



Starting Strong IV

Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Country Note

FRANCE

Summary

In France, the responsibilities for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) are split between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé*) for children in childcare up until the age of 3 years (or 2 in schools belonging to a priority area), and the Ministry of National Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*) for children in pre-primary education aged between 2-3 and 6 years. Licensing of day care services is undertaken by the Child and Maternal Protection Agency (*Protection Maternelle et Infantile* or PMI), while the national government accredits and licenses pre-primary schools in collaboration with local authorities. French ECEC settings for children under pre-primary school age are led by the *Orientations du code de la santé publique et les projets d'établissements* (guidelines of public health and facilities) which ensures a good and equal level of sanitary, health, hygiene and safety across settings; and the *Orientations générales pour les crèches* (general guidelines for crèches) which shapes a general framework for the childcare system France. Pre-primary education is guided by a national curriculum, *L'école maternelle: un cycle unique, fondamental pour la réussite de tous* (Kindergarten: a single cycle, fundamental to the success of all), which sets out the objectives for, as well as the foundations of, pre-primary education and its general orientations and expectations regarding subjects and skills to be taught in preschool.

Service and staff quality are monitored in French childcare and preschool settings, while child development is also commonly monitored in preschools. Monitoring is undertaken at the national level in France. Inspections and self-assessments of service quality in French childcare (family day care and community crèches) are used. They have a strong focus on whether the setting meets regulations regarding structural aspects. For preschools, the focus of staff quality inspections in France is on process quality, the materials staff use, time management and planning, their knowledge of subjects, teamwork with colleagues, and professional development opportunities. In childcare settings, staff qualifications and working conditions are also monitored, while in pre-primary schools the implementation of the national curriculum and how children develop is part of the inspection. French pre-primary school settings commonly use narrative assessments and observational tools to monitor children's development. Direct assessments are not used.

Although France implements a wide range of practices to monitor quality in ECEC, several challenges remain. Firstly, France does not yet monitor children's views at a large scale while this can provide some interesting information on how children experience ECEC and provide some valuable information on quality from the user-perspective. Secondly, it is challenging to monitor the implementation of policy for long-lasting reforms. To overcome this challenge, follow-up training is needed for inspectors and ECEC staff on the reforms and on monitoring. Evaluations could be launched to assess the implementation of the reforms.

The monitoring quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) country note for France is based on findings presented in the report of OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies.

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Key messages

- **In France, responsibilities for monitoring are held at the national (central) level**, while responsibilities for standard setting, curriculum development and financing and funding are mainly defined by the national government for preschools and by local authorities for early childhood education. France has a split ECEC system, with different ministries responsible for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).
- **Service quality is monitored in France for various reasons**, including: accountability purposes, to inform policy making and the general public, and to improve the level of service quality.
- **There are several different purposes for monitoring staff quality**, these include: for accountability purposes (without sanctions or rewards attached to the results), to inform policy makers, to enhance service and staff quality, to identify possible learning and development needs of staff, and to enhance children's development.
- **Inspections are commonly used to monitor service or staff quality**. Service quality inspections in France focus on compliance with regulations regarding health, hygiene and safety regulations, staff-child ratios, and materials in use. Curriculum implementation and planning is only monitored in pre-primary schools. In childcare settings, staff qualifications, working conditions and human and financial resource management are also monitored. Staff quality inspections in childcare settings are more focused on regulatory aspects, including staff qualifications and working conditions; whereas in preschools, inspections focus on the curriculum and children's development.
- **Similar tools are used to monitor staff quality and service quality**, including: observations, checklists, interviews, surveys, and analysis of setting's documentation. Self-assessments are conducted in addition to inspections, and parental surveys can be used to ask parents about the level of quality provided.
- **Children's development and outcomes are monitored for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years**. France uses narrative assessments, mainly portfolios, and observational tools, such as checklists.
- **There are several monitoring challenges in France**. The monitoring of children's views can contribute to improving ECEC services, but **children's experience of ECEC is not yet widely monitored** in France. In addition, France experiences challenges in **monitoring the implementation of recent and long-lasting policy reforms**. Continued in-service training for inspectors on the new reforms and on how they can be monitored can help in overcoming this challenge. ECEC staff can also be trained on the reforms, which supports implementation. Lastly, evaluations can be conducted to assess the implementation and create better knowledge on how the reforms are implemented.

Introduction

The data and information in this country note for France are based on findings from the OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* report that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies and the underlying the OECD Network on ECEC's Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development that was conducted in 2013 and validated in 2014/15.¹

This country note primarily aims to provide opportunities for peer-learning by highlighting France's policies and practices for monitoring quality in ECEC settings and describing what other countries are doing in this area. It informs policy makers and the general public of the current international standing of France regarding key areas of monitoring quality in ECEC, of the types of challenges for France in monitoring quality, which have been identified by the OECD ECEC team in close consultation with the French colleagues. Between the time of data collection, verification and publication, some changes occurred in France and the French contributors provided the updated information which has been considered in this note. It also provides insights from other countries to understand various approaches and practices used for monitoring quality.

This note distinguishes between the monitoring practices of three key aspects of quality: 1) service quality; 2) staff quality and performance; and 3) child development and outcomes. Some jurisdictions monitor all three aspects and some monitor only one. Sometimes aspects are integrated into the monitoring tool of another aspect, for example, curriculum implementation can be monitored when evaluating quality at a more general service level, or when assessing staff performance; and monitoring general staff performance can be part of the service quality evaluation procedure. Therefore, aspects of ECEC quality that are monitored are not mutually exclusive (see also Litjens, 2013).

In line with previous reports from the Starting Strong series, the term Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) "includes all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content" (OECD, 2015: 19). In France, there are several ECEC provisions. This note focuses mainly on home-based family day care provisions for children up to age of 2 to 3 years, centre-based community crèches for children from birth until 2 to 3 years, and pre-primary schools (or *écoles maternelles* in French) for children from the age of 3 years (or 2 years in disadvantaged areas) until they start primary school at the age of 6.

France chose to be compared with Germany, Italy and Korea in this country note. The information and data for Germany refer to child day-care centres for all children under the age of 6 years. Italy's data refer to nurseries for 0-2 year-olds; integrative services for early childhood for 0-2 year-olds, such as centres for parents and babies or play centres; and pre-primary schools for children between 3 and 6 years. For Korea, the information refers to childcare centres for children under the age of 5 and kindergartens for children between 3 and 5 years. All data and information for countries refer to their most commonly or generally used practices and tools, unless indicated otherwise, as monitoring practices are not usually implemented nationally.

1. For the purpose of comparability across all participating countries the information collection underlying this report focused on the mainstream provision and therefore – in line with the work on ECEC by the European Commission (Eurydice) – excludes the information on settings providing services to children with special needs only, settings integrated into hospitals (and all other ECEC services targeting children with disabilities attributable to organic pathologies), orphanages or similar institutions. Responding countries and jurisdictions were asked to use, where possible, the school year starting in 2012 as a reference year for reporting statistics and data. Further information about the questionnaire and compiling procedures can be found in the full report (see OECD, 2015).

This country note first provides a review of key findings from the research literature, focusing on studies that examine how monitoring practices contribute to quality improvement, specifically in the areas of service quality, staff quality, curriculum implementation and child development and outcomes. The remaining sections focus on France's monitoring policies and practices, in comparison with Germany, Italy and Korea. The sections address how quality is defined, the purposes of monitoring quality, the areas and scope of monitoring, responsibility for monitoring, and approaches and procedures. The final part of the country note looks at the challenges for France and policy approaches that other countries have taken when tackling these issues.

Monitoring matters: Overview of research findings

- There is a significant body of research that shows the benefits of quality ECEC for child development (OECD, 2006). This body of research emphasises that the benefits of high quality ECEC are important for all children's outcomes, with evidence especially strong for disadvantaged children.
- Definitions of "quality" may differ between countries as it is a value- and cultural-based concept, and any definition of quality is subject to change over time (Kammerman, 2001). Service quality is usually defined by a set of structural (e.g. staff-child ratios) and process indicators (e.g. the quality of staff-child interactions) that contribute to practices that are markers of settings and staff performance.
- Staff quality is often linked to pre-defined criteria or professional standards (Rosenkvist, 2010). Child development encompasses various domains such as socio-emotional skills, health, motor skills, early numeracy, literacy and language skills. Quality indicators for children's development may be linked to pre-defined outcomes for different ages, learning standards, developmental goals or curriculum objectives. These outcomes can also be used over time to define the effectiveness of a setting and its staff (Rosenkvist, 2010).
- Service quality (including curriculum implementation), staff quality and child outcomes can be monitored using various practices and tools. It is often difficult to elicit the causality between monitoring and actual quality improvements; for instance, improvements in service quality are more likely to be the result of numerous policy developments.

