

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE OECD NETWORK ON EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE: DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING**

11-12 June 2012

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1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

[EDU/EDPC/ECEC/A\(2012\)1/REV3](#)

1. The Network **ADOPTED** the agenda.

2. ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

[EDU/EDPC/ECEC/M\(2012\)1](#)

2. The Network **ADOPTED** the summary record of the 10th meeting.

3. OPENING REMARKS

3. Mr. Michael Davidson, Acting Head of Early Childhood and Schools Division, welcomed participants, underlined the objectives of the meeting, and explained the reorganisation of the Directorate for Education. He invited Mrs. Tove Mogstad Slinde (Norway) to be Acting Chair and informed the Network of Ms. Jacqueline Jones' (United States) resignation as Chair of the Network due to professional and academic obligations. He also indicated that Ms. Kiyomi Akita (Japan) accepted to become a bureau member and that Ms. Nada Pozar Matijasic (Slovenia) declined the nomination of bureau member due to professional obligations. Therefore, he informed participants that the post of Chair and one seat for a bureau member are vacant, and nominations can be made through written procedures to the Secretariat.

4. Mr. Davidson gave a brief overview of the work on the OECD Skills strategy and reflected on *Starting Strong III* and the roundtable in Oslo. He invited participants to comment and reflect on the dissemination of *Starting Strong III*. Countries indicated that the publication has been integral to policy work, provided learning opportunities through the inclusion of country experiences, and helped them in reflecting on the importance of quality and highlighting the importance of ECEC. It was also noted that the toolbox is helpful in making evidence-based decisions and developing strategies. Additionally, countries expressed high interest in data collection on ECEC by the OECD.

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE OECD NETWORK ON ECEC AND FUTURE PROJECTS

[EDU/EDPC/ECEC\(2012\)3](#)
[EDU/EDPC\(2012\)1](#)

5. Mr. Michael Davidson gave an introduction and explained the purpose of the session: to discuss the relevance of the proposal, get feedback and guidance based on countries' opinions and needs, and discuss the methodology. He explained that *Starting Strong III* highlighted the importance of monitoring and data collection, which was also emphasised at the Oslo roundtable, and explained that this will be the focus of the Programme of Work and Budget 2013-14 for the ECEC team. Mr. Davidson explained the EDPC procedures regarding the rating exercise of projects within the Directorate for Education and the allocation of funding to ECEC work: he explained that ECEC has been highly rated, and therefore, core funding (part I funding) is allocated for work on this topic. He also indicated that this funding will be used for work on monitoring quality and a focused collection of ECEC data. He explained that country reviews are always fully funded by voluntary contributions from countries wishing to participate in a review.

6. Ms. Miho Taguma, Senior Analyst and ECEC project leader, explained the project proposal for 2013-14 on monitoring quality and data collection, which consists of three strands: 1) policies for effective

monitoring of quality across early learning and development settings; 2) strengthening monitoring of early learning and development quality through internationally-comparable indicators and collection of data on ECEC; and 3) country reviews. Strand 1 involves a survey and analysis of responses regarding monitoring practices. Strand 2 consists of close co-operation with other departments of the OECD and international organisations on ECEC data collection so as to avoid duplication of work and ensure relevant policy-driven data collection. For strand 3, the country reviews, Ms. Taguma proposed three possible options for the focus of the reviews: 1) monitoring quality practices; 2) policies to enhance quality based on the five levers in *Starting Strong III*; and 3) ECEC system evaluation in which a country's ECEC system will be reviewed paying attention to, among others, participation, quality standards, the workforce, funding and equity of the system.

