



# Starting Strong IV

## Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Country Note

### KOREA

#### Summary

Korea has a split Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system with two different authorities in charge: the Ministry of Health and Welfare (*보건복지부*) is responsible for children in childcare up to the age of 5, and the Ministry of Education (*교육부*) is responsible for children in kindergartens between the age of 3 and the primary school starting of 6.

The Korea Child Care Promotion Institute (*한국보육진흥원*), under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, is responsible for the monitoring of childcare centres for children aged 0-5 years, while kindergartens are monitored by regional and local education offices, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Service and staff quality are monitored in all ECEC settings in Korea, while child development is not commonly assessed although the official record of the child is legislated in kindergartens, which is similar to official school records of students. ECEC services may be required to take measures to address shortcomings, such as participation in training to improve their level of quality. Based on monitoring results, additional funding or follow-up consulting may also be provided to ECEC settings. The challenges Korea faces in monitoring ECEC include 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; the lack of an integrated monitoring system which may result in different quality standards for different providers, less even levels of quality, and less unification in ECEC; and ensuring that monitoring informs policies and strategies to improve quality in early learning.

Despite the country's efforts to monitor quality in ECEC, several challenges remain. First, Korea does not yet monitor children's views widely while this can provide useful information on quality. Second, the country has no unified monitoring system. Standardising monitoring tools and developing a unified monitoring framework can overcome this challenge. Third, it can be challenging to ensure monitoring informs strategies and policies while monitoring information can contribute to stronger policies. Greater efforts to collect data and information on ECEC can contribute to evidence-based policy-making and practices.

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

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## Key messages

- **Korea has a split ECEC system, with different ministries responsible for ECEC and responsibilities for monitoring, standard setting and financing ECEC are divided between different levels authorities.** Responsibilities for monitoring in Korea are split between the national government and regional and local authorities, while responsibilities for standard setting and curriculum development are at the national level, and both the national government and regional authorities finance ECEC, for instance financial support for education and care for 3-5 year-olds through the Nuri curriculum is provided by the integrated Local Grant for Education.
- **Service quality is monitored every three years in Korea, while staff quality is monitored yearly.** They are mainly monitored to inform policy making and the general public, improve the level of service quality, identify the development needs of staff to enhance staff performance, and for accountability purposes.
- **Inspections of service and staff quality in Korea focus on regulation compliance; curriculum implementation; materials in use; working conditions, planning of work; and financial and human resource management.** Staff quality inspections also address process quality, knowledge of subjects, professional development opportunities and child development.
- **Self-assessments of service quality have a comprehensive focus:** the overall quality of the setting; quality of staff; compliance with regulations; quality of the play and classroom environments; collaborations among staff and between management and parents; availability and use of materials; curriculum implementation; working conditions; and management and leadership.
- **For self-assessments of staff quality have a broad focus:** on the use of materials; implementation of the curriculum; teamwork with other ECEC staff; communication with parents; management and leadership skills; and working conditions.
- **A range of tools can be used during inspections and self-evaluations.** For inspections, these include observations, rating scales, checklists, interviews, surveys, results of self-evaluations and analysis of a setting's documentation. In kindergarten inspections, portfolios may also be used. The most common tools used in self-evaluation are self-reported surveys, self-reflection reports, portfolios, and checklists.
- **Peer reviews and parental surveys are used in kindergartens to assess staff performance.**<sup>1</sup> They focus on the overall quality of staff, process quality, use of materials, knowledge of subjects and curriculum implementation. Peer reviews also pay attention to time management and planning skills and teamwork, while parental surveys may ask about the communication between staff and parents and how they feel their child is developing. Parental surveys of service quality focus more on parental satisfaction with opening hours, services provided, possibilities for parental involvement, and child development.

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1. In childcare centres, parental surveys are being trialled and applied as a preliminary step. Parental monitoring and parental involvement in the provision of childcare service have been implemented for the purpose of monitoring service quality, but also to ensure collaboration between teachers and parents.

- **In Korea, both external assessors** (such as inspectors) **and internal assessors** (ECEC staff and managers conducting self-assessments) **receive on-the-job or in-service training on monitoring and evaluation.**
- **There are several monitoring challenges in Korea.** The monitoring of children's views can contribute to improving ECEC services, but children's experience of ECEC is not commonly monitored in Korea. In addition, there is no unified, national monitoring system in Korea.<sup>2</sup> Setting up comprehensive quality goals, developing one framework for the whole ECEC sector or a central monitoring framework can strengthen Korea's monitoring ECEC system. Another option would be to standardise monitoring tools to unify monitoring methods across the country. Besides, it is important that monitoring results are used to influence policy and practice as this can further strengthening the quality of a country's ECEC system. For this, additional data on ECEC can be collected through, for instance, surveys, and data can be used to develop action plans or evidence-based policies.

### Introduction

The data and information in this country note for Korea 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.<sup>3</sup>

This country note primarily aims to provide opportunities for peer-learning by highlighting Korea'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 Korea regarding key areas of monitoring quality in ECEC, of the types of challenges for Korea in monitoring quality, which have been identified by the OECD ECEC team in close consultation with the Korean 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 some monitor only one. Sometimes aspects are integrated into the monitoring tool of another aspect, for example, curriculum implementation can be monitored when evaluating quality at a more general service level, or when assessing staff performance; and monitoring general staff performance can be part of the service quality evaluation procedure. Therefore, aspects of ECEC quality that are monitored are not mutually exclusive (see also Litjens, 2013).