Effects of monitoring service quality

Overall, research supports the idea that monitoring and evaluation contributes to improvements in the quality of ECEC services (Litjens, 2013). Without monitoring, it is difficult to ensure that services are meeting their goals and aims (Cubey and Dalli, 1996). Studies show that monitoring quality can be associated with increased programme quality, for example, adopting higher standards can lead to improved ratings for settings (Office of Child Development and Early Learning, 2010; RAND, 2008).

There are a number of tools that can be used to monitor service quality, such as checklists, parental surveys, and rating scales. In the United States, ratings scales are frequently used to monitor quality. Some research has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of rating scales, for example, the validity of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) (a rating scale) has been studied for its role as a tool to improve childcare quality. The study found that among providers using QRIS, service quality improved over time (Zellman et al., 2008). However, others studies have suggested that extensive co-ordination across services, agencies and data systems is required to attain this goal (Tout et al., 2009).

The effects of monitoring curriculum implementation are complex and although some studies indicate that such practices can lead to better staff quality and staff-child interactions (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2012), there is a clear gap in research about how the monitoring of curriculum implementation interacts with other monitoring practices of service and staff quality (OECD, 2012, Østrem et al., 2009).

Effects of monitoring staff quality

The literature indicates that the quality of staff and their pedagogical activities have a large impact on children's well-being and development. It also suggests that the effective monitoring of staff quality is central to their professional development and improvement of ECEC services (Fukkink, 2011; OECD, 2012). From this research, however, it is difficult to draw wider conclusions about the impacts of monitoring staff quality (Litjens, 2013).

Monitoring staff quality usually involves observations or self-evaluations in combination with the use of rating scales, checklists or portfolios, and can be part of monitoring service quality (Isoré, 2009). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in centre-based preschool classrooms. It was found that the CLASS observation tool can help teachers and schools improve the quality of their interactions with students as it identifies what interactions are rated higher and provides an opportunity to identify what practices they can improve (CASTL, 2011).

Studies show that self-evaluation can be an effective tool to support professional development and increase the quality of the service (Picchio et al., 2012). Self-reflection processes enable staff to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses (Isoré, 2009; Cubey and Dalli, 1996), and lead to a greater awareness of ongoing activities and pedagogical processes (Sheridan, 2001).

In Belgium, a process-orientated self-evaluation instrument for staff in care settings contributed to staff professional development and teamwork. However, findings from research in the United Kingdom were more ambiguous, concluding that there needed to be more emphasis on how providers implement self-assessment procedures and initiate changes in their practice (Munton, Mooney and Rowland, 1997).

Effects of monitoring child development outcomes

Research indicates that monitoring child development and outcomes can play an important role in improving teacher practices and service provision. Researchers emphasise the need for age-appropriate monitoring tools and for the assessment of development to be ongoing rather than at a particular point in time. This is because the development of young children evolves at a rapid pace and ongoing monitoring can more accurately capture how a child is developing (Meisels and Atkins-Burnett, 2000; NICHD, 2002).

The results from monitoring child development can foster staff interactions with children and facilitate the adaptation of curricula and standards to meet children's needs (Litjens, 2013). There is some evidence of positive relationships between the use of non-formal monitoring practices such as observation, documentation through portfolios or narrative assessments, and improved child outcomes (Bagnato, 2005; Grisham-Brown, 2008; Meisels et al., 2003; Neisworth and Bagnato, 2004).

Capturing children's skills and abilities at a single moment in time is a challenging proposition (Zaslow, Calkins and Halle, 2000). Brain sensitivity is higher and development more rapid in the period from birth to age eight than at later periods. To assess individual children's abilities in different domains, it is recommended that child outcomes are based on multiple sources of information, rather than single tests or monitoring practices, especially if assessment results are used for high-stakes decisions and tracking at an early age (NAEYC, 2010; Waterman et al., 2012).

Representing children's views in monitoring

The importance of considering the view of the child in monitoring the quality of ECEC provision has been established, but more research and reflection on the validity of instruments and results and their effective implementation is needed (Meisels, 2007; NAEYC, 2010; Neisworth and Bagnato, 2004). Research on children's self-perception suggests that their perceptions can provide information on their development in areas such as academic competence, achievement motivation, social competence, peer acceptance, and depression and aggression, which are also important areas for staff evaluations and monitoring of their performance (Measelle et al., 1998).

Summary

The literature indicates that it is critical to monitor quality at both system and service level. Recent research studies provide some indication that monitoring the quality of settings, staff and children's outcomes can lead to higher quality service provision. However, the literature also reveals some gaps and complexities in making causal links between monitoring practices and quality improvements. Further research into the effectiveness of monitoring tools across the four monitoring areas will provide a greater evidence base to help countries enhance quality in these areas.

Monitoring quality: Where France stands in international comparison

How quality is defined in France

Quality encompasses all the features of children's environments and experiences that are assumed to benefit their well-being and development (Litjens, 2013). These features include the use of a curriculum, staff characteristics, teacher or care giver behaviours and practices, and staff-child interactions, often referred to as process quality. Quality also includes structural features of ECEC settings, such as space, group size and safety standards (OECD, 2006; 2012). The literature points out that the definitions of quality differ between countries as it is a value- and cultural-based concept, meaning that definitions of quality tend to change over time (Kammerman, 2001). Most jurisdictions that participated in the Starting Strong IV study set out their definition of ECEC quality in their curricula or legislation. Alternatively they may set out quality expectations through minimum requirements or educational or developmental objectives for staff to achieve.

Quality in France is, as in most countries, implicitly defined through minimum standards, a curriculum, and a competency framework for staff. The minimum regulatory standards set out the aspects France identifies as important for quality. The *Orientations générales pour les crèches* (general guidelines for crèches) sets out a general framework for childcare in France and covers quality standards regarding hygiene, safety, staff qualifications, size of the setting, size of each group, and the optimal conditions in which to foster the physical, intellectual and emotional development of children. In ECEC centres for children below pre-primary school age and family day-care, the *Orientations du code de la santé publique et les projets d'établissements* (guidelines of public health and facilities) define the minimum requirements. Quality in pre-primary schools is defined by its curriculum, which sets out objectives for pre-primary education. This was revised in 2015 to have a greater emphasis on holistic development. Among others, a competency framework for kindergarten teachers defines their tasks and objectives. Both the curriculum and competency framework complement each other and define quality in pre-primary schooling in France.

In Germany, a definition of quality ECEC has been developed through law, a curriculum framework as well as state-level curricula, and through a quality initiative that sets out quality criteria. Expectations of ECEC (as part of the general child and youth welfare system) is provided in Social Code Book VIII (*Sozialgesetzbuch*), where the federal law stipulates that all young people have the legal right to be supported in their development and encouraged to become independent and socially competent personalities. It also states that ECEC providers are obliged to equally support the education, care and

upbringing of children, and take into account children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Children's individual interests and needs, and their ethnic background, also have to be considered. In addition to the Social Code Book, all 16 *Länder* (regions) have developed their own ECEC curriculum. The overarching document for these curricula is the Common Framework of the Federal States for Early Education in ECEC Centres (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen*), which is an agreement on the most important basic principles that guide curriculum development. This framework emphasises the importance of a holistic approach whereby education, care and upbringing are considered inseparable elements of pedagogical practice. The framework indicates that a curriculum has to take into account the interests of children and should be relevant to their lives. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*), together with 10 *Länder*, launched the National Quality Initiative in ECEC (*Nationale Qualitätsinitiative im System der Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder*) in 1999. Its aim was to define quality using a set of quality criteria (21 quality areas) and to develop instruments for internal and external evaluation within five sub-programmes.

In Italy, quality in care for 0-3 year-olds is locally defined and legal minimum quality requirements are in place in various regions. The national legal requirements define quality in relation to: accommodation capacity (minimum and maximum number of children per setting); space availability for children (number of square metres available per child); teacher-child ratio (number of children per teacher); and teacher level of education (number of years in education, type of degree needed to access the profession). In early education (3-6 years), quality is defined primarily by the Charter of Services (*Carta dei Servizi*), by a document stating a school's official rules (*Regolamento d'Istituto*) and by the 2012 National curriculum guidelines (*Indicazioni Nazionali*). The *Indicazioni* sets out the expectations of pre-primary school, children's broad learning goals, specific objectives regarding competencies children should acquire, and a profile of children at the end of preschool in the transition to primary education. The *Indicazioni* includes reference to preschool self-evaluation to improve quality of provision. Other legal requirements are nationally binding, such as: maximum group size, staff qualification at tertiary level, and health and safety regulations. New work on national regulatory quality standards for the entire 0-6 age range is foreseen through Law 107/2015, meaning that the current situation might change.

