



Starting Strong IV

Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Country Note

KAZAKHSTAN

Summary

Kazakhstan has an integrated Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system with one national authority, the Ministry of Education and Science, in charge of ECEC settings. There are four government approved ECEC curricula that guide ECEC settings and practices: *Algashky Kadam* for 1-2 year-olds, *Zerek Bala* for 3 and 4-year-olds, *Biz Mektepke Baramyz* for 5 and 6-year-olds, and the *State Programme for Preschool Preparation* (Алғашқы қадам, Зерек бала, Біз мектепке барамыз, 5-7 жастағы балаларға арналған мектепалды даярлық бағдарламасы) for children from the age of 5-7 in ECEC settings. ECEC and early education settings in Kazakhstan are monitored by territorial departments of education and territorial departments for control of education, which operate under the Ministry of Education and Science (Қазақстан Республикасы білім және ғылым министрлігі). Monitoring is therefore also financed by national and local public funding.

Service and staff quality are monitored in ECEC settings in Kazakhstan, commonly using inspections and self-assessments. Inspections of service quality focus on a broad range of areas, including structural aspects, health, hygiene and safety standards. Other areas include materials in use, planning and time management, and curriculum implementation. Inspections of staff quality tend to focus on regulatory areas, process quality, the overall quality of caring and teaching, subject knowledge, and children's outcomes, among other aspects. Self-evaluations focus on regulation compliance, available materials and curriculum implementation, collaboration among staff, and collaboration between staff, management and parents.

Kazakhstan monitors child development from age one until they start primary school. In general, the same competences and areas are monitored for all ages, although the specific skills monitored and the tools used in Kazakhstan vary by age. The most widespread tools used in Kazakhstan include screening, story-telling and portfolios, and checklists and rating scales. The most commonly monitored areas of child development in Kazakhstan are language and literacy, socio-emotional skills and motor skills, numeracy, creative skills, autonomy, health development, and practical skills.

Despite Kazakhstan's efforts to monitor quality, challenges remain. Firstly, children's views are not monitored in Kazakhstan. These can be monitored to provide an additional source of information and can give valuable input on what aspects need additional resources. Secondly, ensuring that monitoring has effects on quality and policies can be challenging. Greater efforts in data and information collection on ECEC can contribute to evidence-based policy-making and implementing practices that are found to work.

The monitoring quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) country note for Kazakhstan 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. A separate OECD (2016) [Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: Kazakhstan](#) provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in Kazakhstan.

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Key messages

- **Service and staff quality is monitored for several reasons in Kazakhstan:** for accountability purposes (with possible sanctions or rewards), to inform policy making and the general public, to improve the level of service quality, to identify development needs of staff with the purpose of enhancing staff performance, and to identify possible learning needs of children.
- **Service and staff quality are monitored once every five years,** or more frequently if there are complaints about a setting. Internal self-evaluations are conducted several times per year on a continuous basis.
- **Inspections of ECEC service quality in Kazakhstan have a broad focus,** including compliance with regulations on space, health, hygiene and safety, staff-child ratios and staff qualifications. Inspections also focus on the implementation of the curriculum, materials in use, planning of work, working conditions and human resource management.
- **Staff quality inspections commonly monitor curriculum implementation,** staff qualifications, staff working conditions, planning and use of materials, process quality, staff knowledge of subjects, overall quality of teaching and caring, communication between staff and parents, team work amongst ECEC staff, management and leadership skills, professional development opportunities, and child outcomes.
- **A range of tools can be used during inspections of service and staff quality in kindergartens,** including: observations; interviews; results of surveys completed by parents, inspectors or management and staff; checklists; self-evaluation results; and the analysis of a setting's documentation. In addition, portfolios may be used in staff quality inspections.
- **Self-assessments of service quality are common but self-evaluations of staff quality are not common practice in Kazakhstan** and are usually only conducted before an attestation (inspection or evaluation), for instance. When self-evaluations of staff performance are implemented, they typically address similar areas as staff quality inspections. Portfolios and checklists are most frequently used during self-evaluations in Kazakhstan.
- **Children's development and the outcomes of children aged between 1 and 6 are monitored** for accountability purposes, without sanctions or rewards, to identify children's learning needs and stimulate their development. To monitor a wide range of skills and aptitudes, Kazakhstan commonly uses direct assessments, screening and narrative assessments, and observational tools, such as checklists and rating scales. The areas monitored include motor and socio-emotional skills, language and literacy, numeracy, autonomy and creative skills, health development and practical skills. There is no national testing of children in ECEC in Kazakhstan.
- **There are several monitoring challenges in Kazakhstan.** The monitoring of children's views can contribute to improving ECEC services, but children's experience of ECEC is not monitored in Kazakhstan. Ensuring that monitoring results have a tangible effect on improving service quality and overall system performance can be challenging. It is important that monitoring results are used to influence policy and enhance ECEC quality, further strengthening the quality of a country's ECEC system.

Introduction

The data and information in this country note for Kazakhstan 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, 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 A separate OECD (2016) [Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: Kazakhstan](#) provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in Kazakhstan.

This country note primarily aims to provide opportunities for peer-learning by highlighting Kazakhstan'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 Kazakhstan regarding key areas of monitoring quality in ECEC, of the types of challenges for Kazakhstan in monitoring quality, which have been identified by the OECD ECEC team in close consultation with the Kazakh colleagues. 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 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 Kazakhstan, ECEC refers to kindergartens and mini-centres, which are for children from the age of 1 to primary school age – usually 6 or 7 years.