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2 .Between the time of data collection, verification and publication, some changes occurred in Korea, and colleagues from the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education provided the updated information that the index of national evaluation of kindergartens and child care centres were integrated in 2016. It is expected that the unified monitoring indicators will be applied in the coming years.

3. 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).

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 Korea, this refers to childcare centres for children under the age of 5, and kindergartens for children aged between 3 and 5.

Korea chose to be compared with Finland, France and New Zealand in this country note. Broad comparisons and examples from other countries are used in this note as well. For Finland, the data in this note refers to five types of ECEC settings: home-based family day-care for all children below the age of 6 years; group family day-care for all 0-6 year-olds; day-care centres for 0-6 year-olds; open ECEC settings for 0-6 year-olds; and pre-primary education for 6-year-olds. For France, this note focuses mainly on home-based family day-care provisions for children up to age 2-3, centre-based community crèches for children from 0-2/3, and pre-primary schools (or *écoles maternelles* in French) for children from the age of 3 (or 2 in disadvantaged areas) until they start primary school at the age of 6. For New Zealand, the information refers to centre-based provisions (including education and care services for 0-5 year-olds and kindergartens for 2-5 year-olds), playcentres for 0-5 years, and home-based care for 0-5 year-olds. 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 areas of service quality, staff quality, curriculum implementation and child development and outcomes. The remaining sections focus on Korea’s monitoring policies and practices in comparison with Finland, France and New Zealand. 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 Korea 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***

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 Korea stands in international comparison**

### ***How quality is defined in Korea***

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

*Strong IV* study set out their definition of ECEC quality in their curricula or legislation. Alternatively they may set out quality expectations through minimum requirements or educational or developmental objectives for staff to achieve.

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

Two curricula for ECEC further define quality in ECEC in Korea. The standardised childcare curriculum for all children aged 0-2 explains the goals of ECEC and what is expected of staff. The Nuri curriculum does the same for ECEC settings that serve children aged 3-5 (or up to 6 depending on school entry). Hence, quality in Korea, as in most countries, is implicitly defined through minimum standards and curricula. A unified evaluation system (with unified quality standards) for kindergarten and childcare centres is being considered. Currently, childcare centres and kindergartens are still split, however initiatives are taking place to improve integration.

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 population<sup>4</sup> (STAKES, 2005). These frameworks complement the regulatory standards in setting out what constitutes ECEC quality in Finland.

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

New Zealand regulations indicate that all licensed ECEC settings in the country have to implement *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum framework. The regulations, in combination with the curriculum framework, provide an indication of what constitutes quality for New Zealand. The early

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



childhood curriculum framework describes outcomes for ECEC settings in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and provides staff pedagogical guidance on how these can be achieved.

### *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.

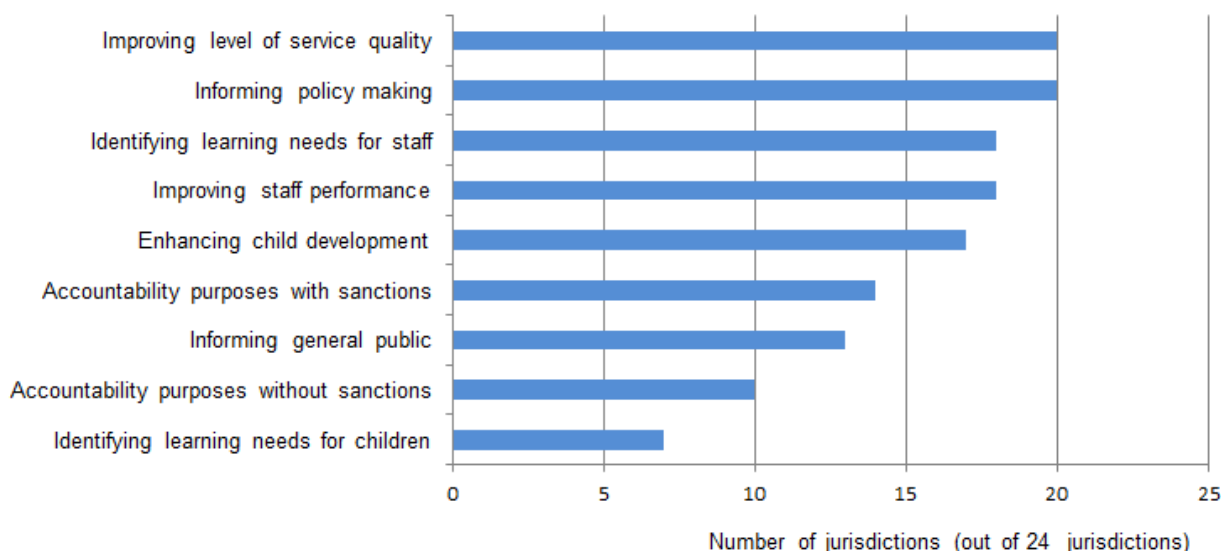
Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 3.1, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933243059>.

In all four countries discussed in this country note, service quality is monitored to enhance the level of quality in ECEC provisions, to inform policy-making, and for accountability purposes (although only in Korea and New Zealand are sanctions or rewards used). Korea, France and New Zealand also monitor service quality to inform the public of the level of quality, while Korea, Finland and New Zealand do so with the purpose of enhancing staff performance. Korea and Finland also monitor service quality to identify the learning needs of staff, and in Finland and New Zealand to stimulate children's development. Finland is the only country out of the four to monitor service quality to identify the learning needs of young children (OECD, 2015).