Korea does not have a definition of quality for ECEC at the national level, but quality indicators have been developed for the evaluation and accreditation of ECEC settings. The national indicators for kindergarten evaluation and childcare accreditation set out the criteria for ECEC quality in Korea. The indicators refer to environmental aspects, curriculum, interactions, health and safety, and management. When a setting meets these quality standards or criteria it is accredited or passes an evaluation.

Why countries monitor the quality of services, staff and child development

Countries reported various reasons for monitoring ECEC service and staff quality. Common reasons included: accountability with and without sanction or reward; informing policy making; informing the general public; improving the level of service quality; improving staff performance; identifying learning needs for staff; and enhancing child development and identifying children's learning needs. In all countries, improving service quality is the main purpose for monitoring both service and staff quality, followed by informing policy making. Monitoring service and staff quality is not usually conducted in order to identify learning needs for children or for accountability purposes without any sanctions or rewards. It is common to monitor service quality to inform the general public, including the users of ECEC settings, while this is fairly uncommon in monitoring staff performance (see Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Purposes of monitoring service quality

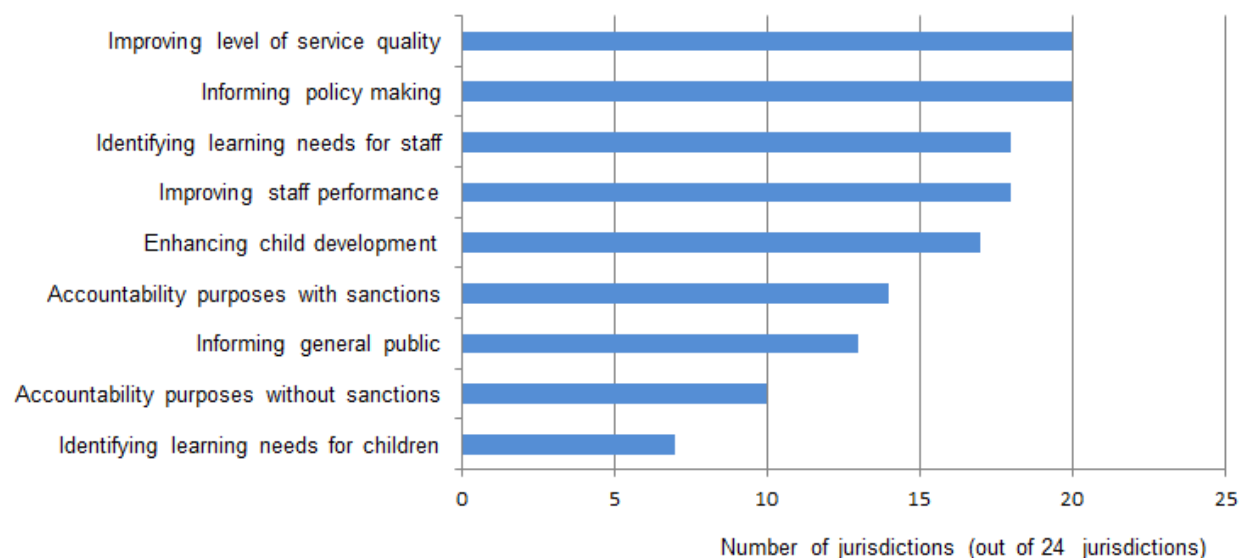
Note: Purposes of monitoring service quality are ranked in descending order of the number of times they are cited by jurisdictions.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 3.1, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243059>.

In all four countries compared in this country note, service quality is monitored to enhance the level of quality in ECEC provisions. In France and Korea, it is also monitored for accountability purposes, although no sanctions or rewards for an evaluated school are attached to the results in France. France, Italy and Korea monitor service quality to inform policy makers, and France, Germany and Korea also aim to inform the public of the level of quality. Germany and Korea monitor service quality to enhance staff performance, and Korea is the only country out of the four that monitors service quality to identify the training and learning needs of staff.

Staff quality is monitored to improve ECEC quality in all four countries. France and Korea monitor staff for accountability purposes without sanctions or rewards; to inform policy making (also in Italy); to enhance staff performance (also in Germany); to identify developmental learning needs of staff; and to enhance child development. Korea also monitors staff quality to inform the general public.

Figure 2. Purposes of monitoring staff quality



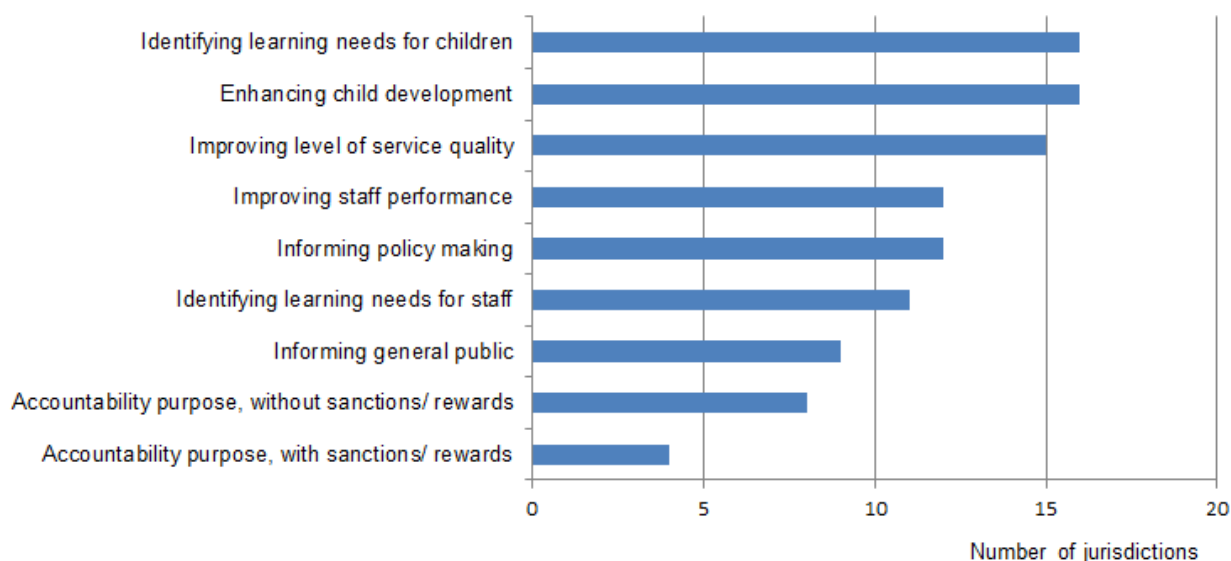
Note: Purposes of monitoring staff quality are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 4.1, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243203>.

While the research literature suggests that child development outcomes are not usually used as a way of monitoring quality, many countries do monitor child development for various purposes. In line with the potential benefits suggested by research, the most commonly named reason for monitoring child development and outcomes is to enhance child development (16 jurisdictions out of 24), to identify the learning needs for children (16) and to improve the level of service quality (15).

In France and Germany child development is being monitored to enhance the service and improve staff performance. France also monitors child development and outcomes to enhance the overall level of quality in ECEC, inform the public about children's development, and inform policy makers about ECEC outcomes (see Figure 3 for a complete overview). Germany aims to identify the learning needs of staff and stimulate child development. In Italy, monitoring children's development in pre-primary education is not a nationally regulated practice, thus its purposes are largely unknown.

Figure 3. Purposes of monitoring children's development



Note: Purposes of monitoring child development are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 5.1, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243334>.

Monitoring practices

Countries use various approaches and practices for monitoring service quality, staff quality and child development (see Table 1). The practices used for monitoring service and staff quality can be either external or internal. The external monitoring of quality is done by an external agency, evaluator or office that is not part of the ECEC setting being monitored.

Monitoring in France is done at the national level, where the Ministry in charge of the respective setting is also responsible for monitoring. In Germany and Italy, local authorities are responsible for conducting inspections. And, in Korea, the Child Care Promotion Institute (한국보육진흥원), under the Ministry of Health and Welfare (보건복지부), monitors childcare settings; while regional and local education offices, under the Ministry of Education (교육부), are responsible for monitoring kindergartens. In Italy, regional and municipal authorities and agencies are in charge of monitoring nursery schools and integrative services. The monitoring of pre-primary schools is the responsibility of regional school offices (*Uffici Scolastici*), regional branches of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (*Ministero dell'istruzione, dell'università e della ricerca*).

