

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*.

Japan

Key findings

In Japan more than in other countries participating in the Survey, a larger percentage of staff report using practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development rather than practices that facilitate children's numeracy development.

Compared to other participating countries, Japan stands out as having a large percentage of highly educated staff, who received practical training, and training to work with children.

Staff work with large groups of children (on average 23 children per group).

Almost 14% of leaders indicate that their centre includes 11% or more children with special needs, which is high compared to other countries. ECEC staff in Japan rank training to work with children with special needs as a key priority for professional development.

Japan is one of the participating countries where a low percentage of staff are satisfied with their jobs (81%), with their salary (23%) and report feeling valued in society (31%). Staff shortages are a top barrier to their effectiveness, according to leaders.

Leaders are relatively older in Japan (81% aged 50 and above) and there are more male ECEC leaders than in most other participating countries. A relatively small percentage of leaders indicate having responsibilities for budget allocation (43%) and the appointment and recruitment of staff (45%) within the centre.

Highlights and policy implications for Japan

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. Compared to other participating countries, Japan stands out as having a large percentage of staff with an education above secondary level (99%), having received practical training (92%) and having been trained specifically to work with children (94%). In contrast, a substantial share of leaders have a relatively low level of education (44% with a bachelor's degree or higher). The share of staff participating in professional development activities is high, similar to the share in other participating countries (85%).

In most participating countries, larger shares of staff report using practices that facilitate children's socio-emotional development rather than practices that facilitate children's numeracy development. Japan has one of the highest gaps between the use of practices that foster socio-emotional and numeracy development.

In addition, when ranking the importance of abilities or skills to prepare children for their life in the future, staff in Japan attribute less importance to children's numeracy and science skills compared to staff in other countries.

Staff in Japan work with relatively large groups of children (on average 23 children per group). However, a small percentage of staff (23%) indicate that having too many children in the group is a significant source of stress. Nevertheless, staff in Japan who do feel more stress related to the size of their groups report using more group management strategies (e.g. calming children) compared to staff in Japan who feel less stress from the size of their groups.

Practices engaging parents or guardians (e.g. providing workshops on child-rearing/development or informing parents about daily activities) are relatively common across countries and in Japan. Nevertheless, Japan has the lowest share of staff that report parents can contact ECEC staff easily (73%).

Japan has the highest percentage of staff whose professional development activities (in the last 12 months) included facilitating transitions to primary education. In addition, a relatively high share of leaders report that their centre is in communication with primary school teachers (85%).

Attract and retain a high-quality workforce

Japan is one of the participating countries where the lowest percentage of staff are satisfied with their jobs (81%), report feeling valued in society (31%) and are satisfied with their salary (23%). The same findings are also relevant for leaders. Improving salaries is indicated as a top spending priority by staff. Japan also has a relatively low percentage of permanent contracts for staff (61%).

Professional development can help motivate staff and also facilitate career progression. The gap in the percentage of staff reporting participation in professional development between highly educated staff and less educated staff is also high in Japan. In Japan, while staff are more likely than in other participating countries to report receiving reimbursement or payment of costs associated with professional development, half of staff indicate that professional development being too expensive is a barrier to their participation.

Give a strong start to all children

Most centres in Japan include a relatively low share of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes or whose first language is different from the language(s) used in the centre. At the same time, a moderate percentage of staff report having received training to work with children from diverse backgrounds (62%). Compared to other countries, small percentages of staff report using practices that support diversity (such as through the use of books and toys).