In this country note, Kazakhstan is compared with Chile, Finland and Norway. These three countries were selected by Kazakhstan for specific country comparison. Chile has four types of ECEC settings: 1) community kindergartens (*jardines infantiles comunitarios*) for 0-6 year-olds; 2) kindergartens for 0-6 year-olds; 3) pre-primary education settings (*colegios*) for children from the age of 3 to primary school starting age (6 years); and 4) pre-primary education settings (*escualas*) for 4 and 5-year-olds. In Finland, there are five types of ECEC settings: one is home-based family day care for all children below the age of 6 years, and the rest are centre-based ECEC provisions for children aged 0-6 years, including group family day care, day care centres, open ECEC settings, and pre-primary education. For Norway, all information in this note regards kindergartens for children from 0-6 years-old. All data and information for countries refer to their most commonly or generally used practices and tools, unless indicated otherwise, as monitoring practices are usually not implemented nationally

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

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).

areas of service quality, staff quality, curriculum implementation and child development and outcomes. The remaining sections focus on Kazakhstan’s monitoring policies and practices in comparison with Chile, Finland and Norway. The sections address how quality is defined, the purposes of monitoring quality, areas and scope of monitoring, responsibility for monitoring, and approaches and procedures. The final part of the country note looks at the challenges for Kazakhstan 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 (Kamerman, 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

As indicated above, 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 three monitoring areas will provide a greater evidence base to help countries enhance quality in these areas.

Monitoring quality: Where Kazakhstan stands in international comparison

How quality is defined in Kazakhstan

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 (Kamerma, 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.

In Kazakhstan, quality in ECEC is defined through minimum standards and the ECEC curricula. There are several model curricula in place that explain what subjects and skills children should be taught, and the objectives and expectations of ECEC. Three model curricula (*Algashky Kadam*, or First Step; *Zerek Bala*, or Smart Child; and *Biz Mektepke Baramyz*; or We Go to School) were approved by the Order of Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan in 2009, and each ECEC setting is expected to adopt these frameworks. In addition to these curricula, minimum regulatory standards set requirements for group size, sanitation, and health and safety. Each ECEC setting is legally obliged to provide ECEC in accordance with these standards and the ECEC curricula. Hence, while quality is not explicitly defined in Kazakhstan as part of, for instance, a quality framework, the regulatory minimum standards for ECEC settings and the government-approved curriculum frameworks implicitly define quality ECEC. This is similar to Chile, where the national curriculum for early childhood education, in combination with the minimum regulatory standards for ECEC, implicitly define quality ECEC.

In Finland, quality is implicitly defined through the minimum regulatory standards in place that set out what aspects Finland regards as important for quality. Finland sets high expectations for the level of quality in ECEC. There are high minimum staff qualifications, one of the most favourable staff-child ratios in OECD countries (OECD, 2012), and high requirements for safety, health and hygiene. Finland sets out its objectives for ECEC through curriculum frameworks: the national curriculum guidelines for early childhood education and care (for 0-6 year-olds) and the core curriculum for preschool education for 6-year olds. These frameworks aim to provide standard principles for high-quality activities and have a strong focus on staff and what is expected from them. The guidelines also aim to enhance parental engagement in ECEC and stimulate co-operation with other early childhood services. Based on the frameworks, each municipality develops its own specific guidelines and local curriculum to meet the

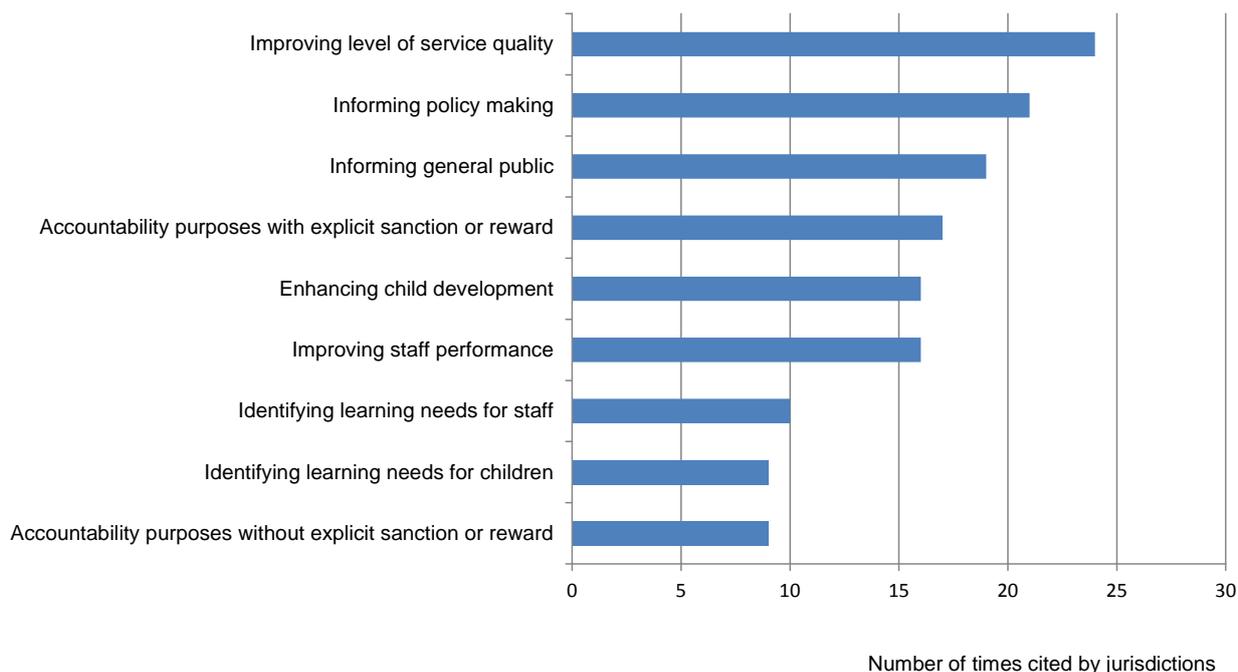
needs of their municipality and population² (STAKES, 2005). These frameworks complement the regulatory standards in setting out what constitutes ECEC quality in Finland.