External monitoring practices include inspections, surveys and peer reviews (when conducted by, for example, a teacher from another ECEC setting). Internal practices include self-evaluations, peer reviews, and tests for staff (for staff quality only). External inspections and internal self-evaluation are the most common methods or practices used to monitor service and staff quality. France, Germany, Italy and Korea conduct external inspections to monitor both service and staff quality (see Table 1).

Self-assessments to monitor service and/or staff quality are common in many countries, including France (for childcare settings), Germany (in child day-care), Italy, and Korea (in childcare settings only regarding service quality and in both pre-primary school and childcare regarding staff quality). All four countries make use of parental surveys, usually implemented locally, to ask parents' opinions on the quality of services provided. Parents' satisfaction with staff is surveyed in France, Italy (on a local basis) and Korea.

Table 1. Monitoring practices for service and staff quality

	Type of setting	External practices			Internal practices		
		Inspections	Surveys	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Tests for staff	Self-assessment/evaluation
France	Community crèches and family day care	X	X				X
	Pre-primary school	X	X (Staff)				
Germany	Family day-care	X (Service)					
	Child day-care centres	X	X (Service)				X
Italy*	Integrative services for early childhood	X	X				X
	Nursery schools	X	X (Service)				X
	Pre-primary schools	X	X				X
Korea	Childcare centres	X	X (Staff)				X
	Kindergartens	X	X		X (Staff)		X

Notes: In Italy, how to monitor staff quality is decided at the regional/municipal level. Data in the table refer to the most common practices in Italy. In addition, surveys are not implemented at the national level, but are rather used on a case-by-case basis locally and even by individual centres or preschools.

Sources: OECD (2013), Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development, Network on ECEC, OECD, Paris; OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, OECD Publishing, Table 3.2 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243065> and Table 4.2 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243213>.

Direct assessments, observational tools and narrative assessments are commonly used to monitor child development. Direct assessments test children at a certain point in time, while narrative assessments, and usually observational tools, monitor children's development on an ongoing basis. France and Italy commonly use narrative assessments, mainly portfolios, in combination with observational tools, such as checklists. Italy also uses storytelling frameworks (narrative assessment) and rating scales (observational tool) at a local level. Direct assessments (in the form of tests or screenings) may also be carried out in Italy.² However, in the absence of a national monitoring system, the extent of child assessment and child development monitoring practices remains unknown. In Germany, all three practices may be used (OECD, 2015).

2. In Italy, the few tests developed and used locally to monitor child developmental outcomes at the end of ECEC mainly consider cognitive domains, and are coupled with checklists or rating scales for socio-emotional development. Recently, INVALSI (*Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione*), National Institute for the Evaluation of the System of Education and Training developed a rating scale for approaches to learning (Stringher, 2016). Screenings for disabilities or learning difficulties are not used nationally in Italy, but are used in some preschools to assess children's readiness for primary education, although the purpose of the tools is different from that which was originally intended

Areas and scope of monitoring

There are a number of different aspects or areas that can be monitored in relation to service³ and staff quality.⁴ When monitoring child development, other aspects more directly related to outcomes, skills, and aptitudes a child can develop are monitored. These include language and literacy skills, numeracy skills, socio-emotional skills, motor skills, autonomy, creative skills, practical skills, health development, well-being, science skills, and information and communications technology (ICT) skills.

Table 2. Aspects of service quality monitored through inspections

Jurisdiction	Type of setting	Staff-child ratios	Indoor/outdoor space	Health and/or hygiene regulations	Safety regulations	Learning and play material in use	Minimum staff qualifications	Planning of work/staff	Working conditions	Curriculum implementation	Human resource management	Financial resource management
France	Community crèches and family day-care	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
	Pre-primary school	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Germany*	Child day-care centres and family day care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Italy	Nurseries	X	X	X	X							
	Pre-primary schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Korea	Childcare centres	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Kindergartens	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note: For Germany, the data in this table refer to recurrent quality aspects, for example, the quality aspects commonly monitored through KES-R, a rating scale tool, (although tools can differ between settings). The KES-R consists of 7 subscales (43 items) which refer to process and structural aspects of quality: space and material resources; personal care routines; cognitive and language stimulation; activities; staff-child and child-child interaction; planning and structuring of pedagogical practice; situation of staff and co-operation with parents. Data in this table do not reflect the situation for every inspection in every setting.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 3.3, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243071>.

3. For service quality, these aspects are: staff-child ratios, indoor/outdoor space, health and/or hygiene and safety regulations, learning and play materials, minimum staff qualifications, planning of work and staff, the working conditions for staff, implementation of the curriculum, human resource management and financial resource management.

4. For staff quality, these aspects are: staff qualifications, process quality, use of materials, time management, knowledge of subjects, overall quality of teaching/caring, teamwork and communication skills, communication between staff and parents, management and leadership, working conditions, professional development opportunities and child outcomes.

Service quality

All jurisdictions indicated that regulatory aspects of service quality are monitored during inspections. Safety regulations are most frequently monitored (in 23 out of 24 jurisdictions), followed by health and hygiene regulations (22) and staff qualifications (22). Staff-child ratios (21) and space requirements (19) are also commonly monitored. Working conditions are not frequently monitored as part of service quality. Korea is the only country out of the four in this country note that monitors all aspects listed in Table 2 during inspections.

France's crèche and family day care inspections have a stronger focus on regulatory aspects than inspections of pre-primary schools. In both settings, staff-child ratios, space requirements, health and hygiene and safety regulations are monitored; while in childcare settings, minimum staff qualifications, working conditions and human and financial resource management are monitored. Italy, Germany and Korea monitor regulatory aspects such as ratios, space, and health and safety regulations. In French pre-primary schools, the implementation of the curriculum and staff planning is monitored, in addition to regulatory aspects. Self-assessments of quality usually monitor slightly different aspects to external inspections. For example, more attention is given to communication among staff members and with parents, and collaborations (OECD, 2015).

Staff quality

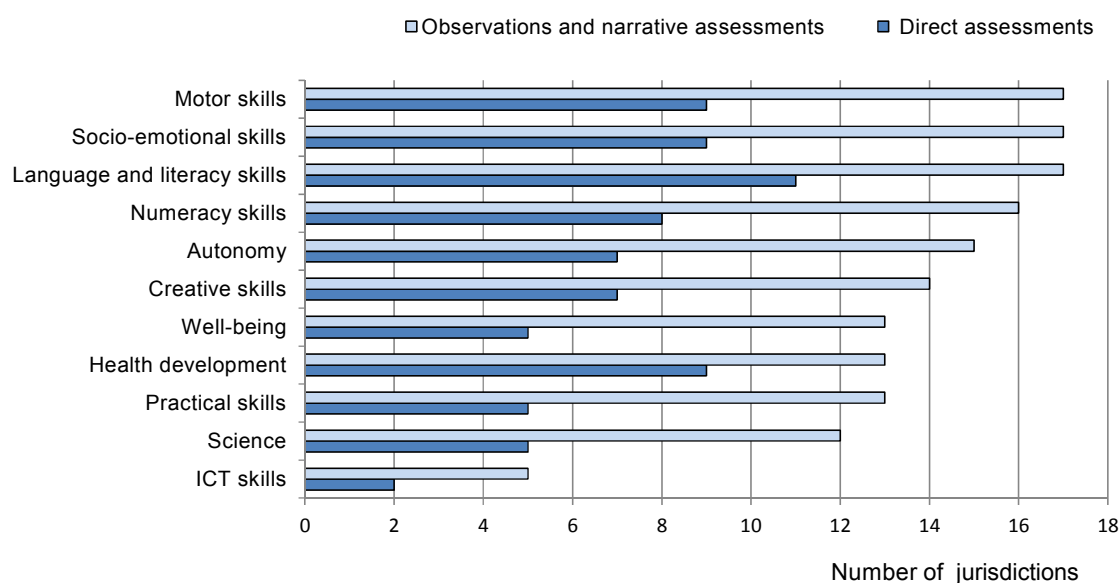
Inspections of staff quality in France monitor: process quality; the materials in use; the overall quality of teaching, teamwork and communication among staff; time management and planning; staff knowledge of subjects; and the professional development of staff. Curriculum implementation and child development outcomes are also monitored in pre-primary schools. Staff qualifications and working conditions are only inspected in childcare settings. In German child day care settings, similar aspects are monitored as in French childcare settings, except for professional development opportunities of staff and knowledge of subjects. Curriculum implementation and management and leadership of staff are also monitored during inspections of staff quality in Germany. Korea's inspections have the broadest scope and monitor similar aspects to French crèches and family day care (French childcare settings), as well as management and leadership. Inspections of staff quality in Italian ECEC settings generally focus on staff qualifications. According to INVALSI's of current normative documents, 17 out of 21 Italian regions and autonomous provinces monitor overall regulation compliance, including staff qualifications requirements in settings for 0 to 3-year-olds. Only two regions monitor staff performance or leadership and management (OECD, 2015).