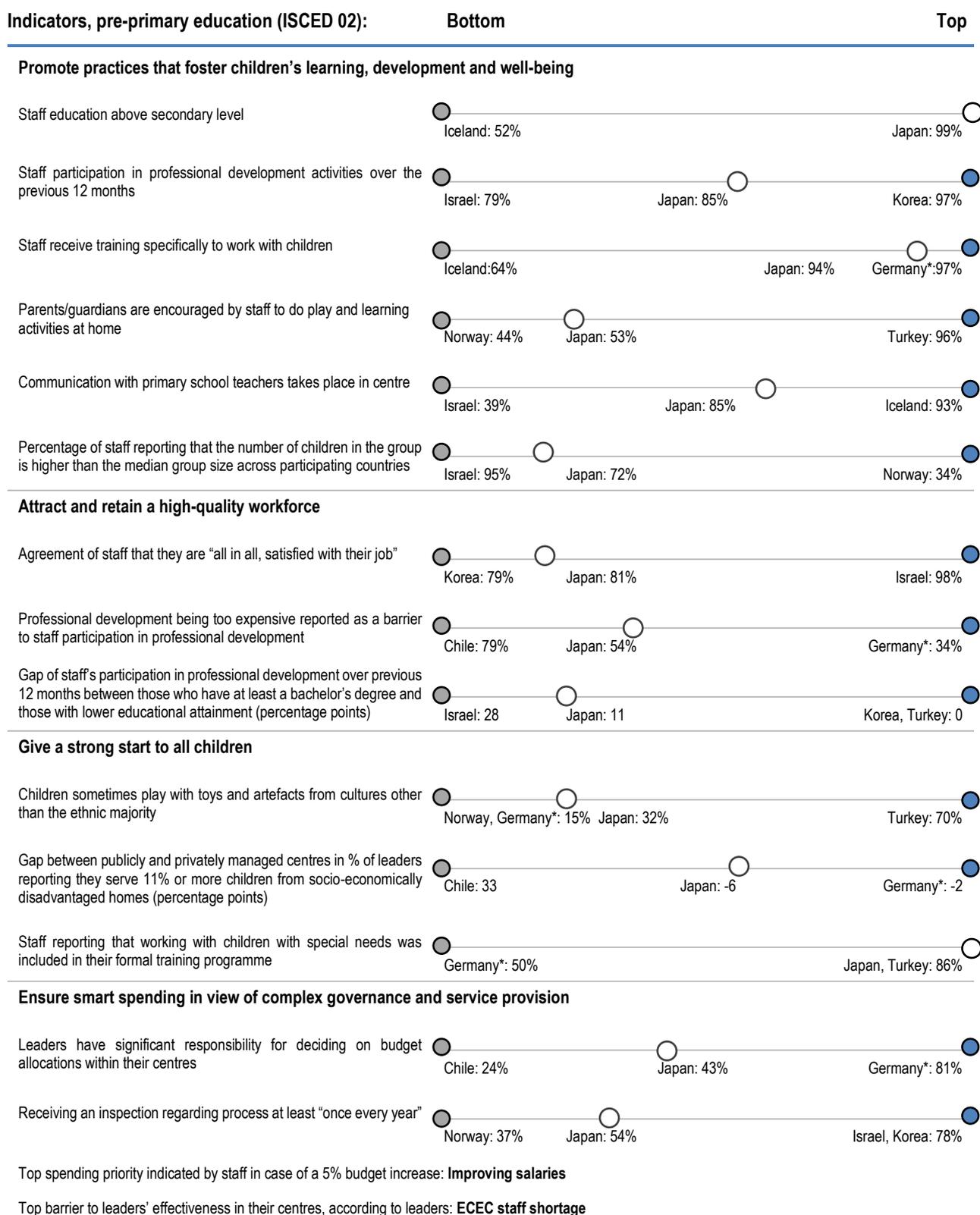
Almost 14% of leaders indicate that their centre includes 11% or more children with special needs, which is high compared to other countries. Japan has the highest share of staff reporting that working with children with special needs was included in their formal training programme. At the same time, training in working with children with special needs is considered a top priority for professional development by staff.

Ensure smart spending in view of complex governance and service provision

A relatively small percentage of leaders indicate having responsibilities for the budget allocation within the centre and the appointment and recruitment of staff. Half of leaders indicate receiving inspections regarding process quality at least once every year.

In line with most countries, administrative work (e.g. filling out forms) and changing requirements are the most significant sources of work-related stress for leaders. Staff shortages are the top barrier to their effectiveness according to leaders. Leaders are older in Japan (81% aged 50 and above).

How does JAPAN 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.
Source: TALIS Starting Strong 2018 database.

Policy pointers for Japan

- 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 financial packages to ensure that they can attract and maintain a high-quality workforce in the sector.
- Investigate options to foster interactions between staff and children as part of small groups and ensure that larger groups benefit from well-trained staff.
- Ensure that policies and regulations do not create an excessive burden to leaders that prevent them from exerting the various aspects of leadership.

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

TALIS Starting Strong is an international, large-scale survey of staff and leaders in 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 Japan, 1 616 staff members and 216 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) settings completed the TALIS Starting Strong questionnaires.

TALIS Starting Strong covers the following ECEC settings in Japan: kindergartens (Youchien) for children aged 3-5, day-care centres (Hoikusho) and centres for ECEC (Nintei Kodomoen), both for children aged 0-5.

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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 Starting Strong 2018 visit <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/oecd-starting-strong-teaching-and-learning-international-survey.htm>.

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