In Norway, quality is defined through legislation (the Kindergarten Act) and the country’s Framework Plan, which gives guidance on the content and pedagogical practices of kindergartens (OECD, 2015). In some countries, quality is defined at the regional or local level, rather than at the national level.

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

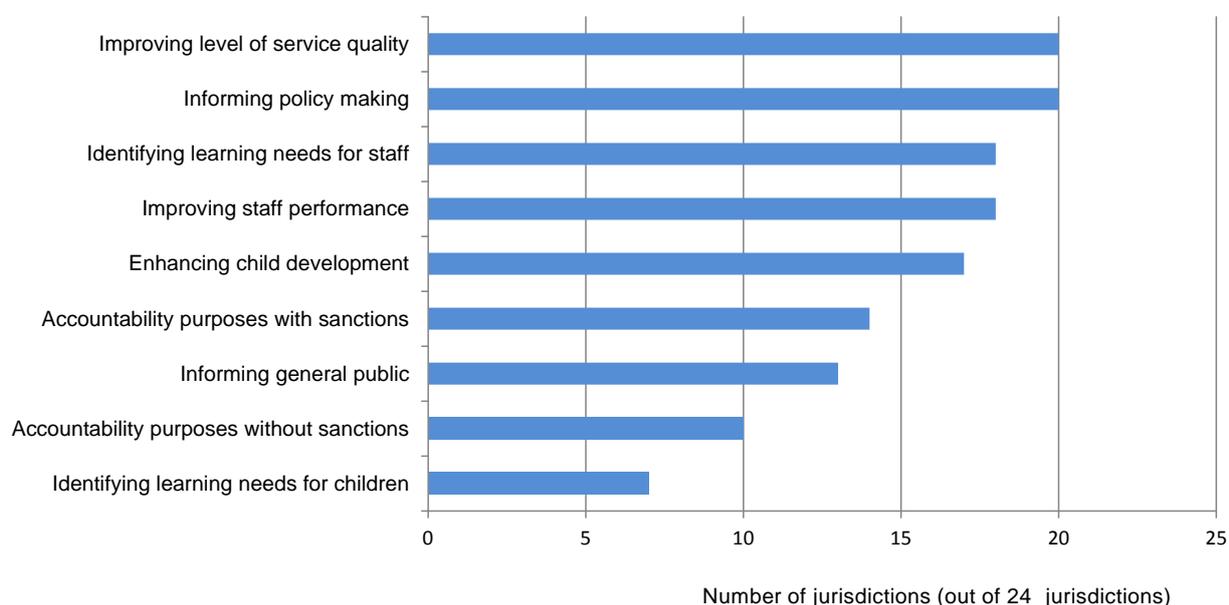


Note: Purposes of monitoring service quality are ranked in descending order of the number of times they are cited by jurisdictions.
 Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 3.1, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243059>.

2. Since August 2015, the National Board of Education is in charge of curriculum development in Finland.

Kazakhstan monitors service quality for all of the purposes listed in Figure 1, except for accountability purposes without a sanction or reward attached to the monitoring results. Kazakhstan monitors staff performance for similar reasons. In Finland and Norway, the purposes for monitoring service quality are similar to those for monitoring staff quality. Finland and Norway monitor for accountability purposes, although sanctions or rewards are only used in Norway. In addition, as in Kazakhstan, service and staff quality is monitored to inform policy making, to improve the level of service quality, and to enhance child development. Norway also monitors service quality to identify learning needs of children. Kazakhstan, Finland and Norway also monitor service and staff quality to enhance staff performance and to identify learning needs of staff and children. Norway also monitors staff quality to analyse what training needs staff may have. Chile monitors service quality for accountability purposes with sanctions or rewards, to inform the general public and to improve the level of service quality. Staff quality is also monitored in Chile for accountability purposes (with sanctions or rewards possible), to inform policy making, to enhance staff performance and identify possible learning needs of ECEC staff (OECD, 2015).