Child development and outcomes

Among the participating countries, the most common aspects of child development monitored are language and literacy, socio-emotional skills and motor skills. Language and literacy skills are more commonly monitored through direct assessments than socio-emotional and motor skills. Observations and narrative assessments, rather than direct assessments, are more likely to be used to assess children's development. In French and Italian⁵ pre-primary schools and German family day care, language and literacy skills, numeracy, socio-emotional skills, motor development and autonomy are monitored. In France and Italy, science is also monitored, along with health development in Italy and creative skills in both Germany and Italy. Germany is the only country out of these three countries to also monitor practical skills and the well-being of the child.

5. Italy does not monitor child outcomes systematically, yet there are some experiences of local initiatives in pre-schools that monitor child development (in, for instance, Reggio Emilia and the Rome municipality). These are mainly carried out using portfolios and documentation of children's development and learning journeys. Screenings for disabilities or learning difficulties are not nationally used, but can be part of some pre-schools' tools to assess children's readiness for primary education.

Figure 4. Areas of early child development monitored, by monitoring method



Notes: Developmental areas are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited observations and narrative assessments to monitor development areas.

Information on the use of direct assessments and observations and narrative assessments to monitor developmental areas is based on 21 jurisdictions.

Sources: OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, OECD Network on ECEC, Table A5.1, OECD, Paris; OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Chart 5.3, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243423>.

Monitoring system design, responsibilities and evaluator training

Design

Various stakeholders are involved in the design and monitoring of ECEC services. These generally involve the ministry in charge of ECEC (national or regional), an independent national agency, and/or local authorities.

In France, different authorities have set up and developed the monitoring systems for childcare settings (community crèches and family day care) and pre-primary schools. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health developed the monitoring system for childcare settings at the national level. At local level, the PMI services (Child and Maternal Protection Agency) and the Family Allowances Fund (*Caisse des allocations familiales*) are involved in developing the local monitoring system. The Ministry of Education developed the system for pre-primary schools. In Germany and Italy, local authorities are responsible for developing a monitoring system for their municipality, and there is no national monitoring system in place. However, Italy is now aiming to develop an integrated 0-6 ECEC system that covers all ECEC settings and promotes the quality of educational provision. The Child and Youth Welfare Statistics (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistiken*) in Germany generate data that allow policy makers to evaluate the structural features of the ECEC sector, such as: quantitative growth, staff and employment conditions, opening hours, and the age and ethnic background of children. As part of Germany's National Quality Initiative (*Nationale Qualitätsinitiative im System der Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder*), several instruments for the internal and external evaluation of quality in ECEC have been developed by different groups of ECEC researchers, on the initiative of, and with funding from, the

Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. These instruments have served as a blueprint for provider-specific adaptations. In Korea, monitoring systems for childcare and kindergarten have been developed at the national level. For childcare centres in Korea, the Ministry of Health and Welfare designed and developed the monitoring system on quality. For kindergartens, this was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Responsibility

Among the 24 participating countries and jurisdictions, half have integrated systems of governance for ECEC, and half have split systems of governance. In integrated systems, the responsibilities for childcare and early learning are within one ministry or authority, and ECEC services generally provide integrated care and education. In split systems, the responsibilities for childcare (usually for children 0 to 3 years) and early education (generally for children aged 3 or 4 and above) are split between different ministries or authorities. There also tend to be different providers for childcare and early education.

France has a split system, with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé*) responsible for all children below pre-primary school age, and the Ministry of National Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*) responsible for pre-primary education. Germany is the only country out of the four compared in this note that has an integrated ECEC system with one ministry responsible for ECEC at the national level – although most responsibilities for ECEC in Germany are decentralised to the state-level and local authorities. Korea and Italy also have a split system.

Responsibility for monitoring is held at the national level in France. For pre-schools, the curriculum is defined at national level and responsibilities for standard setting and financing ECEC are shared between the national government and local authorities. For crèches, there is no curriculum at the local or national level, financing is a shared responsibility of both levels while standard setting is under the responsibility of the national level. In Italy, responsibilities for monitoring, financing, curriculum development and standard setting are shared with regional and local authorities for the care segment (0-3 years). For the 3-6 years segment they are more centralised, with the exception of monitoring quality, which is carried out by Regional Education Offices (*Uffici scolastici regionali*), branches of the Ministry of Education. In Korea, responsibility for standard setting and curriculum development lies at the national level, while responsibility for financing is shared between the national and regional authorities. Monitoring responsibilities are shared between the national, regional and local governments.

Funding for monitoring ECEC services in OECD countries comes from a mix of public and private sources. Public funding can be from national, regional or local/municipal governments. In some countries, the funding sources for monitoring quality differ depending on the type of setting. In France and Italy, an important part of costs of pre-primary schools is covered by the national level. Childcare in France is funded by the national level and local authorities, and also receives private funding (i.e. contributions from parents). In Italy, childcare is funded by regional and local authorities. Family day care and child day care centres in Germany receive funding from mainly local authorities, complemented with some private funding for child day care centres. Korean ECEC settings receive funding from all three levels of government: national, regional and local authorities (OECD, 2015).

Qualification and training of evaluators

Research suggests that evaluators need to receive training to apply monitoring practices and tools to ensure these are properly understood and that practices result in consistent and objective judgments (Waterman et al., 2012).

In the majority of the 24 jurisdictions, pre-service education or training, on-the-job training or other types of training are offered to evaluators. Two-thirds of jurisdictions (16) reported that external assessors/evaluators receive on-the-job or in-service training. Training for assessors/evaluators can focus

on various skills or aspects of ECEC. In France and Korea, those with external evaluator roles (such as inspectors) and internal evaluation roles (such as staff conducting self-assessments or peer reviews) can receive on-the-job or in-service training on monitoring and evaluation. In Korea, teacher education also prepares staff for internal evaluations. In Germany, internal evaluators are not usually trained, while external evaluators are trained through pre-service education and training (OECD, 2015). Italy is the only country out of the four that does not provide specific training on monitoring for either external or internal evaluators (see Table 3).

Table 3. Training of external and internal evaluators

		No, not specifically	Yes, through pre-service education/training	Yes, through on-the-job or in-service training
France	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors			X
Germany	External assessors		X	
	Internal assessors	X		
Italy	External assessors	X		
	Internal assessors	X		
Korea	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors		X	X

Sources: OECD (2013), OECD Network on ECEC's Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development, OECD, Paris; OECD (2015) *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, OECD Publishing, Table A2.4 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243001> and Table A2.6 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243026>.

Implementation of monitoring practices

Monitoring tools (instruments)

Service quality

The main practices used to monitor service quality are external evaluations/inspections and parental surveys, as well as internal self-evaluations. There are various tools that can be used to carry out these practices.

In France, a wide range of tools are used during inspections of service quality, including: observations, checklists (in childcare only), interviews, surveys taken by management/staff, and analysis of internal documentation. Similar tools may be used in Germany for inspections of child day care services, as well as parental surveys, surveys taken by inspections, rating scales and results of self-evaluations. In Korea, similar tools to Germany may be used, although parental surveys are not commonly used in childcare settings. In Italy, inspections of ECEC settings may use similar tools to France, although parental surveys and analysis of internal documentation are commonly used, whereas checklists are not used (OECD, 2015).

The most common self-evaluation tools used across countries are self-reported questionnaires/surveys (12), self-reflection reports/journals (12), checklists (11), and portfolios (8). Video feedback is used in three jurisdictions: the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. Internal evaluation is often used in combination with external evaluation/inspections to monitor service quality, which is the case in Italy, Korea and French and German childcare settings. In France, self-reflection journals and self-reported questionnaires are most commonly used. These are also used in Germany and Korea, where they may be complemented by portfolios and the use of checklists. All of these tools, except for portfolios, appear to be commonly used in self-assessments of Italian pre-primary education settings.

