

RESULTS FROM TALIS STARTING STRONG 2018

The OECD Starting Strong Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS Starting Strong) is an international large-scale survey of early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and leaders conducted in nine OECD countries. This note presents the findings from the first volume of results on TALIS Starting Strong 2018, *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care*.

Denmark¹

Key findings

In Denmark, larger shares of staff report using practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development rather than practices that facilitate children's literacy and numeracy development. Moreover, for children's life in the future, staff in Denmark attribute more importance to cooperation and oral language skills than to literacy, math and science skills.

Denmark has a large share of highly educated staff in pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3, who received training to work with children, but a majority of staff report not having received practical training in this programme.

Staff in Denmark work with relatively small groups of children (on average 18 children in pre-primary centres and 12 in centres for children under age 3). However, reducing group size by recruiting more staff is indicated as a top spending priority by staff.

Providing workshops on child development for parents/guardians is not very common in Denmark. Encouraging parents/guardians to do play or learning activities at home is more typical.

Over 20% of leaders indicate that their centre includes 11% or more children with special needs. ECEC staff in Denmark rank training to work with children with special needs as a key priority for professional development.

A majority of staff in Denmark are satisfied with their jobs, but not their salaries. Lack of resources and having extra duties or administrative work are important sources of stress mentioned by staff and leaders in pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3. Inadequate centre budget and resources are the top barriers to their effectiveness according to leaders.

Highlights and policy implications for Denmark

Promote practices that foster children's learning, development and well-being

TALIS Starting Strong data show that staff with more education and training specifically to work with children report using more practices that can facilitate children's learning and development in a large range of areas. In Denmark, a large share of pre-primary ECEC staff report having a level of education above secondary level (75%), and having been trained specifically to work with children (70%), but a smaller share of staff report

¹ Low responses rates in the survey may result in biases in the estimates reported and limit the comparability of the data.

having received practical training (39%). The share of leaders with a bachelor's degree or higher is high (97%), and the majority of leaders have training focused on early childhood (85%). The share of staff participating in professional development activities is high (78% at pre-primary, 79% in centres for children under age 3).

In most participating countries, a larger share of staff report using practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development rather than practices that facilitate children's language, literacy and numeracy development. This is particularly the case in Denmark where staff report encouraging children to "talk to each other" far more than practices to support early numeracy. Related to this, when ranking the importance of abilities or skills to prepare children for their life in the future, staff in Denmark attribute more importance to cooperation and oral language skills than to literacy, math and science skills.

On average, staff in Denmark work with relatively small groups of children (18 children in pre-primary centres, and 12 children in centres for children under age 3). Nonetheless, the majority of staff (52% at pre-primary level, 65% in centres for children under age 3) indicate that having too many children in the group is an important source of stress. In line with these findings, reducing group size by recruiting more staff is indicated as a top spending priority by staff.

According to leaders, providing workshops on child-rearing/development is not common practice in Denmark (41% for both levels). However, a high share of staff report that parents are encouraged by ECEC staff to participate in play and learning activities with their children at home (74% at pre-primary level, and 72% in centres for children under age 3).

In Denmark, only approximately half of the staff report that their formal education or training programme included facilitating transitions to primary education (48% at pre-primary level, 54% in centres for children under age 3). A small share of centres are co-located with a primary school (12% at pre-primary level, 5% in centres for children under age 3).

Attract and retain a high-quality workforce

A large majority of pre-primary staff in Denmark are satisfied with their jobs (96%), while a smaller share are satisfied with their salary (36%) or feel valued in society (61%). The same findings hold for centres for children under age 3. Lack of resources and having extra duties due to absent staff are important sources of stress mentioned by a large share of staff in pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3.

Professional development can help staff keep motivated at their job but can also facilitate career progression. Opportunities for high-quality professional development appear as a top-three priority for staff in Denmark. The gap in the percentage of staff reporting participation in professional development between highly educated staff and less educated staff is high in Denmark. Half of the staff indicate that professional development being too expensive is a barrier to their participation.

Give a strong start to all children

A moderate share of pre-primary centres in Denmark include a large percentage of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes (27%) or whose first language is different from the language(s) used in the centre (43%). These numbers are slightly smaller for centres for children under age 3 (18% and 38%, respectively). A relatively small percentage of staff report having received training to work with children from diverse backgrounds or with dual/second language learners, and a small percentage of staff report using practices on diversity (such as through the use of books and toys) at both levels.