Figure 2. Purposes of monitoring staff quality

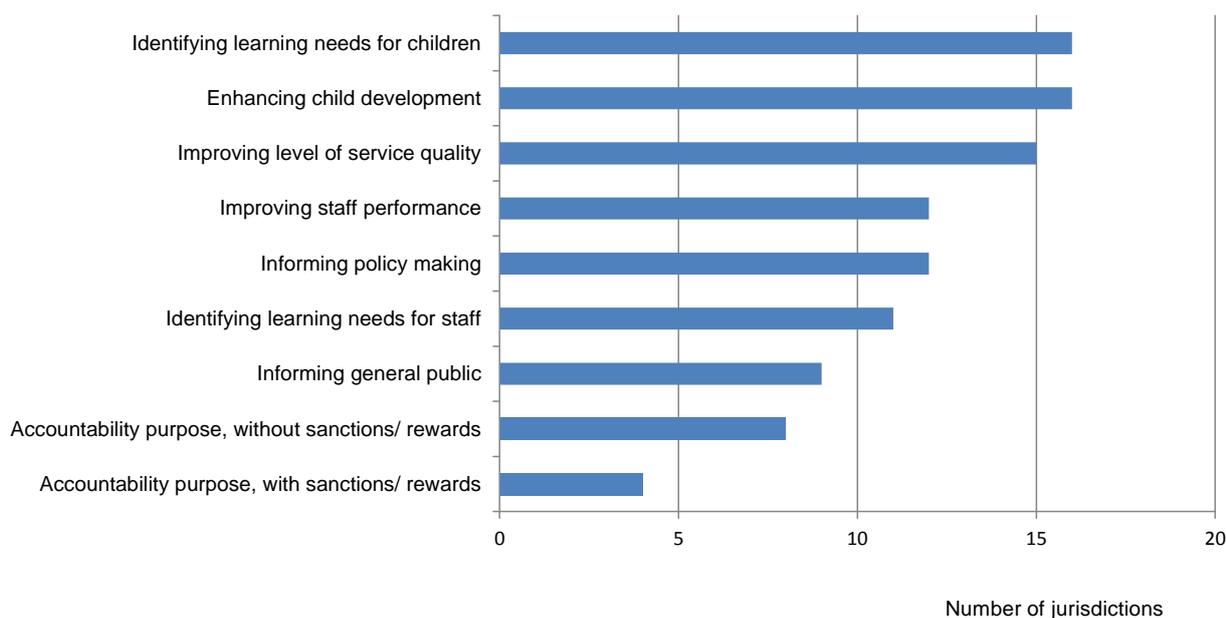


Note: Purposes of monitoring staff quality are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

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).

Kazakhstan monitors children's development for accountability purposes without sanctions or rewards (as does Chile), to identify children's learning needs (as do Chile, Finland and Norway), and to enhance children's development (as do Finland and Norway) (see Figure 3). Chile also monitors children's development to inform policy making and to enhance the level of quality in ECEC, as do Finland and Norway. In addition, Finland and Norway monitor children's development to enhance staff performance, and in Finland, to identify whether staff have any specific learning needs (OECD, 2015).

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. 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 responsibilities in Kazakhstan are shared between national and local authorities. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for monitoring at the national level, together with the territorial departments of education and territorial departments for control of education in the country’s 14 regions and 2 cities. In Chile, JUNJI, the *Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles* (National Board of Kindergartens), monitors kindergartens and community kindergartens. Pre-primary education for 3-6 year-olds and pre-primary education for 4 and 5-year-olds are monitored by the Quality Agency (Agencia de Calidad) and the Superintendence of Education (Superintendencia de Educacion). In Finland, responsibilities for monitoring are decentralised to the regional and municipal level, where regional state administrative agencies have the responsibility to conduct inspections together with municipalities and settings. Municipalities are also responsible for inspections in Norway.

External inspections and internal self-evaluation are the most common practices used to monitor service and staff quality. All four countries use external and internal practices, although internal self-evaluations are only used to monitor staff quality in Chilean community kindergartens and in Finnish ECEC settings (see Table 1). Parental surveys may be used in all four countries, although only to monitor service quality in Chilean kindergartens and community kindergartens, and in Finnish and Norwegian ECEC settings. Peer reviews are less common: they are used in Chilean pre-primary education for 4-5 year-olds to monitor staff quality, and in Kazakh ECEC settings to monitor staff quality. Kazakhstan is the only country in this study where tests for staff are used to monitor staff quality.

Table 1. Monitoring practices for service and staff quality

Jurisdiction	Type of setting	External			Internal		
		Inspections	Surveys	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Tests for staff	Self-assessment/evaluation
Kazakhstan	All ECEC settings	X	X	X (Staff)	X (Staff)	X (Staff)	X
Chile	Community kindergartens	X	X (Service)				X (Staff)
	Kindergartens	X	X (Service)				X
	Pre-primary education for 3-6 year-olds	X	X				X
	Pre-primary education for 4-6 year-olds	X	X	X (Staff)	X (Staff)		X
Finland	All ECEC settings	X	X (Service)				X (Staff)
Norway	Kindergartens	X	X (Service)				X

Notes: In Finland, external monitoring practices take the form of inspections only in response to complaints. For internal monitoring practices, municipalities make the decision themselves, although self-assessments are frequently implemented. In New Zealand, external inspections of service quality, but not staff quality, are conducted. Peer reviews refer to staff appraisal reviews of ECEC staff conducted by leaders and/or managers.

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, Paris, 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. Finland commonly uses narrative assessments in combination with observational tools to monitor children's development in ECEC, while in Kazakhstan, direct assessments, observations and narrative assessments may be used. The practices used to monitor child development differ by age in Kazakhstan, but direct assessments, through screening, may be used to monitor children's development between the ages of 1 and 6. Narrative assessments and observational tools are commonly used in Kazakhstan to monitor children's development in ECEC. Chile mainly uses direct assessments and observational tools to monitor children aged between 1 and 7. In Norway, the practices used to assess child development are decided at the setting level and practices therefore differ across regions and settings (OECD, 2015).

Areas and scope of monitoring

There are a number of different aspects 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

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.

skills, socio-emotional skills, motor skills, autonomy, creative skills, practical skills, health development, well-being, science skills, and information and communications technology (ICT) skills.

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.

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
Kazakhstan	All ECEC settings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chile	Community kindergartens			X	X	X	X					
	Kindergartens			X	X							
	Pre-primary education for 3-6 year-olds	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
	Pre-primary education for 4-6 year-olds	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Finland	All ECEC settings	X		X	X		X					
Norway	Kindergartens	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X

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>.