Staff quality

In many countries, staff quality is monitored in the same way as service quality and includes a mix of external and internal practices. However, there can also be differences in the focus, aspects monitored and instruments used.

External monitoring and evaluation practices of staff quality include inspections, parental surveys, and peer reviews. Similar to the monitoring of service quality, inspections (external evaluations) of staff quality are undertaken in all 24 jurisdictions. In France, similar tools are used for inspecting service and staff quality. In Germany and Korea, observations, rating scales, checklists, interviews, results of self-evaluations and the studying of internal documentation may be used. In Korea, inspection surveys, surveys taken by management and staff, parental survey results, and portfolios of work may also be used.

In all four countries, self-assessments are commonly used to monitor staff performance, although only in childcare settings in France and Germany. In France, as with service quality, self-reported questionnaire and self-reflection journals are most commonly used. In Italy, self-reflection journals and checklists are commonly used in nurseries, but not on a national basis as self-assessments are locally developed and settings can decide what tools they wish to use. In Germany, each setting can decide on the tools and instruments it uses for staff self-evaluations (OECD, 2015).

Child development

Across participating countries, monitoring child development and outcomes is mostly done through internal practices, with an important role also taken by external agencies. This is in line with the fact that in many countries, the monitoring of child development and outcomes takes place more frequently than in other areas, often on a continuous basis or several times per year. The three main tools used to monitor child development are: 1) direct assessments (tests of children and screening); 2) narrative assessments (storytelling and portfolios); and 3) observational tools (rating scales and checklists). As Table 4 shows, there is some variation in the combination of tools used, albeit not necessarily in a systematic way and nation-wide in all settings

The majority of jurisdictions use observational tools (primarily checklists), however these often vary by type of ECEC setting. Narrative assessments are also common, while direct assessments through testing and screening are less common. France, Italy, and Germany report using both narrative assessments and observational tools when monitoring children in pre-primary school. In Italy and Germany, portfolios, checklists, storytelling, rating scales, testing and screenings are used. Rating scales are used primarily for 4-5 year-olds in Italy, not for the entire 3-6 age range. Germany reports that direct assessments may be conducted for 4 and 5-year-olds for screening purposes and to detect any developmental delays (OECD, 2015).

Table 4. Child development monitoring tools in place, by country

Country	Direct assessments		Narrative assessments		Observational tools	
	Tests for children	Screening	Storytelling	Portfolios	Rating scales	Checklists
France*				X		X
Germany	X	X	X	X	X	X
Italy	X	X	X	X	X	X
Korea	a					

Note: In France, in pre-primary school (école maternelle) individual tests can be carried out to appreciate the special educational needs of some children.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 5.2, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243347>.

Frequency

Service quality is generally monitored a set number of times by the responsible monitoring body. Frequency of monitoring often varies across different types of ECEC. In France service and staff quality is monitored once every two to three years. In Korea, staff quality is monitored every year in public kindergartens, while private kindergartens are monitored at the discretion of the setting. Service quality is monitored in every three years in kindergartens and child care centres in Korea. The frequency in Germany and Italy varies by municipality or region as it is not regulated.

Use of results and consequences

The results from monitoring have to be made public in most jurisdictions (16 out of 24), however, not always for all types of ECEC. In France, monitoring service quality results are not usually shared with the general public, whereas in Korea, the results are made publically available. Aggregated results of staff evaluations and the monitoring of staff quality are also usually available to the public in Korea, while these remain internal documents in France and Italy. In Germany settings decide whether or not to share the results.

Countries take various actions or impose consequences when the results from monitoring service quality do not meet the minimum standards set by the service or body responsible. Actions can include funding cuts, follow up inspections, obligatory staff training, or closure of services. There can also be positive outcomes for services from monitoring results, for example, services can have a competitive advantage compared to other services, or remuneration can be increased in line with monitoring outcomes. In France, settings are required to address their shortcomings by, for instance, participating in training, and a follow-up inspection or evaluation is planned. In extreme cases, a setting may be closed (for crèches or family day care only). This is also the case in Italy and Korea, although revoking licenses and closing settings was not indicated as a possible consequence of poor monitoring results in Korea. Based on the monitoring results, ECEC provisions in Korea may receive additional funding.

Challenges and policy options

All countries face challenges in monitoring, and some challenges are shared by different countries. The practices that countries have implemented suggest ways of overcoming the challenges of monitoring quality. France's challenges include:

1. The monitoring of children's views.
2. Implementing recent policy reforms.

Policy approaches that other countries have taken when tackling these issues are presented to provide some examples for France in how the challenges can possibly be addressed.

Challenge: Monitoring children's views

Research suggests that children's voices can be considered competent and that they can provide useful information about their experience in ECEC, as well as wider societal issues (Clark, 2005; McNaughton, 2003; Sorin, 2003). Quantitative studies of children's self-perception suggest that their perceptions can provide information on their development in areas such as academic competence, achievement motivation, social competence, peer acceptance, and depression and aggression, which are convergent with the ratings of carers and teachers (Measelle et al., 1998). Box 1 provides a case study of one of the few countries that currently monitors children's views: Finland. Involvement of children in monitoring practices can provide valuable insights into how children experience certain pedagogical practices, which can contribute to improved child development experiences. Other countries have also implemented measures to collect information on children's experiences.

Box 1. Monitoring children's views in Finland

Finland provides an interesting example of how monitoring children's views can be used to inform policy making. In 2013/2014, a large survey of parents was conducted by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture to inform the preparation of a new law on the ECEC sector. The process also included interviews with children to ensure that their voices were being heard; the first time this had ever been done in the preparation of a new law. Finland reports that the emphasis put on hearing children's opinions stems from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To inform the revision of the legal framework, 48 children across the country were interviewed in their ECEC setting, either by their own teachers or other staff. The interviews sought to reveal information about how children experience their days and practices in ECEC and what meaning they attribute to its different aspects. To express their opinions, children used photographs they had taken and drawings they had made to discuss with staff what they appreciated in ECEC and what they did not like and wanted to change.

Finland reported that children emphasised the importance of being able to participate in activities with their friends. They particularly liked being allowed to play and move. They also enjoyed games involving physical activities. On the question of the ECEC environment, they considered their bed and the sleeping room unpleasant, i.e. the rooms where activities and free movement are restricted. Long sedentary periods were also seen as unpleasant. Children reported that they expect personalised care from adults and that they mediate when differences in group situations emerge. While overall children enjoy being in ECEC, they asked for more time for play, movement and physical activities, as well as to be able to make use of modern technology. Activities regarded as important by staff and adults, such as long morning meetings in a circle, were not regarded by children as at all meaningful and important.

For the ministry, this represents valuable feedback from the users of the ECEC services under their responsibility that can contribute to their evaluation. The findings also encourage Finland to involve children more often in the development of practices.

Sources: Draft case study provided by Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and edited by the OECD Secretariat. OECD Network on ECEC, "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November 2013.

Include children in evaluations and monitoring practices

- In the **Czech Republic**, children's views in public settings are taken into account as part of the school external evaluation, when children's well-being is assessed. Based on these reports, a comment about the atmosphere in the school is included in the public school inspection report. Internally, schools may also monitor children's well-being and happiness when conducting their self-assessments.
- In the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, children's views are monitored in both family day care settings and day care centres. Though not compulsory, tools have been developed to enable family day care providers and day care centres assess how children experience the settings. The Self-Assessment Instrument for Care Settings (SiCs) starts by scanning well-being and involvement and helps to identify factors in the environment that may affect them. MyProfile, originally developed as ZiKo-Vo for family day care providers, helps practitioners in all kinds of settings for young children monitor children's development. Both instruments help the settings monitor each child and tailor their approach to the child's individual needs. Additionally, for preschool children (3-5 year-olds) a more extensive monitoring system is available: POMS, the Process-Oriented Monitoring System.