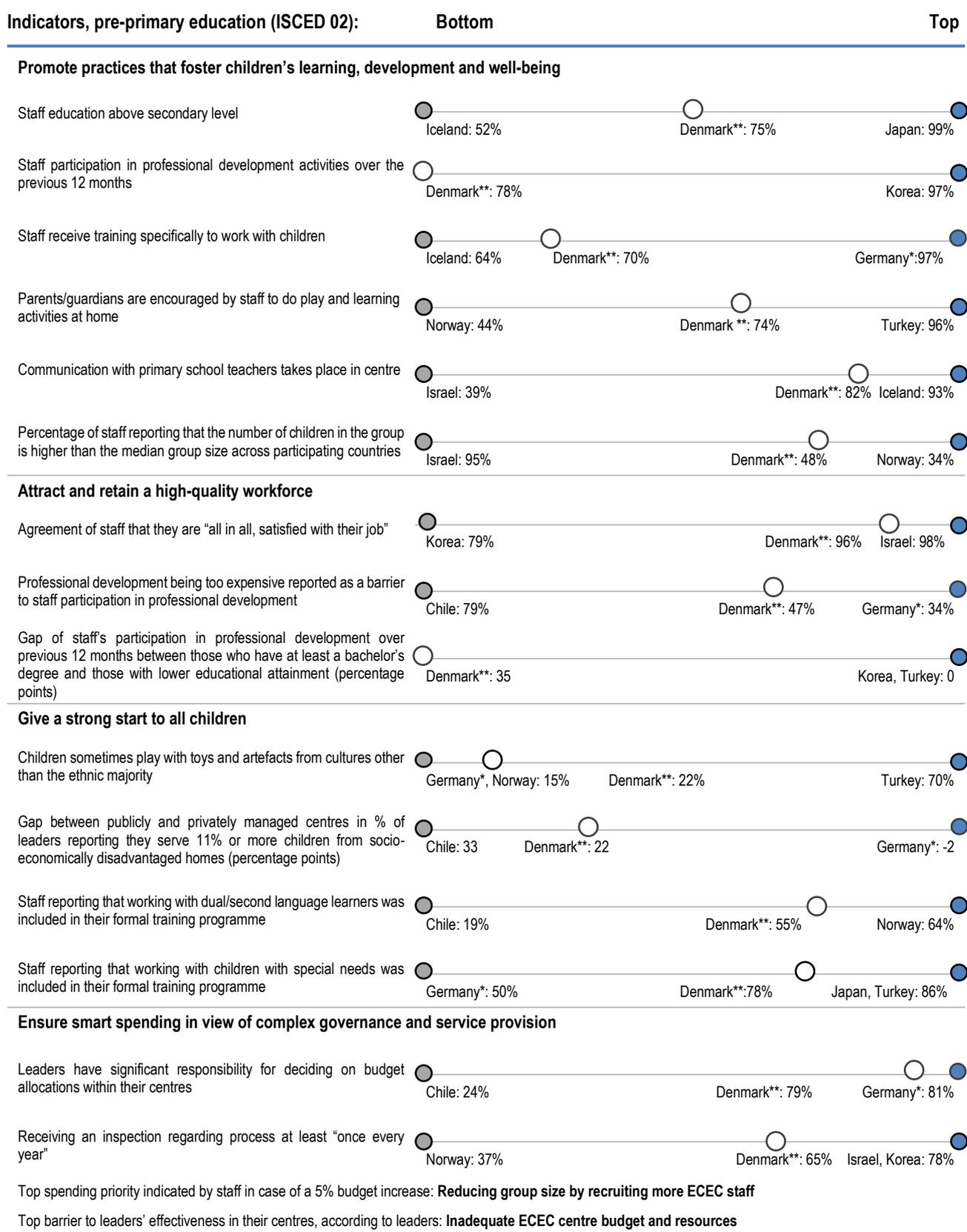
Over 20% of leaders indicate that their centre includes 11% or more children with special needs. Over two thirds of staff in pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3 report that working with children with special needs was included in their formal training programme. Nevertheless, training in working with children with special needs is ranked as the most important priority for professional development by staff.

Ensure smart spending in view of complex governance and service provision

A relatively high percentage of leaders in pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3 indicate having responsibilities over budget allocation within the centre and the appointment and recruitment of staff. A high share of leaders indicate receiving inspections on process quality at least once every year.

Administrative work and lack of resources are the most important sources of work-related stress for leaders. Inadequate centre budget and resources are the top barriers to their effectiveness according to leaders.

How does Denmark compare?



Note: * Estimates for sub-groups and estimated differences between sub-groups in the TALIS Starting Strong 2018 data need to be interpreted with care.
** Low responses rates in the survey may result in biases in the estimates reported and limit the comparability of the data.

Source: TALIS Starting Strong 2018 database.

Policy pointers for Denmark

- Ensure that pre-service and in-service education and training programmes for staff lead to a common understanding of developmentally appropriate ways to support children's learning.
- Review ECEC staff and centre financial packages to ensure that they can attract and maintain a high-quality workforce in the sector.
- Engage in dialogue with staff and leaders to identify needs for high-quality professional development and ensure that financial costs are not a barrier in participation.
- Ensure that policies and regulations do not create an excessive burden on leaders that prevent them from exerting the various aspects of leadership.

What is TALIS Starting Strong and how does it apply in Denmark?

TALIS Starting Strong is an international, large-scale survey of staff and leaders in early childhood education and care (ECEC). TALIS Starting Strong uses questionnaires administered to staff and leaders to gather data. Its main goal is to generate robust international information relevant to developing and implementing policies focused on ECEC staff and leaders and their pedagogical and professional practices, with an emphasis on those aspects that promote conditions for children's learning, development and well-being. TALIS Starting Strong data are based exclusively on self-reports from ECEC staff and leaders and, therefore, represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and accounts of their activities.

TALIS Starting Strong 2018 includes nine countries: Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway and Turkey. All of these countries collected data from staff and leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) settings typically serving children aged 3 to 5. In addition, four of the nine countries (Denmark, Germany, Israel and Norway) collected data from staff and leaders in settings serving children under age 3. Only data on centre-based provision are reported in the first report volume and this country note.

The Survey aims to obtain a representative sample in each participating country of staff and leaders for each level of ECEC in which the country participated. In Denmark, 544 staff members and 102 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) settings, and 563 staff members and 93 leaders in settings for children under age 3 completed the TALIS Starting Strong questionnaires.

TALIS Starting Strong covers the following ECEC settings in Denmark: kindergartens, integrated institutions, nurseries and day-care facilities.

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Note regarding data from Israel: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

References

OECD (2019), *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/301005d1-en>.

For more information on TALIS 2018 visit <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/>.

Data can be found also on line by following the **StatLinks**  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/>.

Questions can be directed to: TALIS Starting Strong team, Directorate for Education and Skills,
StartingStrongSurvey@oecd.org