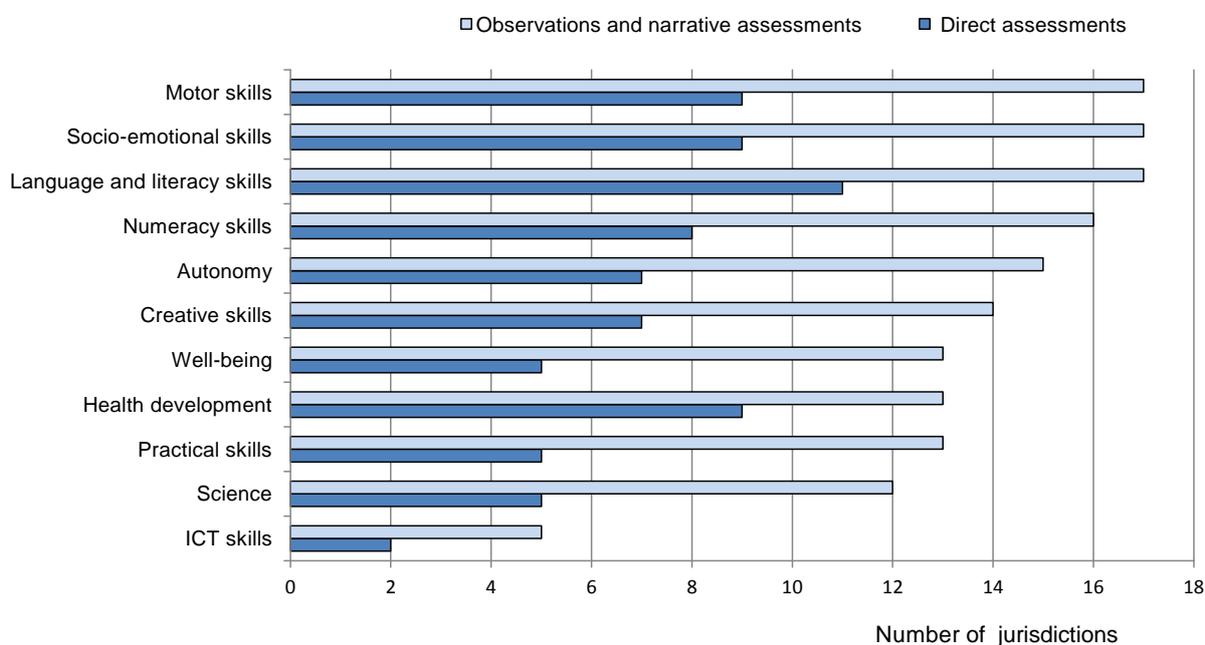
All four countries monitor staff-child ratios, health and hygiene regulations, safety requirements, and minimum staff qualifications, although not all of these are inspected in all ECEC settings. For example, staff-child ratios are not monitored in Chilean kindergartens and community kindergartens, and minimum staff qualifications are not monitored in kindergartens in Chile. Kazakhstan also monitors space, materials in use, planning of work, working conditions, human and financial resource management, and curriculum implementation. These aspects are also monitored in Chilean pre-primary schools for 4-6 year-olds, with the exception of planning of work and curriculum implementation. In Chilean pre-primary education for 3-6 year-olds, the focus is similar to that of pre-primary education settings for 4 and 5-year-olds, except that human resource management is not commonly monitored. Norway's inspections focus on similar aspects as Kazakhstan, but do not monitor the materials used by staff, working conditions or human resource management. Inspections in Chilean kindergartens have a comparatively narrow focus and look at just health, hygiene and safety regulations. These are also inspected in community kindergartens, as well as materials in use and staff qualifications. Different aspects of quality are often assessed through self-assessments, compared with external inspections. For example, in self-assessments more attention is given to communication among staff members and with parents (OECD, 2015).

Staff quality

In Kazakhstan, inspections of staff quality tend to focus on minimum qualifications. This is similar to Chilean pre-primary education settings, and Finnish and Norwegian ECEC settings. Kazakhstan has the broadest scope for inspections of staff quality, which focus on process quality: the use of materials: time management: staff knowledge of subjects: curriculum implementation: overall quality of staff performance: teamwork amongst staff: collaborations between staff and parents: management and leadership: working conditions: professional development opportunities, and child development outcomes. Kazakhstan is the only country out of the four that commonly takes into account child development outcomes and collaborations among ECEC staff when inspecting staff quality. Finland's inspections address similar aspects to Kazakh inspections, but tend not to focus on child outcomes, staff-parent communications and collaborations, and management and leadership skills. In addition to staff qualifications, inspections of pre-primary education settings in Chile address time management and planning of staff, teamwork amongst ECEC staff, management and leadership skills, and staff working conditions. In Norway, the focus is on curriculum implementation and overall staff quality (OECD, 2015).

Self-evaluations of staff in Kazakhstan's ECEC programmes have a similar focus as inspections, although self-evaluations are not very common in Kazakhstan and are usually only conducted before an attestation has to be completed. In Chile and Norway, self-evaluations focus on the use of materials, teamwork and communication, collaborations between staff and parents, management and leadership skills, and working conditions. In Norway, attention is also given to the overall quality of staff and curriculum implementation. Peer reviews in Kazakhstan may address similar aspects to inspections and self-evaluations; while in Chilean pre-primary education the focus of peer reviews is on the overall quality of staff and curriculum implementation (OECD, 2015).

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



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

Information on use of direct assessments and observations and narrative assessments to monitor developmental areas 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>.

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. Observations and narrative assessments, rather than direct assessments, are more likely to be used for assessing children's development. In Kazakhstan, screenings (direct assessments) address health development, while narrative assessments address all areas listed in Figure 4, except science and ICT. In general, the same competences and areas are monitored for all ages, although the specific skills monitored in Kazakhstan vary by age (see Table 3). In Norway, all of the areas listed in Figure 4 may be monitored, this is the same for Finland, with the exception of ICT skills. In Chilean kindergartens, direct assessments can focus on language and literacy skills, numeracy, socio-emotional and motor skills, health development, and executive functions (OECD, 2015).

