levers to shape structural and process quality, and links to child outcomes.• A country survey on process quality generated through the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, collecting in depth policy data on curriculum and pedagogy; workforce development, with a cross-cutting emphasis on family and community engagement. It will also update data on governance, regulations, data and monitoring. |
| 2019 – early 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Country background reports to be prepared by countries will document their approaches to multi-dimensional quality in early childhood education and care, enabling in-depth analysis for countries providing voluntary contributions. |
| Late 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A multi-dimensional matrix/ framework for quality in ECEC. |
| Early 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A final synthesis report "Starting Strong VI". |

This invitation is for countries to take part in Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Review: Quality beyond Regulations project. For further information, including costings please contact the ECEC team who will be happy to advise you (ecec@oecd.org or Tel: +33(0)145248674.).

The OECD aims to provide valid, timely and comparable information to help countries review and design policies to develop high-quality ECEC systems. To learn more about the OECD's work on ECEC, visit our website: www.oecd.org/education/school/earlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm/.