Korea, Finland and France monitor staff quality for similar purposes: for accountability purposes without sanctions or rewards; to inform policy making; to improve the level of quality provided; to

enhance staff performance; to identify developmental learning needs of staff; and to enhance child development. Korea also aims to inform the general public and Finland aims to identify the learning needs of children. New Zealand monitors for two main purposes: to identify the learning needs of staff and to improve staff performance (OECD, 2015).

**Figure 2. Purposes of monitoring staff quality**



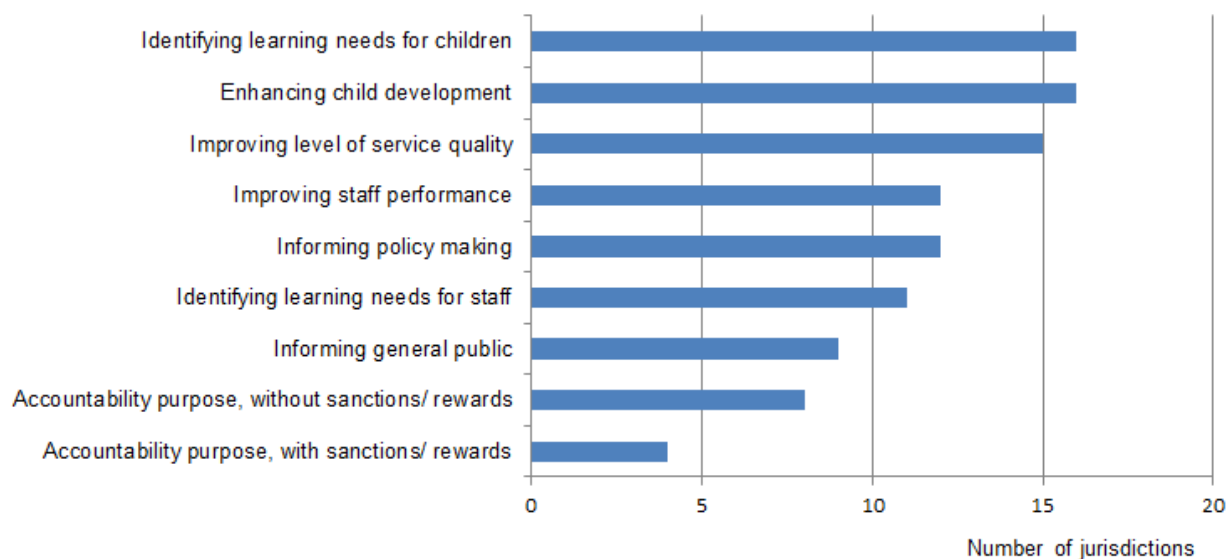
Note: Purposes of monitoring staff quality are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

Source: OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Table 4.1, OECD Publishing, Paris, <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).

Korea does not commonly monitor children's development, however in Finland, France and New Zealand children's developmental outcomes are monitored in order to improve the quality of the setting and to identify areas in which children may need additional support. Finland and New Zealand also monitor child development to identify possible training needs of staff, while Finland and France aim to improve staff performance. Finland also undertakes monitoring to enhance child development, and France aims to inform policy making and the general public (see Figure 3 for a complete overview).

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, Paris, <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. In Korea, the Child Care Promotion Institute, under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, monitors childcare settings at the national level, while regional and local education offices, under the Ministry of Education, are responsible for monitoring kindergartens. In Finland’s decentralised system, responsibility for monitoring is at the regional and municipal level, where regional state administrative agencies conduct inspections together with the municipalities and settings. Inspections are conducted when a complaint or problem has been identified in an ECEC setting. Monitoring in France is done at the national level, where the Ministry in charge of the respective setting is also responsible for monitoring. In New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO), a national agency, is responsible for conducting external evaluations or inspections of all ECEC settings.

External inspections and internal self-evaluation are the most common practices used to monitor service and staff quality. All four countries use these tools, although inspections are only used to monitor service quality in New Zealand; and internal self-evaluations are only used to monitor staff quality in Finland and only crèches and family day-care in France (see Table 1). Parental surveys may be used to monitor service and/or staff quality in Korea for kindergartens. Parental surveys are sometimes used in Finland to monitor service quality and in France to monitor staff quality in pre-primary school. Peer reviews are commonly used to monitor staff quality in Korean kindergartens and in all New Zealand ECEC settings. New Zealand indicated that staff appraisals, identified as peer reviews in Table 1, are commonly undertaken by leaders or managers.

Table 1. Monitoring practices for service and staff quality

	Type of setting	External practices			Internal practices		
		Inspections	Surveys	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Tests for staff	Self-assessment/evaluation
Korea	Childcare centres	X					X
	Kindergartens	X	X		X (Staff)		X
Finland*	All ECEC settings	X	X (Service)				X (Staff)
France	Community crèches and family day care	X	X				X
	Pre-primary school	X	X (Staff)				
New Zealand*	All ECEC settings	X (Service)			X (Staff)		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 and France commonly use narrative assessments in combination with observational tools, while New Zealand uses mostly narrative assessments, such as learning story frameworks and portfolios (OECD, 2015).