Table 3. Developmental standards for cognitive competences in Kazakhstan

Developmental area/age	1-3 year-olds	3-5 year-olds	5-6 year-olds
Orientation in properties of objects	Distinguishes between primary colours, shape, size, texture of objects.	Describes symptoms and characteristic differences of objects based on tactile, auditory and olfactory perception.	Examines the properties and attributes of objects as a category of cognitive activity.
Recognition of the world	Shows curiosity and interest in people and their actions.	Understands simple causal relationships in living, inanimate nature and social life, talks about it, composes 2 to 3 sentences.	Can solve cognitive tasks in visual-motor and visual-shape plan, is able to distinguish similarities and differences, organise and classify for various reasons.
Constructive skills	Can reproduce a simple construction demonstrated by an adult.	Shows independence in choosing a construction material, tries to carry out constructions in a beautiful manner.	Understands several ways to create simpler generalised designs and uses the same methods to get different results.
Fundamentals of ecological culture	Exhibits a friendly and caring attitude to wildlife.	Understands certain rules of behaviour in nature, and that adults care for plants and animals.	Understands the diversity of the world, features and properties of plants, animals, and the relationship with the environment.
Elementary mathematical representations	Shows rudimentary skills of orientation in space.	Demonstrates basic concepts of time, space, causality, number.	Knows the structural characteristics of geometric shapes, quantitative relations backwards and forwards.
Search and Experimental work	Experiments with different objects (disconnects, connects, designs).	Experiments purposefully with new materials, models surroundings; reflects on common relationships between objects.	Sets a goal in the experimental activities to achieve results.
Working with information	Interested in different information sources.	Understands the need to obtain new information.	Understands how to provide new information and to whom it will be interesting.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 5.3, OECD Publishing, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243352>.

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 Kazakhstan, the Republican Centre “Pre-school Childhood” developed the internal monitoring system for preschool institutions and methodologies for monitoring ECEC. The Republican Centre is part of the Ministry of Education and Science, which is the authority responsible for approving and recommending monitoring systems and methods. In Finland, there is no national monitoring system in place; municipalities themselves are responsible for developing their own monitoring system. However, Finland acknowledges the importance of a national monitoring system, and the new ECEC Act (*Päivähoitolakia*), which came into effect in August 2015, indicates that all ECEC settings should be internally and externally evaluated at the municipal and setting level. In Norway, municipalities hold overall responsibility for developing monitoring systems, however, the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) develops guidance material on the inspection process. In Chile, the *Centro de Perfeccionamiento, Experimentación e Investigaciones Pedagógicas* (CPEIP, Centre for Training, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research), part of the Ministry of Education, developed instruments to assess staff in public settings, implement the instruments, inform staff about their own results, and inform society about the aggregated results. Responsibility for monitoring service quality is shared across different institutions: the Ministry of Education sets out the minimum standards for the settings recognised by the Ministry, while the Superintendence of Education (*Superintendencia de Educación*) and the Education Quality Agency (*Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación*) is responsible for monitoring the settings.

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.

Kazakhstan has an integrated ECEC system: the Ministry of Health Care and Social Development (Қазақстан Республикасы Денсаулық сақтау және әлеуметтік даму министрлігі) is responsible for children under the age of 1 (children can start ECEC at the age of 1 in Kazakhstan), and the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for all children in ECEC aged between 1 and 6. Chile, Finland and Norway all have an integrated ECEC system. In Chile, the Ministry of Public Education is responsible for ECEC at the national level; in Finland, it is the Ministry of Education and Culture, and in Norway the Ministry of Education and Research.

Kazakhstan has a centralised system with national standards and national curricula frameworks. The responsibilities for financing and monitoring are shared between national, regional and local authorities. In Chile, responsibilities for financing, monitoring and the curriculum development of ECEC are all held at the national level. Responsibility for setting the minimum regulatory standards is a shared responsibility between national and local authorities. In Finland and Norway, responsibility for standard setting is at the national (central) level, while responsibility for financing is shared between the national and municipal level. The curriculum frameworks in Finland and Norway are designed at the national level, but municipalities are expected to adapt the guidelines and frameworks to the needs of their local area.

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 differs depending on the type of setting. In Kazakhstan, monitoring is financed by national and municipal (local) public funding. In Chile, the monitoring of community kindergartens and pre-primary education settings for 3-6 year-olds is funded by national public funding, while the monitoring of kindergartens and pre-primary education for 4-5 year-olds is funded through national public and local public funding. In Finland, the National Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) (*Koulutuksen arviointikeskus*) has been responsible for national evaluations of ECEC since August 2015, and funding for monitoring comes from national public funding. However, evaluations of individual settings, planned and conducted by themselves, remain the responsibility of municipalities and are funded at the municipal level. In Norway, monitoring is usually funded by local public funding (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 vast majority of 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 focuses on various skills or aspects of ECEC. In Kazakhstan, external evaluators or inspectors are usually trained on-the-job or via in-service training that addresses different aspects including monitoring and evaluation. Finland is the only country out of the four that does not provide specific training on monitoring for either external or internal evaluators (see Table 4). Some evaluators have specific formal training, but it is not systematic. Chile does not provide specific training on monitoring for internal evaluators, although external evaluators are trained on monitoring during their pre-service education programme and during on-the-job training. In Norway, inspectors receive on-the-job or in-service training on monitoring and evaluation. Internal evaluators are trained on monitoring and evaluation during their initial education programme (OECD, 2015).

Table 4. Training of external and internal evaluators

		No, not specifically	Yes, through pre-service education/training	Yes, through on-the-job or in-service training
Kazakhstan	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors	missing		
Chile	External assessors		X	X
	Internal assessors	X		
Finland*	External assessors	X		
	Internal assessors	X		
Norway	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors		X	

Note: *In Finland, some evaluators have some evaluation training, but the training is not systematic at the national or municipal levels.

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, Paris, Tables 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, and internal self-evaluations. There are various tools that can be used to carry out these practices.

