



## Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

### STRATEGIES TO TACKLE CHALLENGES IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING QUALITY REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

#### Challenge 4: Implementation

Implementing standards and regulations and monitoring them can be challenging because of a lack of sufficient financial, human or time resources. There is also insufficient support or buy-in among stakeholders or a lack of knowledge and awareness on the standards and regulations. Besides this, a lack of expertise and know-how on how to implement or monitor the regulations can further complicate the challenge.

#### *Ensuring stakeholder buy-in by involving them in the design process*

- In **Australia**, a national Stakeholder Reference Group was established to act as a key consultation forum during the transition to and implementation of the National Quality Agenda (NQA). Members of the reference group represent the ECEC and school-age care sector and include peak bodies, unions, academics, training organisations and special interest groups. The Council of Australian Governments sought public comment on a series of options to improve the quality of ECEC. The general public was invited to give their comments and opinions on several proposed quality improvement measures, including changes in regulatory standards.
- Before standards in child care are set in the **Netherlands**, stakeholder organisations, such as the parent organisation BOinK and child care representatives, can have a say. Together, they advise the Minister about quality standards. Because of the involvement of these organisations in the process, there is not much resistance when new regulations are implemented.
- **Prince Edward Island** and **Manitoba (Canada)** used a consultative process for regulation changes to meet the needs of stakeholders and members of the early learning and child care field, and to reflect current best practices for educators and administrators of early learning and child care programmes. Prince Edward Island has a regulatory board, the Child Care Facilities Board, which monitors adherence to the Child Care Facilities Act and is comprised of members from the community at large, public education, government and the early childhood sector. In Manitoba, the Child Care Regulatory Review Committee was established, made up of representatives from government and stakeholder groups, including the Manitoba Child Care Association, an advocacy group working on behalf of the child care workforce. This committee has been successful in finding agreement on regulatory changes in a collaborative and

consultative method for the improvement of licensed early learning and child care services in Manitoba.

#### *Allocating funding for implementation*

- The Flanders Participation Company in **Flanders (Belgium)** established an investment fund exclusively for the independent child care sector. The funding is called “Kidsinvest” and is targeted to independent child care providers. The target is to support them in order to avoid having financial problems that could threaten the existence of independent facilities. The aim is to avoid the decrease of independent child care facilities and, thus, the number of available places. From 2012, *Kind en Gezin* will guide one or more organisations as they develop a support project for quality and education in the independent child care sector.
- A new funding system, implemented in **New Zealand** in 2005, provides an incentive for ECEC services to increase the proportion of registered ECEC teachers employed. Since December 2007, teacher-led ECEC centres have been required to have at least 50% of their teachers with an ECEC qualification at diploma or degree level. The funding system supports ECEC centres in achieving this standard.
- **Prince Edward Island (Canada)** introduced in 2010 a new funding model for Early Years Centres, which ensures a wage grid for early childhood staff, regulated parent fees and viable operational costs. In addition, the province provided funding for the development and delivery of entry-level training for all uncertified staff working in Early Years Centres in both official languages. Infrastructure funds were also provided for the construction or renovations to existing space in primary schools to allow for starting/building an early years centre. Additional funds were made available to the remainder of early years centres for renovations or the purchase of materials as needed to meet the renewed criteria of an early years centre.
- In **Manitoba (Canada)**, to assist with the implementation of the requirements under The Child Care Safety Charter, additional provincial funding was offered to support the physical changes to buildings so that facilities could comply with the requirements for controlling visitor access.

#### *Setting up an agency responsible for implementation*

- In **Australia**, a guidance authority, the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, has been set up to guide the implementation and management of the national regulatory system.

#### *Giving structural or financial incentives to service providers to follow the regulations*

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity of **Portugal** launched the System for Quality Improvement of Social Services, which includes child care services. One objective of this programme is to establish a series of minimum standards for new and existing buildings, ensuring a good level of safety and quality. Once all the requirements have been fulfilled, the provider can ask for a certification of good quality and safety and receive a “Quality Mark”. There are three levels of certification, depending on the stage of development of the quality requirements.

- **Ireland** provides a capitation grant to a wide range of ECEC service providers who meet specific quality criteria, including qualifications of preschool leaders and compliance with regulations. A higher capitation grant is available to preschool services that employ preschool leaders with ISCED Level 5 qualifications.
- **Korea** acknowledges kindergartens of high quality through official evaluation and provides financial support (e.g., subsidies for teacher salary especially in private kindergartens) accordingly. The Korea Childcare Accreditation Council, a national agency, awards an official accreditation plaque to acknowledge child care centres which meet quality criteria.

#### *Providing training for staff and assessors*

- As part of the full regulation renewal in 2007, education for licensing inspectors and the operators of facilities in **British Columbia (Canada)** was done by face-to-face all-day workshops with inspectors and included a training guide and video. All licensed child care facilities received an invitation to attend one two-hour information session.
- In **Manitoba (Canada)**, to assist with the implementation of the requirements under The Child Care Safety Charter, the Province offered training and support to facilities in the development and approval of their safety plans and codes of conduct and reimbursed expenses (up to set maximums) for centre staff and home providers to attend training sessions on the new requirements and standards.

#### *Disseminating the new or revised regulations and standards widely*

- In **Australia**, all key documentation including the draft assessment and rating documentation and the draft regulations have been made available on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [website](#) for interested stakeholders to familiarise themselves with and comment on. Additionally, a range of other strategies are underway to engage and inform the sector about the new standards, including various public speaking engagements, more public consultation forums and targeted communications materials.
- **Flanders (Belgium)** designed the quality assurance manual, which is a written document setting out minimum standards. The document includes information on: 1) the quality assurance policy, including the mission, vision, objectives and values of the child care facility; 2) the elements of the quality system that the child care facility will develop, implement and maintain; 3) how the quality planning of the child care facility is organised; 4) who is in charge of the quality assurance policy; and 5) how the authorities can visit the facility to verify and evaluate its implementation of the regulations. The Flemish government made it compulsory for all subsidised child care provisions to have a quality assurance manual.
- **Korea** publishes the Childcare Guidebook annually and distributes it to all child care centres and family day care to inform providers of new regulations. Sixty-one Childcare Information Centres nationwide also disseminate new regulations and policy through their websites. For kindergartens, the Offices of Education in 16 provinces and cities and 178 District Offices of Education nationwide disseminate changes to regulations and guidelines in a written document and through their websites as well.

- All licensed child care facilities in **British Columbia (Canada)** were given an information packet that included Frequently Asked Questions, helpful tips and a copy of the new regulation.
- In **Manitoba (Canada)**, the province developed and maintains a large assortment of publications and materials for use by the child care workforce. This includes a substantive [Best Practices Licensing Manual for Early Learning and Child Care Centres](#). The aim is to help facilities in implementing legislative and regulatory requirements, as well as to enhance their programmes beyond what is required by law.
- In **Poland**, a nationwide social campaign was carried out to share information about changes in the ECEC system and stress the importance of preschool education. The campaign information targeted the details on newly introduced kindergarten forms, practical guidelines on building regulations and impacts of preschool education. The means used include published guides, television and radio, articles in the press, supplements to popular magazines, websites, etc. Preschool education was also included as a topic of discussion in popular television programmes and series.