### *Areas and scope of monitoring*

There are a number of different aspects that can be monitored in relation to service<sup>5</sup> and staff quality.<sup>6</sup> When monitoring child development, other aspects more directly related to outcomes, skills, and aptitudes a child can develop are monitored. These include language and literacy skills, numeracy skills, socio-emotional skills, motor skills, autonomy, creative skills, practical skills, health development, well-being, science skills, and information and communications technology (ICT) skills. Korea does not

5. 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.

6. 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.

monitor child development, so information about this area is only presented for the selected comparison countries.

### 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
Korea	Childcare centres	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Kindergartens	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finland	All ECEC settings	X		X	X		X					
France	Community crèches and family day-care	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
	Pre-primary school	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
New Zealand*	All ECEC settings	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

*Note:* For New Zealand, data on inspections refer to the inspections conducted by ERO and do not refer to the inspections conducted by the Ministry of Education for licensing purposes. The aspects monitored through inspections for licensing purposes cover different aspects. In New Zealand, ERO has evaluation indicators in place for its reviews of education and care centres, kindergartens and playcentres. ERO also has separate evaluation indicators for its reviews of *Kōhanga Reo* (Māori language family programme). ERO has recently revised its evaluation indicators for reviews of home-based services and is in the process of revising its indicators for hospital-based early childhood services.

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

All four countries monitor staff-child ratios, health and hygiene regulations, safety requirements, and minimum staff qualifications. Korea is the only country to monitor all aspects listed in Table 2. Finland's inspections of service quality have a strong focus on regulatory aspects, and inspections in the other three countries commonly focus on additional aspects, but often differ across types of settings. France's crèche and family day care inspections have a stronger focus on regulatory aspects than inspections of pre-primary schools. For both settings, staff-child ratios, space requirements, health and hygiene and safety regulations are monitored. In childcare settings, minimum staff qualifications, working conditions, and human and financial resource management is monitored. The other three countries also monitor regulatory aspects such as ratios, space, health, and safety regulations. In French pre-primary schools, implementation of the curriculum and staff planning are also monitored. In

New Zealand, 9 (out of 11) aspects of service quality are monitored across all settings through inspections conducted by ERO. The only aspects not monitored by ERO are indoor/outdoor space (although space is monitored by the Ministry of Education for licensing purposes) and staff working conditions. Self-assessments of quality in New Zealand tend to focus on different aspects to those assessed during external inspections, for example, stronger attention is given to communication amongst staff members and between staff and parents (OECD, 2015).

Parental surveys are used in Korean kindergartens, as well as in French and Finnish ECEC settings. Parental surveys focus on the overall quality of the setting, quality of the rooms, the day schedules and opening hours. Parental surveys in Korea and Finland may also survey parents about the quality of instruction and their level of satisfaction regarding the information shared by staff and management, the materials used in the setting, the possibilities for parental involvement, and how they think their child is experiencing the ECEC setting. Finland may also include questions on possibilities for parental networking and the relevance of the ECEC curriculum regarding, for instance, learning and development at home (OECD, 2015).

### *Staff quality*

The performance appraisal system in an ECEC setting focuses on the implementation of the curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and instruction, teamwork and communication, the communication between staff and parents, management and leadership, and overall process quality (OECD, 2015).

Korea has the broadest scope for inspections of staff quality. Similar aspects are monitored in French crèches and family day care (French childcare settings), these include: process quality; the materials in use; staff qualifications; overall quality of teaching; teamwork and communication among staff; time management and planning; staff knowledge of subjects, working conditions; and the professional development of staff. Korea's inspections also commonly address curriculum implementation and management and leadership. Curriculum implementation is monitored in French pre-primary schools, as are child development outcomes. Finland has a similar focus of inspections as Korea, but does not monitor management and leadership, communication between staff and parents, or child outcomes. In New Zealand, ERO monitors the systems and processes that early childhood services use for managing staff performance, including staff appraisal. However, it does not conduct individual staff assessments, which are conducted internally in ECEC settings. ERO investigates the quality of the systems and processes for staff appraisal. Any matters of compliance are reported to the Education Council, which is responsible for teacher registration and ongoing certification.

Self-evaluations of staff quality in Korea focus on the use of materials, curriculum implementation, and communication between staff and parents, as well as the staff member's relationships with colleagues, management and leadership skills, and work conditions. New Zealand's self-evaluations have a similar focus but do not commonly include the use of materials and work conditions, instead they may focus on the overall quality of teaching and process quality. In French childcare and family-based care settings, self-evaluations have a similar focus as in Korea, except curriculum implementation is not included as there is no national curriculum for childcare in France. Overall and process quality and time management and planning skills are commonly addressed in self-evaluations within French care settings (OECD, 2015).