In Kazakhstan, a wide range of instruments may be used during inspections of kindergartens, including observations, surveys taken by inspectors, management or staff, results of parental surveys, rating scales, checklists, interviews, results of self-evaluations, and analysis of a setting's documentation. Some of these tools are also commonly used during inspections in Chile: checklists and observations are most commonly used in community kindergartens; in regular kindergartens these tools may be complemented by analysis of internal documentation and results of parental surveys. Commonly used tools for inspecting pre-primary settings for children from the age of 3 until primary school age in Chile are: observations, checklists, interviews, results of a setting's self-evaluation, and analysis of a setting's documentation. In Norway, surveys undertaken by inspectors, checklists and parental surveys are most commonly used, in combination with interviews and analysis of internal documentation. In Finland, no data collection instruments are prescribed, and these therefore differ between municipalities or ECEC settings (OECD, 2015).

Internal evaluation is often used in combination with external evaluation/inspections to monitor service quality. This is the case in Kazakh, Chilean and Norwegian ECEC settings. There are various internal evaluation tools used to monitor service quality across ECEC settings. The most common self-evaluation tools 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. In Kazakhstan, self-reported questionnaires or surveys, self-reflection journals, portfolios and checklists are most commonly used. In Chile, self-reported surveys are commonly used during self-evaluation in kindergartens and pre-primary education settings for 3-5 year-olds. In pre-primary schools for 4-5 year-olds, similar tools are complemented by self-reflection journals. In Norway, individual settings have the discretion to determine what collection processes or tools are used (OECD, 2015).

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 monitoring service quality, inspections (external evaluations) of staff quality are undertaken in all 24 jurisdictions.

In Kazakhstan, the same tools or instruments used during service quality inspections are used in staff quality inspections of ECEC settings. In addition, portfolios may be used during staff quality inspections. In Chile, similar tools are used for inspections of staff and service quality. In Finland and Norway, no instruments or tools are prescribed at the national level and municipalities or individual settings decide on which instruments to use during inspections. Peer reviews are common in Kazakh ECEC settings and Chilean pre-primary education provisions for 4-5 year-olds. Peer reviews of staff quality in Kazakhstan can make use of similar tools as those used during inspections, except for surveys completed by inspectors and analysis of internal documentation. In Chile, rating scales, interviews, and surveys completed by management and staff are commonly used.

In Kazakhstan, portfolios and checklists are most commonly used during staff self-evaluations. In Chilean kindergartens and pre-primary schools for 3-5 year-olds and for 4-5 year-olds, similar tools may be used for service and staff self-evaluation. No instruments are prescribed in Norway, and therefore settings can make use of a wide range of tools. Self-reflection reports are commonly used in Norway, and self-reported questionnaires, checklists, portfolios and even video feedback may also be used. In Finland, each setting decides 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, often with a complementary role 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 5 shows, there is some variation in the combination of tools used.

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 used less often. Kazakhstan and Finland report using both narrative assessments and observational tools to monitor children in pre-primary school. In Finland, however, the decision about what tools to use is made by individual settings. In Kazakhstan, screening of health development, narrative assessments and observational tools can be used for all children in ECEC. In Chile, the most commonly used tools include tests for children in ECEC and rating scales. In Norway, settings decide on the instruments they use to monitor children's assessment (OECD, 2015).

Table 5. Child development monitoring tools in place, by country

Country	Direct assessments		Narrative assessments		Observational tools	
	Tests for children	Screening	Story-telling	Portfolios	Rating scales	Checklists
Kazakhstan		X	X	X	X	X
Chile	X				X	
Finland			X	X	X	X
Norway*	Settings decide what tools to use					

Notes: In Chile, these tools can be used on children between the age of 1 and 7 years-old. In Finland, all monitoring tools/instruments of child development may be used, but municipalities decide what to use and there is no standard national test for children. In Norway, narrative assessments and observational tools are most common. Direct assessments are mostly used outside ECEC settings, in health checks or special needs assessment.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 5.2, OECD Publishing, Paris, <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 Kazakhstan, the quality of ECEC settings is monitored once every five years. Staff quality is internally monitored through self-evaluations or peer reviews several times per year, while the frequency of external monitoring of staff performance depends on the previous monitoring result. Usually, this means once every five years, except for when complaints arise (in which case they are monitored more frequently). For unregistered or unregulated settings in Chile, regulation does not prescribe the frequency of monitoring quality; however JUNJI visits all settings at least once per year. The frequency of visits by the Quality Agency (*Agencia de la Calidad*) to registered/regulated settings depends on the last monitoring performance of each setting: settings whose performance ranks as “insufficient” must be visited every two years, and those whose performance ranks as “medium-low” must be visited every four years. Settings with a

performance ranking of “medium” are visited whenever the agency considers appropriate, and settings ranked as “high” are not subject to re-evaluative visits, but only to learning visits that aim to identify successful practices and disseminate these to other settings. In Chilean in pre-primary education settings for 4-5 year-olds, the frequency of monitoring staff quality depends on the last monitoring result. The frequency of monitoring in Finland varies by municipality and in Norway, it is not regulated. Child development is generally monitored more frequently, usually continuously through observations and/or by contributing to portfolios (OECD, 2015).

Use of results and consequences

The results from monitoring have to be made public in most jurisdictions (16 out of 24), however, sometimes not for all types of ECEC. In Kazakhstan, results are only made publicly available upon request, whereas in Chile, generic or aggregated results are commonly shared with the public. Individual staff quality monitoring results remain internal documents in Chile. In Finland, service providers have discretion over whether results are made available, although they are usually published. National evaluation results in Finland are commonly shared. In Norway, results of inspections are made available to the public upon request, but internal self-evaluations are not shared with the public. Aggregated results of staff evaluations and monitoring staff quality are also usually available to the public, while individual staff evaluations are not, due to privacy.