7. Mr. Michael Davidson explained the renewed mandate of the ECEC Network for 2012-17 and indicated that the Network is expected to provide input to the Programme of Work and Budget. Mr. Davidson also highlighted the importance of links and co-operation with other OECD departments, the European Commission, Eurydice, UNESCO, the World Bank, etc. He explained that the new project for 2013-14 will draw on, or might feed into, related work within the OECD, such as *Education at a Glance*, the work of the Employment and Labour Directorate, and the Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. He indicated that Strands 1 and 2 of the new project proposal will be conducted with part I funding, and a final report will be published. The country reviews (strand 3) will be conducted on one of the three options based on countries' needs and wishes, and these country reviews will be paid through voluntary contributions from the countries participating in the reviews. He emphasised that voluntary contributions for strand 2 are only needed if countries wish to widen the proposed scope of data collection. Additionally, it was emphasised that participation in the Network remains free of any costs and that the Network is expected to feed into the Programme of Work and Budget. He encouraged countries to indicate their interest in the new project proposal and identify the option within strand 3 (which focus for country reviews) they would find most useful.

8. Ms. Nora Milotay (European Commission) gave a brief update of the European Commission's work on ECEC and the thematic working group on ECEC that has been set up following the Ministers agreement¹ to work on this topic at European level to support Member States in developing by their ECEC systems. So far, twenty-five Member States nominated two participants per country: they are policy makers and researchers not only from the education field but other ECEC relevant sectors as well, such as employment, social, family and health affairs. The group has a two-year mandate. The group undertakes peer learning and peer reviews on policies to improve the accessibility and quality of ECEC provision, including issues such as effective curricular frameworks, staff competences, evaluation and monitoring and governance arrangements. The thematic working group exchanges good practices, compares and contrasts policy approaches to challenges, and addresses the latest quantitative and qualitative research evidence to identify factors critical to success in policy making and reform and that are transferable to other national contexts. The final outputs of the group will be a glossary of ECEC terms and a European quality framework. Alongside the thematic working group, the Commission has also created a stakeholder group of fifty-five European and global organisations interested in ECEC and early school leaving to support policy work at the European level. Finally, Ms. Milotay indicated her appreciation of the OECD work and invited the OECD to be a member of the ECEC working group. Regarding developing methodologies for ECEC data collection by the OECD, she emphasised the need for strong communication and collaboration between the European Commission and the OECD.

¹ Council Conclusions on early childhood education and care, OJ 2011/C 175/03

9. Countries acknowledged there is a lack of comparable data on ECEC and a lack of knowledge within countries the indicators for which data should be collected. It was noted that there is a need for additional knowledge on what drives the quality of systems. Therefore, careful consideration on what the OECD should and can collect data on, and for what purposes, should be given to strand 2. Federal countries indicated it is important to take into account the federal system when collecting data – or any system characteristics within ECEC. Also, additional information and data on family day care is needed, and data on what leads to good development would be appreciated. It was also emphasised that collaboration with different departments within the OECD and with other international organisations on data and indicators would be highly appreciated. Countries indicated they would send comments through written procedure to the Secretariat.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME OF THE MEETING: DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

[EDU/EDPC/INES/WP\(2012\)2](#)

10. Ms. Miho Taguma gave a brief overview on “Data collection and Monitoring” in *Starting Strong III* and the challenges and strategies of countries in collecting data and monitoring quality. She emphasised that data collection and monitoring is important, since it can provide information on ECEC for improving quality and for accountability purposes and contributes to parental choice. She explained the aspects that need to be considered for data collection and monitoring: the purpose of data collection; careful consideration of monitoring methods; and good co-ordination of data collection. She indicated that there is little data across all areas of ECEC provision, in particular, on quality, financing and costs; services for the youngest children; and the impacts of data and data systems on quality and children's learning and development. Additionally, there is little coherent cross-national data for international comparisons of programmes and their outcomes.

11. Mr. Eric Charbonnier, Analyst in the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division, presented an update on recent data collection developments of the OECD's INES working group on ISCED 0. He informed participants that INES is developing an indicator on early childhood education programmes that will be released for the first time in education at a glance 2012 (indicator C2) in September 2012. He also informed participants that the new ISCED classification (ISCED-2011) will include two categories to define ISCED 0, one for children below the age of 3 (early childhood development programmes) and another one for children from the age of 3 to compulsory schooling age (pre-primary education). These two categories will be included separately in the future data collection based on ISCED 2011. The first launch of the results of the indicator with two categories will be in May 2014, which will include data on staff, enrolment rates, staff-child ratio, programme characteristics, and financing. The results will be published *Education at a Glance 2015*. Additionally, he explained that the indicator for ISCED 0 will include policy recommendations of the ECEC Network.