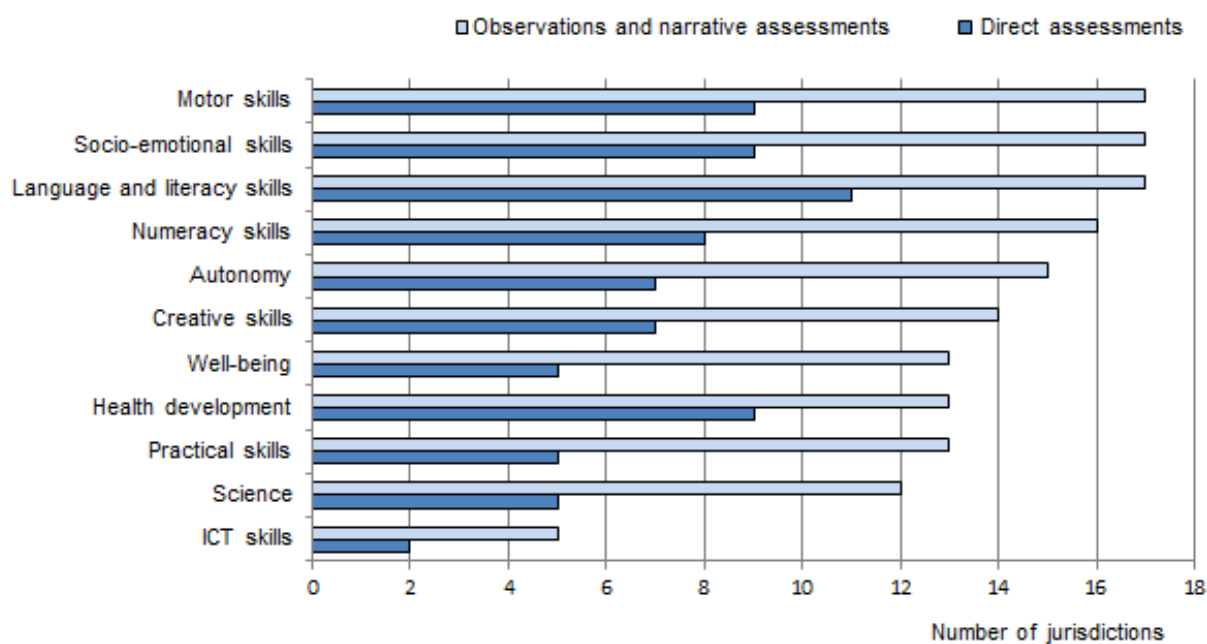
Peer reviews and parental surveys are currently only used in Korean kindergartens to assess staff performance, however, these tools are currently being trialed in childcare centres. Peer reviews and parental surveys focus on the overall quality of staff, process quality, use of materials, knowledge of subjects and curriculum implementation. Peer reviews also pay attention to time management and planning skills and teamwork. Parental surveys may ask about the communication of staff with the

parents and how they feel their child is developing. Peer reviews in New Zealand have a similar focus as their self-evaluation procedures (OECD, 2015).

### *Child development and outcomes*

Among the participating countries, the most common aspects of child development monitored are language and literacy, socio-emotional skills and motor skills. Language and literacy skills are more commonly monitored through direct assessments than socio-emotional and motor skills. Observations and narrative assessments, rather than direct assessments, are more likely to be used to assess children's development. In Finland, all areas listed in Figure 4 are commonly monitored, except for ICT skills. In New Zealand, the areas assessed vary by setting and within settings. In French pre-primary schools, the common aspects monitored are: language and literacy skills, numeracy, science, socio-emotional skills, motor development and autonomy. In Korea, there is no official monitoring or assessment of children's outcomes, however, in kindergartens it is common to prepare a record of each child that is similar to official school records of primary school students.

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



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

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

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

### *Monitoring system design, responsibilities and evaluator training*

#### *Design*

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

In Korea, monitoring systems for childcare and kindergarten have been developed at the national level. The Ministry of Health and Welfare designed and developed the monitoring system on quality for childcare centres. For kindergartens, the Ministry of Education is responsible.

In Finland, there is no one single 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, 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 France, monitoring systems for childcare settings (community crèches and family day-care) and pre-primary schools have been set up and developed by different authorities. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (*Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé*) developed the monitoring system for childcare settings at the national level. At the local level, the mother and child protection services (*Protection Maternelle et Infantile* or *PMI*) services and the Family Allowances Fund (*Caisse des allocations familiales*) are involved in developing the local monitoring system. The Ministry of Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*) developed the system for pre-primary schools.

In New Zealand, ERO designed the monitoring system in consultation with the ECEC sector and the Ministry of Education. ERO is responsible for evaluating and publicly reporting on the quality of education and care of children in all New Zealand schools and early childhood services. ERO has an ongoing programme to review its evaluation methodologies. In 2012-13 it revised its methodology for centre-based services, and it has recently reviewed its methodology for reviews of home-based education and care services. It is currently revising the way it reviews hospital-based education and care services, which represent a small but unique part of its ECEC sector.

### *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 years and above) are split between different ministries or authorities. There also tend to be different providers for childcare and early education. Finland and New Zealand have an integrated ECEC system with one ministry responsible for ECEC at the national level, while Korea and France have a split system.

In Korea, the Ministry of Health and Welfare is responsible for children in childcare up to the age of 5 years, and the Ministry of Education for children in kindergartens between 3 and primary school starting age (6 years). In France, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for all children below pre-primary school age, and the Ministry of National Education has responsibility for pre-primary education. In Finland and New Zealand, the Ministry of Education has responsibility for ECEC.

In Korea, standard setting and curriculum development is done at the national level, while national and regional authorities undertake financing. Monitoring responsibilities are shared between the national, regional and local governments. In France, monitoring is the only ECEC responsibility held by the national level; responsibility for standard setting, curriculum development and financing ECEC are shared between the national government and local authorities. In Finland, responsibilities are shared between the central and municipal level. Standard setting is done at the national level, while responsibilities for financing and curriculum development are shared between the national and municipal level. Curriculum frameworks in Finland are designed at the national level, but municipalities are expected to adapt the guidelines and frameworks to the needs of their area. In New Zealand,



responsibility for certain aspects of ECEC quality (financing, minimum standard setting, curriculum development and monitoring of quality) is held at the central government level.