Challenge: Monitoring the implementation of policy reforms

France has made several reforms to its ECEC system regarding the quality of education for children aged between 2 and 6 years. The monitoring of such reforms presents a challenge in France. Other countries, such as Australia, Ireland and Norway, have also reported challenges in this area. The reforms in France regard the organisation of early childhood education in pre-primary school (*école maternelle*), programming (curriculum), and teachers. First, the organisation of the education cycles in what is

considered primary education was restructured in 2015. Pre-primary school is now separate to elementary school. The purpose of this reform was to better support the child in the transition from early child development to structured learning. Second, pre-primary programmes have been redesigned. Pre-primary school is now focused on learning by playing and doing, problem solving-skills, and remembering taught skills and knowledge. In line with this, the assessment of children was changed in 2016 to focus on continuous observations of child development. Third, from 2013, in disadvantaged areas, children between 2 and 3 years can be enrolled in early childhood education settings to stimulate their development from an early age. Fourth, the school week for kindergartens was restructured in 2013/14 into nine half days, with five mornings, four afternoons and extracurricular activities. Fifth, guidelines and support for teachers in pre-primary schools have been developed and a pre-primary specialisation for teachers was introduced in 2015. Also in the area of childcare, efforts are underway to raise quality, for instance by providing financial support to family day carers who decide to regroup with at least three other carers outside their homes, and by introducing guidelines for the licensing of such family day care houses and their supervision.

Successful implementation of reforms and policies largely depends on the pre-primary managers and their staff throughout his realization. Hence, support managers and training for them is highly important. To support pre-primary school staff, educational resources and example practices to accompany the reforms have been developed and are available online. Specific training on policy reforms may also be useful and continued, as is explained through the country examples below. It would be useful and relevant to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy reforms and whether staff believe that they have had a positive impact on pedagogy and child development. If needed, policies can be adapted or revised based on the evaluation results. Other countries have used systematic training for staff and inspectors on reforms, in addition to evaluation, as a strategy to ensure the implementation of policy changes is monitored.

Providing on-the-job/in-service training to inspectors on the reforms

- In **Australia**, the National Quality Standard (NQS), a national quality benchmark for early childhood education and care, was developed to support consistency in assessment and rating. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has been set up to guide the implementation and management of the national regulatory system. This means that there is one authority that monitors implementation, carries responsibility for the implementation, and indicates any challenges in implementation. To ensure successful implementation, the ACECQA and state and territory regulatory authorities worked together to develop resources and guidance notes, to identify areas of inconsistency, and to determine national solutions to operational issues. Ratings of services are analysed for inconsistency to inform future training and the practice of inspectors. State and territory regulatory authorities and ACECQA provide training to ECEC providers and services about the NQS and requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Providing training for ECEC staff on reforms

- **Prince Edward Island** (Canada) developed the Early Learning Framework, a curriculum document for the early childhood sector that focuses on children from birth to school entry. The province provided developmental and implementation funding to allow for the entry-level training of all uncertified staff working within early years centres so that they could be educated as an early years educator and learn about the new learning framework. The province also provides in-service training to early childhood directors and educators already working in the centres.

Providing training on monitoring

- In **Slovenia**, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport publishes the annual Catalogue of Programs for Continual Professional Development of Education Staff. This catalogue includes all professional development programmes that are available on a wide range of subjects, including the available training programmes on monitoring. Staff and ECEC managers are informed of these training courses through the catalogue. For example, the SIQ (Slovenian Institute of Quality and Metrology – a private institute) offers training on “Quality for the Future of Schooling and Education model”, which is applicable for educational institutions. The training model is based on current quality management system standards and models that are recognised internationally, such as the international standards of the ISO 9000 family for quality management systems and the EFQM European business excellence model. ECEC provisions can participate in this training to learn about quality management systems and how to improve their own system.

Launch evaluations to assess implementation

- In **Sweden**, a national evaluation of preschools, carried out by the National Agency for Education in 2003, provided policy makers at central and local levels with many valuable insights into how the national preschool curriculum is understood and implemented in practice. The evaluation also reported significant disparities in preschool quality (e.g. class size) across municipalities. The evaluation showed that the lack of support in terms of financial resources and management appears to affect preschools in low-resource catchment areas. A second national evaluation in 2008 showed that ten years after it was introduced, the curriculum has gained increasingly larger significance. The results showed that extensive evaluations are carried out both at the municipal level and at the preschool level. A broad spectrum of different evaluation models is used, including self-evaluation, colleague evaluation, parental surveys and evaluations involving children. Such evaluations monitor implementation and can provide insights into how policy changes, such as a revised curriculum, are implemented and analyse over time whether additional time for implementation or training have positive effects on implementation. It can also identify weaknesses in implementation, for example, a need for more specific training or additional staff.

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GLOSSARY

Autonomy: The ability of a child to undertake activities, tasks etc. without the help of others (mastery of skills), to make his/her own decisions, and to express his/her own opinions or ideas, feel secure and have confidence in his/her own ability.

Appraisal: The review of a preschool teacher's or educator's work by the centre management, an external inspector or by his or her colleagues. This appraisal can be conducted in a range of ways, from a more formal, objective approach (e.g. as part of a formal performance management system involving set procedures and criteria) to the more informal, more subjective approach (e.g. through informal discussions with the teacher).

Assessment: Judgement on individual progress and achievement of goals. It covers classroom/playroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external assessments and examinations and refers to the process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner and staff (adapted from OECD, 2013). Assessment can be direct or indirect and its use formative or summative.

- **Direct assessment:** Assessments that look at concrete outputs of learning, i.e. the measurable and demonstrated knowledge and skills of children/staff.
- **Indirect assessment:** Assessments that examine indicators of learning and gather information through feedback, e.g. in surveys or interviews (adapted from Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2007).
- **Formative assessment:** Assessments that frequently or continuously (not at one point in time only) and interactively assess child development and progress with the purpose of understanding and identifying learning needs and adjust instruction and teaching methods accordingly (adapted from OECD, 2005, and Litjens, 2013).
- **Summative assessment:** Assessments that measure learning results at the end of a certain time period to obtain summary statements. These can be used e.g. for holding staff and settings accountable for providing quality ECEC or as a method to identify whether children have learning disadvantages (adapted from OECD, 2005, and Litjens, 2013).

Assessor (or evaluator): A person or organisation/company that conducts assessment or evaluation on the effectiveness or the level of quality of someone or something, e.g. level of service quality, staff performance, effective curriculum implementation, child development/outcomes.

Checklist: A list of items, tasks or steps to be taken in a specific order to be checked or consulted. In ECEC, this can be used to assess or evaluate the developmental status of children, staff performance and the quality of ECEC services by observing compliance with regulations. This may also include a series of tasks, skills and abilities to assess children's development or knowledge, such as "Child can count to five" or "Child is able to play independently" (OECD, 2012).

Creative skills (e.g. art, music, dance, imagination): Children's capacities and competencies to generate ideas and feelings, use imagination and convey thoughts and experiences in many forms of expressions, including artistic skills (e.g. painting, drawing, handicrafts, etc.), musical skills (e.g. singing,

playing an instrument, recognising songs, etc.). It also refers to the capacity to observe and reflect; explore on their own, and search for their own answers and solutions.

Curriculum implementation: The actual use in practice (practical application) of the curriculum by ECEC staff, managers and children. This refers to the way in which the concepts of the curriculum are put into effect, and how they are used in practices and activities by staff and children, how they are interpreted, how they are used in development and learning, and how they influence teaching, caring and interactions between staff, and between staff with children.

ECEC setting: A place where ECEC is delivered. Also referred to as ECEC centre or provision. With regard to ECEC settings, two types of provision can be distinguished: **centre-based/ school-based** and **home-based** (as defined by Eurydice, 2013).

Evaluation: Judgements on the effectiveness of ECEC settings or ECEC systems, policies and programmes (adapted from OECD, 2013).

Evaluator: See definition of **assessor**.

External monitoring practices: See definition of **monitoring practice**.

Government: The entirety of the executive at all levels of governance, at national, state, regional and local level.

Health development: The physical health status of a child, encompassing physical well-being only (adapted from WHO definition, 2006). Mental, emotional and social development are in this definition excluded – these are included in the definition of **socio-emotional skills**.

Information and communications technology (ICT): The teaching and learning of technological and digital skills. Creating and developing the capacity to use digital and technological environments for development, communication and knowledge creation. Digital environments refer to computers (including laptops, tablets, iPads, netbooks, smart boards etc.) and computer games, the Internet, television and radio, among others.

Inspection: The process of assessing (inspecting, investigating) the quality and/or performance of institutions, staff, services and programmes by those (inspectors) who are not directly involved in the ECEC settings being monitored, and who are usually specially appointed to fulfil these responsibilities.

Instrument (or tool): A means used for monitoring or material that is used to conduct the monitoring process. Examples of instruments or tools for monitoring include checklists, rating scales and surveys.

Integrated system: The responsibilities of ECEC services are under one (leading) authority (at the national and/or regional level), e.g. the education Ministry, Ministry of social welfare or another authority.

Internal monitoring practices: See definition of **monitoring practice**.