12. Ms. Akvile Motiejunaite (EACEA/European Commission) presented Eurydice's work on ECEC. She explained their work on Eurypedia, which includes a section on ECEC with over 250 articles, their 2009 study on tackling social and cultural inequalities, and their 2012 indicator development on ECEC. Eurydice only collects information and data on accredited and subsidised ECEC provisions, excluding family day care. Eurydice's plan for data collection for 2013 includes data and information collection on different ECEC topics, such as participation and educational processes. Eurydice collaborates with Eurostat on collecting this data and uses OECD data as well. The publication date of this data is expected to be March 2014.

13. Ms. Rosalyn Harper and Mr. Graham Knox (United Kingdom) gave a presentation on ECEC data collection in England. They explained the background of data collection, research applications of ECEC data in the Department for Education, and the evidence base in the early years. England collects background information of ECEC establishments by giving each provision a unique reference number and

also collects individual child data for which they are considering developing a unique pupil number. The data collection process starts with identifying policy requirements, and after data has been collected at several levels, data is being cleaned. They indicated that it is important to pilot, be clear on requirements and expectations, consult with working groups regularly and plan well. Data in England is used for, e.g., monitoring implementation of specific early years policies. The evidence base consists of, for example, longitudinal studies of the impact of programmes or development of new programmes to improve child development. In the near future, England plans to evaluate the impact of Sure Start Children's Centres and Early Education in England in general because of the changes in policies that have been implemented.

14. Mr. Lars Hornung Bahn (Denmark) explained that, in 2007, Denmark started a monitoring project, which included the development of monitoring tools. The project developed 7 tools to monitor and measure the quality of daycare within the 6 areas of Denmark's pedagogical curriculum. He explained that all tools have been reviewed by an expert group and have been piloted in municipalities. The project has 3 objectives: develop professional skills for ECEC staff; provide information to politicians at the municipality level for decision-making purposes; and contribute to better informed parental choice. Municipalities were free to use the monitoring tools, although it is mandatory for them to publish information on pedagogical quality every two years. Collection of the results will be done through web-interface, which is currently in development. The goals for the near future are raising awareness of the importance of high-quality pedagogy and implementation of the tools by municipalities.

6. THEMATIC WORKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS

[EDU/EDPC/ECEC/RD\(2012\)2](#)
[EDU/EDPC/ECEC/RD\(2012\)3](#)

15. This round of presentations piloted the new working method of the ECEC Network.

16. Mr. Richard Walley (New Zealand) presented the preliminary results of the working group on data collection. He explained the background of the working groups: the groups focus on in-depth co-operation between a number of jurisdictions and produce intermediate outputs, such as discussion or position papers on the theme of the working group. The group on data collection consisted of New Zealand, Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Norway and the United Kingdom. The initial findings show that an annual census is very common among the participating countries, information collections tend to serve multiple purposes (such as determining enrolment rates and allocating funding), and there is a heavy reliance on aggregated data at national level. Mr. Walley explained that in New Zealand, for example, individual-level longitudinal data systems have been established, and data across the education system are linked. As next steps, the working group identified several areas for further investigation such as: best practice in collecting and analysing workforce data, collection and analysis of process and structural quality data, and data on continuity between different learning settings.

17. Ms. Maria Bakke Orvik (Norway) presented the practices of monitoring quality in Norwegian integrated kindergartens. She explained that Norway holds a holistic view on ECEC, integrating play and learning, care and *bildung*. Participation is voluntary; and half of kindergartens are privately owned but publically financed. At the national level, Norway monitors the number of ECEC places and attendance rates, workforce supply and conditions, and regulation compliance on a regular basis. Parental satisfaction and curriculum implementation are less frequently monitored through the use of surveys. Additionally, at the local level, regulation compliance, parent satisfaction and service quality are monitored by municipalities. Within kindergartens, the annual plan and pedagogical work is assessed in co-operation with parents and staff. Norway is currently in a preliminary phase of developing a national system to monitor the development of quality in kindergartens. This should lead to an annual report on the conditions in the kindergarten sector. The challenges Norway is facing include how to monitor child outcomes without testing children; which quality standards to set; how to collect information on indicators which are not easy to measure; and how to monitor process quality. Norway indicated that current monitoring

practices of the workforce revealed a need for more qualified staff, which resulted in the launch of a plan to recruit preschool teachers and develop targeted actions for certain regions in need.