Funding for monitoring ECEC services in OECD countries comes from a mix of public and private sources. Public funding can be from national, regional or local/municipal governments. In some countries, the funding sources for monitoring quality differ depending on the type of setting. For the monitoring of Korean ECEC settings, funding comes from all three levels of government: national, regional and local authorities. In France, monitoring of pre-primary schools is mainly funded from national public funding, while childcare monitoring is funded by national and local authorities and some private funding. In Finland, the National Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) (*Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus*) took responsibility for the national evaluations of ECEC in August 2015, and responsibility for monitoring is now held at the national level. However, evaluations of individual settings, planned and conducted by themselves, remain the responsibility of municipalities, which are also funded at the municipal level. In New Zealand, the funding for monitoring comes from the national government (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. Finland is the only country that does not provide specific training on monitoring for either external or internal evaluators (see Table 3). Some evaluators have specific formal training, but it is not systematic. In Korea and France, external evaluators (such as inspectors) and internal evaluators (such as staff conducting self-assessments or peer reviews) receive on-the-job or in-service training on monitoring and evaluation. In Korea, teacher education prepares staff for their internal evaluation role. In New Zealand, ERO evaluators participate in on-the-job or in-service professional learning and development. In addition, evaluators have the opportunity to undertake further tertiary-level study in evaluation. ECEC professionals and managers with evaluator roles also receive training on evaluations, although this training differs from the training for ERO evaluators (OECD, 2015).

**Table 3. Training of external and internal evaluators**

		No, not specifically	Yes, through pre-service education/training	Yes, through on-the-job or in-service training
<b>Korea</b>	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors		X	X
<b>Finland*</b>	External assessors	X		
	Internal assessors	X		
<b>France</b>	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors			X
<b>New Zealand</b>	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.

Source: 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*

#### *Service quality*

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

In France, a range of tools and instruments are used for inspections, including observations, checklists (in childcare only), interviews, surveys taken by management/staff, and analysis of internal documentation. Similar tools may be used in Korea for inspections, for example, surveys taken by inspectors, rating scales and the results of self-evaluations. Results of parental surveys may also be used in kindergarten inspections. In Finland, no data collection instruments are prescribed, and these therefore differ between municipalities or ECEC settings. New Zealand makes common use of interviews and observations, which are complemented by the results of self-evaluations (OECD, 2015).

Internal evaluation is often used in combination with external evaluation/inspections to monitor service quality; this is the case in Korea and New Zealand and in French childcare 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 Korea, self-reflection journals and self-reported questionnaires are most commonly used and may also be complemented by portfolios and checklists. In France, self-reflection journals and self-reported questionnaires are also most commonly used. The data collection processes or instruments used to carry out internal evaluations in New Zealand vary across settings.

#### *Staff quality*

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

External monitoring and evaluation practices of staff quality include inspections, parental surveys, and peer reviews. Similar to the monitoring of service quality, inspections (external evaluations) of staff quality are undertaken in all 24 jurisdictions. In Korea, observations, rating scales, checklists, interviews, results of self-evaluations and the studying of internal documentation may be used, as well as inspection surveys, surveys taken by management and staff, parental survey results, and portfolios of work. In France, similar tools are used for inspections of service quality and staff quality. In Finland, no instruments or tools are prescribed at the national level, as with service quality, and municipalities or settings determine the instruments used during inspections.

Internal monitoring procedures are also conducted for staff quality. In all four countries, self-assessments are commonly used to monitor staff performance (although only in childcare settings in France). In Korea, as with service quality, self-reported questionnaires and self-reflection journals are most commonly used, in addition to checklists and portfolios. France also mainly uses self-reported questionnaires and self-reflection journals. In New Zealand, self-reflection journals and portfolios are most commonly used. Tools or instruments for self-evaluations differ between municipalities or settings in Finland. When peer reviews are conducted, the evaluation processes used in Korea are portfolios, observations and rating scales. Observations and portfolios are also used in New Zealand, and can be complemented by the results of the staff member's self-evaluation and analysis of staff documentation (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 4 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. France and Finland report using both narrative assessments and observational tools when monitoring children in pre-primary school. Portfolios and checklists are most commonly used in France. In Finland, narrative assessments and observational tools are also used, in addition to storytelling tools and rating scales. New Zealand tends to use narrative assessments for monitoring child development. Direct assessments are not commonly used in any of the three countries (OECD, 2015).

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

Country	Direct assessments		Narrative assessments		Observational tools	
	Tests for children	Screening	Storytelling	Portfolios	Rating scales	Checklists
<b>Korea</b>						
<b>Finland*</b>			X	X	X	X
<b>France</b>				X		X
<b>New Zealand</b>			X	X		

*Note:* 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.

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

### Frequency

Service quality is generally monitored a set number of times by the responsible monitoring body. Frequency of monitoring often varies across different types of ECEC. In France, service and staff quality is monitored once every two to three years. In Korea, staff quality is monitored every year in public kindergartens, while private kindergartens are monitored at the discretion of the setting. Service quality is monitored in every three years in kindergartens and child care centres in Korea. In Finland, monitoring occurs on the basis of complaints, meaning that the frequency varies across settings.