Language and literacy skills: Children's productive and receptive language skills on all levels: syntax (ability to form sentences), morphology (ability to form words), semantics (understanding the meaning of words/sentences), phonology (awareness of speech sounds), pragmatics (how language is used in different contexts), vocabulary. It also refers to children's (precursor) literacy skills, that is to say, all the skills related to reading and writing, such as recognising and writing letters and words, understanding pictures, etc.

Local level or local authorities: The local level is a decentralised level of ECEC governance. It is located at city/town level in the vast majority of countries. In some countries, the municipalities take the main responsibility for ECEC.

Minimum quality standards: The minimum benchmark for structural aspects of ECEC settings to ensure a minimum level of quality. These are often aspects of ECEC that can be regulated relatively easily (e.g. staff-child ratio, space, group size and qualifications of ECEC staff).

Motor skills: The ability to perform complex muscle and nerve acts that produce movements, the ability to co-ordinate the body. It refers to both fine and gross motor skills and awareness of their own body. Fine motor skills include small movements such as drawing and writing, crawling or putting shoes on. Gross motor skills are large movements like walking and kicking, running and cycling.

Monitoring: The process of systematically tracking aspects of ECEC services, staff, child development and curriculum implementation, with a view toward data collection, accountability and/or enhancing effectiveness and/or quality.

Monitoring practice: The main activity/ies involved in monitoring, such as inspections or self-assessments. There are two different types of monitoring practices:

- **External monitoring practices:** Any monitoring practices conducted by evaluators/assessors/actors who are not part of the ECEC service that is being monitored. These can include inspections, surveys completed by people who are not employed by the ECEC setting that is being monitored, or peer reviews conducted by external staff (peer review of a person working in one ECEC setting by a person not working in that ECEC setting).
- **Internal monitoring practices:** Any monitoring practices conducted by evaluators/assessors/actors who are part of the ECEC service that is being monitored. These can include self-evaluations of staff working in ECEC settings (teachers, managers, care givers, etc.) or peer reviews conducted by internal staff (among colleagues in the same setting).

Narrative assessments: Descriptions of the development of a child through narratives/stories. Narrative assessment is a more inclusive approach to assessing child development, as it involves not only professionals but also the children's work, and can also include inputs or feedback from parents. It is a combination or package of what a child has done and learned, such as examples of drawings and exercises, feedback from staff, and staff planning or example practices. Portfolios or storybooks of children's development are well-known examples of narrative assessment practices (see also **portfolio** and **storytelling**).

National level/national authorities (also referred to as **central level or central authorities**): The authorities responsible for ECEC within a single country that is at the highest level of governance. Depending on the governance structure of the country, such as a federal structure of education governance, those authorities may or may not exert the key power of decision over ECEC policies and implementation. Examples for such authorities include the United Kingdom and Belgium.

Numeracy: The ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts and understand numbers. Basic numeracy skills consist of knowing and recognising space, shapes, location and direction, the basic properties of sets, quantity, order and number concepts, time and change, being able to count, to comprehending fundamental mathematics like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Observation: Observation is a method to collect information on a subject from an outsider's perspective. It can be used for a specific purpose (e.g. inspection, peer review) or can be open-ended (e.g. to document a child's progress for parents).

Peer review: an assessment process of a colleague's work and practices. This can be done internally (by an internal colleague or a manager) or externally (by a colleague or a manager not working in the same setting).

Portfolio: A collection of pieces of work that can tell a story of child/staff progress, or achievement in given areas.

Practical skills: Skills that involve active involvement of a child and refer to only those skills that children need in daily life such as lacing shoes, brushing teeth, etc.

Process quality: What children actually experience in their programme – what happens within a setting, such as interactions between educators and children. It also consists of the relationships with parents, available materials and professional skills of staff.

Rating scale: A set of categories designed to elicit information about a quantitative or a qualitative attribute. A common example is the 1-10 rating scale, in which a person (evaluator or assessor) selects the number that is considered to reflect the perceived quality or performance of the subject being monitored.

Regional level/regional authorities: A decentralised level of governance. It is located at state or province level in the vast majority of countries, and can be referred to as e.g. communities, *Länder*, cantons, states, etc. Regional authorities in federal countries are often responsible for ECEC in their particular region. Examples for regional level authorities are England, Scotland and the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium.

Regulations/recommendations: Different kinds of official documents containing guidelines, obligations and/or recommendations for ECEC institutions. **Regulations** are laws, rules or other orders prescribed by public authority to regulate conduct. **Recommendations** are official documents proposing the use of specific tools, methods and/or strategies for teaching and learning. Their application is not mandatory (as defined in Eurydice, 2013).

Review: The process of examining, considering and judging a situation or process carefully in order to see, for example, if changes are necessary, analyse strengths and weaknesses, and look for improvement.

Science skills: All scientific subjects such as geography and natural science, as for example interest in and understanding of different cycles in nature, but also in the development of scientific knowledge, question scientific phenomena and the ability to draw conclusions about scientific subjects. Science also refers to the development of awareness of how science and technology shape and affect our material, intellectual and cultural environments and the ability to understand that we all are a part of nature's cycles.

Screening: A tool designed to identify problems or delays during normal childhood development. Usually involves a short test to tell if a child is learning basic skills when he or she should, or if there are delays. It can include some questions the professional asks a child or parent (depending on a child's age) or can involve talk and play with the child during an examination to see how he or she plays, learns, speaks, behaves and moves. Screening is often used to identify delays or problems, including learning disabilities, speech or language problems, autism, intellectual disability, emotional/behavioural conditions, hearing or vision impairment or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Self-evaluation (or self-assessment): The process in which an ECEC setting evaluates its own performance regarding the accomplishment of certain goals or standards, or a process in which staff members assess their own skills and capabilities as a way to monitor progress, attain goals and foster improvement.

Sensitivity: The quality of understanding how a child feels and the staff member's responsiveness to children's needs and emotions. The ability of a person (in this case a staff member) to respond and interact in a way appropriate to the age of the child and with care, warmth and attentiveness (adapted from Macmillan, 2014).

Service quality: The level of quality at setting/provision level. It is the level of quality provided by an ECEC setting, and refers to all the features that are regarded by a country/region/local authority to be of importance for quality, children's environments and experiences that are presumed to be beneficial to their well-being. This most often includes the use of a curriculum, staff characteristics, teacher or caregiver behaviours and practices, and the staff-child interactions that form the core of children's ECEC experiences, referred to in the literature as process quality. In addition, quality in most countries involves structural features of the setting, such as space, group size and other standards or regulations, e.g. safety standards (NCES, 1997; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012).

Socio-emotional skills: The emotional and social development of a child. It includes children's ability to express and regulate emotions, children's relations with others (including peers), play with others (including peers), self-concept, development of personality identity, self-efficacy and the personality of a child, which shapes his/her thinking, feeling and behaviour. It also refers to co-operation and solving problems together. Examples of socio-emotional development include the forming and sustaining of positive relationships, experiencing, managing and expressing emotions, and exploring and engaging with the environment.

Split system: ECEC services are governed by different ministries or authorities at national/regional level. In many countries with a split system, policies for "care" and "early education" have developed separately and fall under the responsibility of different authorities. Child care and early education is provided as two different services and for different age groups. For instance, "child care" for younger children refers most commonly to children of under age 3 and "early education" most commonly to children of 3 years or older.

Staff-child ratio: The number of children per full-time member of staff. This can be a maximum (regulated) number, which indicates the maximum number of children that one full-time member of staff is allowed to be responsible for, or an average, that is, the average number of children a full-time staff member can be responsible for. Ratios can be either for main staff only (such as teacher or caregiver), but can also include auxiliary staff, such as assistants.

Standardised test: A test designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures and interpretations are consistent and administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner (OECD, 2012; Zucker, 2004). This means that the same test is given in the same way to all test takers. Standardised assessments are usually administered to large groups of children, and mainly for the purpose of measuring academic achievement and/or comparing members of a cohort (Rosenkvist, 2010) (see also **test**).

Structural quality: Quality aspects that consist of "inputs to process-characteristics that create the framework for the processes that children experience". These characteristics are not only part of the ECEC location in which children participate, but part of the environment that surrounds the ECEC setting, e.g. the community. They are often aspects of ECEC that can be regulated, although they may include variables that cannot be regulated.

Test: A formal assessment, often administered on paper or on the computer, intended to measure children's knowledge, skills and/or aptitudes. Tests can be either standardised or not (see also **standardised test**).

Tool: See definition of **instrument**.

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