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 Kazakhstan, settings are required to address their shortcomings and a follow-up inspection or evaluation is planned. Poor performance may also impact on the funding settings receive: in Kazakhstan, an ECEC setting that underperforms may receive additional funding. In extreme cases, such as when a setting frequently underperforms and does not meet quality standards, a setting may be closed. In Chile, ECEC settings are required to address their shortcomings by, for instance, participating in training. Other outcomes in Chile include increased remunerations and demotions. In Finland, staff are usually required to attend training or follow-up inspections are planned. In Norway, licenses can be revoked and services closed if an ECEC setting drastically underperforms on a continuous basis.

Challenges and policy options

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

1. The monitoring of children’s views, which is currently not undertaken and may help provide policy makers and ECEC management and staff with new insights into further improving ECEC quality.
2. Ensuring that monitoring informs policies and strategies and is translated into policy reforms or changes to improve the ECEC system.

It can be challenging to ensure that monitoring leads to follow-up actions that impact quality. For this to be achieved, sufficient data is needed to better understand ECEC and what the impacts are or can be. The examples cited in this section were selected to provide insights into policies and practices in other countries that may provide a source of inspiration for Kazakhstan.

Challenge: Monitoring children's views

Research suggests that children's voices should be recognised and that they can provide useful information about their own experience in ECEC, as well as wider societal issues (Clark, 2005; McNaughton, 2003; Sorin, 2003). Children's perceptions can provide additional information on their own academic, socio-emotional and mental development. These areas are also important in staff evaluations as such additional information can help improve staff practices to better support children's early development (Measelle et al., 1998). Box 1 provides a case study from Finland, one of the few countries that currently monitors children's views.

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 (*Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö*) 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 the Finnish Government and edited by the OECD Secretariat. OECD Network on ECEC, "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November 2013

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 perspectives.

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: Ensuring monitoring informs strategies

Developing a balanced and consistent monitoring system is challenging in itself, but in addition, it must be ensured that monitoring results have a tangible effect on improving service quality and overall system performance. Monitoring results can be used to influence policy and enhance ECEC quality, which can further strengthen the quality of a country's ECEC system and result in better efficiency. Information collection from different sources, as in Australia and Sweden, can help make policy decisions or draw attention to areas that need additional support. Monitoring results can also contribute to a quality framework, as is currently the case in Germany. Examples of how countries have ensured that monitoring informs strategies are presented below.

Collect census data

- In **Australia**, it is recognised that to ensure public investments in ECEC are directed to areas of need, strong evidence is required to guide decisions on policy, which can, in turn, result in actions. One source of evidence is the data collected by the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). These data provide an opportunity to see how young children are progressing, inform policies and programmes to improve early childhood development, and help evaluate long-term strategies. Australian state and territorial governments have recognised that communities need information about early childhood development and have endorsed the AEDC as a progressive national measure. The Australian Early Development Instrument (EDI), used as a tool in early child development assessment, is a population measure of children's development as they enter school. The EDI, collected through teacher-completed checklists, is based on the teacher's knowledge and observations of children in their class and demographic information. The five developmental domains include: 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social competence; 3) emotional maturity; 4) language and cognitive skills (school-based services); and 5) communication skills and general knowledge. Governments at all levels and community organisations have been using this data to inform early childhood development policy and practice since the first national collection in 2009.

Collect data on structural quality indicators

- In **Germany**, ECEC data are collected annually in the Child and Youth Welfare Statistics (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistiken*). These statistics contain information on some aspects of structural quality, such as qualification of staff, staff per group/number of children, or group size; they also reflect on other quantitative developments in the ECEC sector, such as capacity. Monitoring the ECEC sector through the Child and Youth Welfare Statistics has raised awareness of the considerable differences regarding quality aspects (e.g. child-staff ratios) between East and West Germany, between Länder and within regions. This has led to a debate on the need for quality regulations at the national level, and possibly a national quality framework. As well as stipulating core quality parameters (such as child-staff ratios), a national framework could also include provisions for the systematic collection of data on quality aspects in ECEC services. The increased interest in the quality of ECEC has resulted in a continuous differentiation and refinement of statistical indicators. Most recently, attention has been paid to the management of ECEC in this context.

Conduct surveys to establish information about quality

- In the early childhood sector in **France**, the Ministry of Social Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé*) conducts regular surveys on staff in crèches and nursery assistants (family day care), and the spaces available and occupied at these providers. Parental surveys are also distributed every few years (the last were issued in 2002, 2007 and 2014). In-depth studies are conducted based on these surveys. The Ministry of Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*) regularly shares ECEC data and provides detailed policy briefing notes on, for instance, enrolment rates in ECEC of children below the age of 3 and development at the end of preschool/kindergarten. Such information and data informs parents, ECEC stakeholders and policy makers about the latest developments in ECEC.

Use data to establish action plans

- In **Sweden**, the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) is responsible for generating statistics on the preschool system. Every year, the Agency collects data on children, staff and costs. It aims to provide an overall view of ECEC services and establish action plans, where necessary, at the national and local level. For example, data collected at both the national and municipal level on ECEC staff and workforce supply have been used to address challenges in the sector, such as the need for more preschool teachers. The capacity for preschool teacher education has since been increased in universities. A national evaluation of Swedish preschools by the National Agency for Education in 2008 led to a revised curriculum in 2010, with new and clarified goals for children's development in language, mathematics, natural science and technology. In addition, a quality audit by the Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) in 2012 showed the need for further in-service training to increase staff knowledge. Within the framework of Boost for Pre-school 2012-2014, staff have received continuing professional development on subjects where the curriculum has been clarified and strengthened, particularly children's development in language and mathematics, natural science and technology, support for mother-tongue languages and intercultural policy, as well as follow-up and evaluation.

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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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