In New Zealand, the frequency of ERO's external evaluation depends on the last monitoring result. In centre and home-based services, ERO provides a judgment about "how well placed the service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children". If the service is very well placed, the next ERO review is in four years; if well placed it is in three years; if the service requires further development a review will take place within two years; and if not well placed the Ministry of Education will be asked to re-assess the service's license. The process for determining the frequency of reviews differs for home-based care, where reviews occur every 3 years or 12 months, depending on the last review result. Staff in New Zealand ECEC settings are usually internally evaluated once per year. Child development is, in general, monitored on a more frequent basis, usually continuously through observations and/or 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 Korea, results for service quality are made publically available, while in France results are not usually shared with the general public. In New Zealand, ERO reports for individual early childhood services are made public. ERO also publishes national evaluation reports that are made available to the public. These reports provide system level information in relation to specific topics, inform policy decisions and provide ECEC services with examples of good practice. For staff quality in Korea, aggregated results of staff evaluations and monitoring are also usually available to the public, while these remain internal documents in France. In Finland, evaluation results have to be made publically available.

Countries take various actions or impose consequences when the results from monitoring service quality do not meet the minimum standards set by the service or body responsible. Actions can include funding cuts, follow up inspections, obligatory staff training, or closure of services. There can also be positive outcomes for services from monitoring results, for example, services can have a competitive advantage compared to other services, or remuneration can be increased in line with monitoring outcomes. In France, settings are required to address their shortcomings by, for instance, participating in training, and a follow-up inspection or evaluation is planned. In extreme cases, a setting may be closed. In Korea, revoking licenses and closing settings was not indicated as a possible consequence of poor monitoring results. Teachers who are recognised as excellent by the Appraisal for Kindergarten Teacher Professional Development receive additional funding for self-development, which they can use to take sabbatical leave or fund further training courses. In Finland, staff are usually required to take training, or follow-up inspections are planned and licenses can be revoked, if a setting consistently does not meet the minimum quality standards. In New Zealand, the potential consequences of a poor ERO evaluation result are initially a follow-up inspection. ECEC services that underperform are required to address these issues and work with the Ministry of Education to develop an action plan. When no improvement is shown, or when settings frequently do not meet the regulations, the Ministry can re-assess the setting's license and decide on the closure of the service.

### **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. Korea'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. The lack of an integrated monitoring system.
3. Ensuring that monitoring can inform strategies and policies.

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

### **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 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.

*Source:* Draft case study provided by Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and edited by the OECD Secretariat.

Involvement of children in monitoring practices can provide valuable insights into how children experience certain pedagogical practices, which can contribute to improved child development experiences. Other countries have also implemented measures to collect information on children's experiences.

#### **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: No unified, integrated national monitoring system***

Korea applies a split ECEC system where childcare centres and kindergartens are separate from each other and each has its own evaluation system. Such a split often results in different quality standards and levels of quality and less unification in ECEC. This same issue is visible in Italy. After recognising that it had no monitoring system at the national level to cover its various ECEC settings, Italy is now aiming to set up an integrated 0-6 ECEC system and, within this, a specific uniform quality monitoring and evaluation system. The aim is to make the local, fragmented system more systematic and coherent at the national level by: developing a system for monitoring qualitative aspects, including children's non-cognitive competencies, such as well-being and approaches to learning; developing a system that can pass on relevant information to decision-making bodies in the delivery of ECEC; and planning a monitoring system that will not interfere with the delivery of ECEC services but, instead, promote their continuous improvement.

Common practices used to overcome the challenge of not having a national unified, integrated monitoring system are to set out quality goals for the whole ECEC sector, develop a central monitoring framework and standardise monitoring tools. Examples from countries that have undertaken these practices are presented below:

*Setting out explicit, clear and comprehensive quality goals in a framework for the whole ECEC sector*

- In July 2009, all states and territorial governments in **Australia** agreed to an overarching National Early Childhood Development Strategy (Investing in the Early Years) to ensure that by 2020, all children in Australia have a chance at the best start in life and a better future for themselves and the nation. As part of this initiative, all jurisdictions signed the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care in December 2009, in explicit recognition of the importance of high-quality, accessible and affordable ECEC for children and families. The National Partnership Agreement falls under the umbrella of the broader National Early Childhood Development Strategy.
- **The French Community of Belgium** drafted the Code of Quality of Care (*code de qualité de l'accueil*) at the community level, setting out for all childcare providers the principles of quality care for children aged 0 to 12. The Code is laid down in the French Community's Decree of Government, enacted in December 2003. To provide consistent high-quality childcare, every childcare provider is required to implement certain quality aspects in accordance with the Code.

*Developing a central monitoring framework*

- In **Ireland**, *Stolta*, the National Quality Framework, has been designed to define, assess and support the improvement of quality across all aspects of practice in ECEC settings. It was published in 2006, following a three-year developmental process, which involved consultation

with more than 50 diverse organisations representing childcare workers, teachers, parents, policy makers, researchers and other interested parties. *Síolta* is comprised of three distinct but interrelated elements: principles, standards and components of quality. The 12 principles provide the overall vision of the framework, while the 16 standards and 75 components allow for the practical application of this vision across all aspects of ECEC practice. In settings where the *Síolta* Quality Assurance Programme has been implemented, staff begin with a baseline assessment of how good their practice is and then plan for improvement. As a follow-up measure they must show how they have improved the quality of their practice through a portfolio of evidence.