18. Ms. Deborah Nickerson (United Kingdom) explained monitoring quality practices in ECEC in England. England monitors compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) to ensure welfare and safeguarding, and a good environment for learning and development. England's main levers include funding; statutory requirements placed on providers and local authorities; and central programmes. Funding consists of, *e.g.*, funding for free entitlement to ECEC for 3- and 4-year-olds, which will be extended to 2-year-olds in disadvantaged areas in September 2013, and funding for voluntary and community sector organisations. The EYFS describes requirements for providers, such as statutory assessment of child development at age 5, and learning and development requirements in 17 early learning goals. The requirements for local authorities consist of, *e.g.*, providing sufficient places for children entitled to free ECEC, and they have the responsibility to improve the quality of early years provisions in their area. The central programmes that have been set up are the Sure Start Children's Centres, development of Graduate Leadership through the Early Years Professional Status Programme, and Bespoke Training Programmes, such as Early Language Development Programmes. The main tools for monitoring include OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), the EYFS profile results and additional surveys. Inspection by OFSTED results in a rating or scaling of the provision from inadequate to outstanding. Based on this rating, additional support or resources for improving quality can be allocated to provisions. Ms. Nickerson announced that a new EYFS will be introduced in September, and that England wishes to focus on affordability and quality of ECEC services.

7. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 1 : DATA COLLECTION

19. This round of discussion focused on identifying practices, key challenges and strategies of each country in data collection. Countries were split up into smaller groups, based on their ECEC governance system, and discussed data collection methods, challenges and strategies.

8. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2: MONITORING QUALITY

20. This round of discussion focused on identifying practices, key challenges and strategies of each country in monitoring quality. Countries were split up in smaller groups, based on their ECEC governance system, and discussed practices in monitoring quality, identified challenges and discussed strategies.

9. REPORT BACK

21. This session took stock of the key conclusions from the discussions in sessions 7 and 8.

DATA COLLECTION

22. The discussion group comprised of federal countries indicated that an annual census was most common in collecting ECEC data among them. Additionally, aggregated data collection was common; panel studies are implemented by several countries as well as large sample surveys. Federal countries are experiencing several challenges in ECEC data collection, including the collection of culturally-sensitive data; monitoring financing and financial data; linking care data with early education data, as these are often separately collected; how to share data; and what the data can be used for. Countries indicated they often negotiate with several federal jurisdictions to come to an agreement on data collection, locate data in universities, publically fund collection of data or use funding or taxation as an occasion for data collection. They concluded it takes time to find an agreement on what data should be collected, good communication between different government levels is important, additional data on care is needed, and the purpose of data collection should be carefully thought over.

23. Countries with a highly decentralised ECEC system indicated their biggest challenges in data collection include errors in electronic data input at local level which challenges the validity of the data, regulations on individual-level data collection, defining process quality indicators, and funding data collection. The countries overcame some of these challenges by catching errors in data collection through checking and cleaning processes, carefully defining purposes of data collection, and showing parents results of data collection as part of the dissemination strategy to increase involvement and awareness. In the Netherlands, for example, the latter leads to increased parental involvement. The group of countries learned it is important to have political support for data collection so as to ensure funding, connections need to be established between different ministries responsible for ECEC data collection, and new indicators need to be established or redefined to improve data collection.

24. Countries with a highly centralised ECEC system indicated their challenges include difficulties in sharing or linking data collected by different ministries for different purposes, collecting data on children with special needs, and the lack of structure to collect basic data. It is often challenging to persuade ECEC provisions to provide data, strict privacy laws make collection of data on the individual child level harder, and there is little data available on children not attending ECEC. Strategies to collect ECEC data include setting up a central data collection system, developing unique identifiers to link data in different datasets, and having the statistical office analyse, collect and clean data to ensure high-quality data.