- Until 2013, the **Flemish Community of Belgium** had no uniform method of monitoring the childcare sector. This was acknowledged as a weakness, and as a result, the Measuring and Monitoring Quality project (MeMoQ) was launched in November 2013. Projected to take effect after three years, part of its task is to formulate a pedagogical framework that takes into account the economical, pedagogical and social objectives of childcare. The goal is a vision document, rather than a manual, that explains what is meant by “pedagogical quality” and offers some pedagogical principles and a description of how to provide integrated development opportunities to each child. A “scientific instrument” will also be developed to measure the quality of childcare in Flanders and provide an indication of overall national quality. These measures will help develop a monitoring instrument to be used by the Care Inspection Agency in all settings. Monitoring, for both public and private settings, will be made more coherent, and a self-evaluation instrument will be developed to help ECEC settings identify their weaknesses and strengths themselves.
- In **Germany**, although services are required to comply with basic standards for accreditation, ECEC providers have traditionally had considerable freedom to deliver services and define quality goals according to their own values. This is characteristic of German ECEC and considered the basis for parents’ right of choice, which is legally guaranteed. ECEC policy development in Germany involves co-operative governance and consensus building rather than top-down measures, and its approach to quality assurance is based on support and co-operation rather than control. As a result, monitoring occurs at the state rather than the national level; each state can have its own monitoring framework. Most large welfare organisations have established their own quality assessment systems. Local Youth Welfare Offices employ specialist counsellors (*Fachberater*) and state supervisors (*Heimaufsicht*) who monitor settings only after complaints have been filed. Any initiatives to introduce a single coherent state-wide monitoring system have to strike a balance between uniform standard setting and respect for the diverse profiles and strategies of providers. For instance, when the new monitoring system in Berlin was implemented, quality assessment systems operated by providers were aligned with the requirements of the Berlin Education Program (*Berliner Bildungsprogramm*), the curriculum of Berlin, and accredited, rather than replaced. The monitoring system still allows for provider-specific priorities and variations. Providers are obliged to implement a quality development system, but can choose freely which tools and processes they apply.
- **Norway** acknowledged that the lack of a comprehensive monitoring system meant that it did not have adequate information on the quality of all its kindergartens. As a result, in 2013 the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*) was asked to develop a national quality assessment system for kindergartens. One of the main objectives was to increase accessibility to reliable information on the subject as the basis of a more informed discussion at all levels. Another goal included developing an online publication of statistical indicators for kindergartens.

- **Finland** does not monitor the performance of schools, and school inspections were abolished in 1991. However, a great deal of emphasis is placed on monitoring learning outcomes of children throughout their education, including ECEC. Before 2014, evaluations of education were conducted by three organisations: the Finnish Education Evaluation Council (*Korkeakoulutuksen arviointineuvosto*), the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (*Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvosto*) and the National Board of Education (*Opetushallitus*). To consolidate and centralise the evaluation process, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the Education Evaluation Plan (Koulutuksen arviointisuunnitelma), which led to the creation of an Education Evaluation Centre in 2014. The centralisation of the evaluation process aims to provide clearer evaluations of higher impact as they are now conducted and produced by a single organisation. This should also lead to more coherent national evaluations, which will help the Finnish government in making international comparisons.

#### *Standardising monitoring tools*

- In the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, a standardised tool, known as the CIPO model, is used to perform inspections in kindergartens. It has been used since 1991 and was approved as part of the Resolution of the Decree on the Quality of Education (*Kwaliteitsdecreet*) in 2010. CIPO stands for its four components: context, input, processes and output. Each component is broken down into a number of indicators based on the parameters that are found, through research or experience, to influence the quality of education. The model allows the inspectorate to focus on outputs supported by the process indicators without resulting in a process evaluation. This makes it possible to respect the school's autonomy and its pedagogical project and activities, while judging its output in a standardised manner within the specificity of each school.
- In **Germany**, providers can freely choose the quality assessment tools or schemes they apply. However, they often base the quality monitoring system on standardised monitoring tools that are aligned with provider-specific value profiles and priorities. One of these standards is the DIN ISO 9000, as formulated by the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO), an independent, non-governmental membership organisation and the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards. The ISO 9000 family of standards addresses various aspects of quality management and provides guidance and tools for organisations that seek to ensure that their products and services consistently meet customers' requirements, and that quality is consistently improved. The *Deutsche Institut für Normierung* (DIN) is the German institution responsible for ISO standards. The *Kindergarten-Einschätz-Skala* (Kindergarten Evaluation Scale or KES), a German adaptation of the Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) developed by the German pedagogical professor Wolfgang Tietze, is also used. KES was revised in 2001, becoming KES-R, and is currently under further revision. At present, it contains 43 different rating indicators linked to physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas. It aims to capture all the factors that immediately influence the experience of children in ECEC settings. Germany also uses the *Krippen-Skala* (KRIPS-R) (Crèche-Scale) to support pedagogical quality in ECEC settings, which is based on the American Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS). KRIPS includes 41 indicators that provide a comprehensive overview of pedagogical process in day nurseries.
- In **England (United Kingdom)**, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspectors adhere to a standardised inspection procedure set out in a document published by Ofsted that outlines the expected inspection process in detail. Inspectors have a standardised set of indicators, which they use to evaluate settings and their performance.



### *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 higher 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 Jugendhilfestatistik*). 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 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 regularly shares ECEC data and provides detailed policy briefing notes on, for instance, enrolment rates in ECEC of children below the age of three 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 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 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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