MONITORING QUALITY

25. Federal countries indicated they experience many challenges in monitoring ECEC quality, such as monitoring pedagogical quality, knowing what the frequency of monitoring should or can be, what the consequences of monitoring should be, who should conduct the monitoring practices, ensuring a good level of training for inspectors, engaging parents in monitoring, and how to include the voice of children in monitoring ECEC provisions. Several federal countries have linked funding to the results of monitoring, set up consistent legislations or standards in every state, developed materials for parents to increase awareness of the importance of quality, clearly defining with stakeholders what "good practices" are, developing a national quality assessment framework, and providing staff training on monitoring. They concluded that the goals of monitoring should be clearly defined as well as the purpose; piloting was found highly useful as well as the engagement of politicians.

26. Countries with a highly decentralised ECEC system are experiencing similar challenges but also identified others. These challenges include the use of self-evaluations at the national level and the use of parent boards to monitor quality. To avoid duplication of work, the United Kingdom indicated agencies conduct cross inspections with the care and preschool sectors; and in the Netherlands, monitoring results are linked to support in improving quality when quality has been found insufficient. The inspector and the provider then set an agreement on how to make improvements. They found that setting out a legal framework for monitoring helps ensure that minimum standards are met, and inspection contributes to thinking about how quality can be improved. A collaborative monitoring process was found more effective than a single agent running the process.

27. Countries with a highly centralised ECEC system also experienced a number of challenges in monitoring quality in ECEC, including the use of self-evaluations, monitoring the quality of the workforce versus the quality of the service, what the role of inspectorates should be and the quality of inspectors, how frequently monitoring practices should take place, and up front quality assurance versus ongoing monitoring. In all countries, quality is being monitored; and most inspections result in reports, which are often publically available. Self-evaluations among ECEC staff were frequently implemented as well and used for improvement of staff quality, and all ECEC provisions are commonly monitored on at least the minimum regulated standards. Incentive payments for monitoring ECEC provision were found to be useful in Singapore.

10. THE WAY FORWARD

28. This item discussed the theme and date of the next ECEC Network meeting, the working group for the next Network meeting and the Chair's conclusions.

29. Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde, Acting Chair of the Network, announced that the theme for the next meeting and working group is, as suggested, "Workforce quality". The meeting is scheduled for 17 and 18 December 2012 in Paris. She concluded that the topic of the workforce quality is highly relevant for policy makers, since many countries face challenges in ensuring a high-quality ECEC workforce. She informed the Network that Ms. Wytse Boomsma will moderate this working group and encouraged countries to participate in one of the working groups. She added that sharing internal information, expert perspectives and country experiences on "ECEC data collection and monitoring quality" has been a constructive way to gather useful knowledge and learn from others' practices.

30. Ms. Miho Taguma highlighted the questions for discussion and feedback regarding the project proposal for 2013-14 and encouraged all participants to provide feedback on the project proposal through written procedure by 25 June. She clarified that the scope for the new project will cover age 0 to the early years of primary schooling. It has been agreed that the Secretariat will draft a project plan based on countries' feedback, and the Network will discuss the plan at the next meeting. Additionally, she informed the Network that the Secretariat will prepare a schedule for themes of the future meetings based on country feedback and will propose this schedule at the next meeting. Ms. Taguma announced that the Secretariat will start the preparatory work on Strand 2 by taking stock of currently available international data and untapped survey results from *Starting Strong III*. She indicated that the output will be presented at the next meeting.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. The Secretariat thanked Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde for chairing the meeting and all Network members for their contributions and active participation in the 11th ECEC Network meeting.

**Participants List for 11th Meeting of the Network on Early Childhood
Education and Care**

**Liste des Participants pour 11ème réunion du Réseau sur l'accueil et
l'éducation des jeunes enfants**

11/6/2012 - 12/6/2012

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