



Starting Strong IV

Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care Country Note

NEW ZEALAND

Summary

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the licensing body of Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings in New Zealand. It monitors and enforces compliance with regulations including structural aspects of quality, such as ratios, qualifications, indoor and outdoor space requirements, and centre size; as well as the implementation of *Te Whāriki*, the country's ECE curriculum. Failure to comply with regulations can lead to interventions by the MoE.

In New Zealand, structural and process quality aspects are monitored through external evaluations. The Education Review Office (ERO) is the external evaluation agency/department that focuses on quality in relation to: governance and management, leadership, curriculum and associated teaching practice, partnerships with parents, and internal evaluation/self-review. Changes introduced by ERO in 2012-13 have sought to better align the internal evaluation and external evaluation processes.

Service quality is primarily monitored through external evaluations undertaken by the ERO. A broad range of service quality aspects are monitored through external evaluations and across settings. Monitoring results of service quality have to be made available to the public. The potential consequences of poor evaluation results in New Zealand are a follow-up evaluation and assistance from the Ministry of Education to improve or, in exceptional cases, close the service. The ERO does not directly appraise staff, but evaluates the system and processes for staff appraisal. Within ECEC services, the monitoring of staff quality for registered and certified teachers is carried out through staff appraisal processes using peer reviews and self-evaluations against defined criteria. Children's learning and development is assessed (monitored) through narrative assessments, such as storytelling and portfolios. The areas monitored vary by setting and within settings in New Zealand.

While New Zealand has implemented great efforts to monitor quality in ECEC, several challenges remain. These include improving quality through the use of external evaluations, a more efficient management of the external evaluation processes and resources by ERO, increasing the capacity and capability of ECEC services to evaluate their own performance, and strengthening continuity for learners as they transition from early childhood education to school. New Zealand implemented some strategies to overcome these challenges, such as the development of evaluation indicators, the implementation of cluster reviews, supporting settings in conducting internal evaluations, and strengthening collaborations between ECEC and school settings. The monitoring quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) country note for New Zealand is based on findings presented in the report of OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies. A separate OECD (2016) [Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: New Zealand](#) provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in New Zealand.

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For more information on Early Childhood Education and Care, visit www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood.

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Key messages

- **Reviews of Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings are conducted by the Education Review Office (ERO)**, and as part of this review, each ECE setting is required to complete an attestation which indicates that the setting is meeting the minimum legal requirements and regulations.
- **ERO evaluates how well-placed each service is to promote positive outcomes for children through checking regulation compliance** with a specific focus on the following areas: emotional safety, physical safety, hygiene, suitable staffing, evacuation procedures and practices in case of a fire or earthquake.
- **Service quality is primarily monitored through external evaluations undertaken by ERO.** A broad variety of service quality aspects are being monitored through external evaluations and across settings. These include management, leadership, curriculum planning and implementation, internal evaluation and partnerships with parents. Changes introduced by the Education Review Office in 2012-13 have sought to better align internal evaluation and external evaluation processes.
- **ERO's evaluators receive initial induction and training and ongoing professional learning and development.** ECE staff can also receive on-the-job training on the topic of internal evaluation/self-review and monitoring.
- **Monitoring individual staff quality is carried out internally in New Zealand through peer reviews and self-evaluations that use nationally mandated criteria.** The following aspects of staff quality are monitored: process quality, curriculum implementation, overall quality of teaching/instruction, team work and communication, communication between staff and parents, and management and leadership.
- **Internal staff appraisal procedures focus on individual performances, individual relationships between staff and children, and communication between individual staff members.** Internal performance appraisal systems are reviewed by ERO as part of their regular review. Any issues with appraisal requirements are referred to the Education Council, the professional regulatory body for the teaching profession in New Zealand.
- **In New Zealand, child learning and development is assessed (monitored) through narrative assessments, such as storytelling and portfolios.** This is monitored to improve the level of service quality, to identify learning needs for staff and to identify learning needs for children. The specific development areas monitored vary by setting and within setting in New Zealand.
- **There are several monitoring challenges in New Zealand.** Including using external evaluations to improve quality; improving the efficiency of ERO's external evaluation processes and resources; increasing the capacity and capability of ECEC services to conduct self-evaluations and; strengthening continuity between ECEC and primary school. New Zealand has started to address these challenges through the development of robust evaluation indicators of quality ECEC and the implementation of cluster reviews, the development of resources to help settings in internal evaluations, and the collection of best practices and strengthening collaborations to emphasise the importance of continuous learning.

Introduction

The data and information in this country note for New Zealand are based on findings from the OECD (2015), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* report that covers 24 OECD member and non-member economies, the OECD Network on ECEC's Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development that was conducted in 2013 and validated in 2014/15.¹ Between the time of data collection, verification and publication, several changes occurred in New Zealand, and colleagues from New Zealand have provided some updated information since the publication of *Starting Strong IV*, which are reflected in this country note. A separate OECD [*Starting Strong IV Early Childhood Education and Care Data Country Note: New Zealand*](#) provides an overview of ECEC policy inputs, outputs and outcomes in New Zealand. This country note primarily aims to provide opportunities for peer-learning by highlighting New Zealand'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 New Zealand regarding key areas of monitoring quality in ECEC, of the types of challenges for New Zealand in monitoring quality, which have been identified by the OECD ECEC team in close consultation with the colleagues in New Zealand. It also provides insights to understand various approaches and practices used for monitoring quality.

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

In line with previous reports from the Starting Strong series, the term Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) "includes all arrangements providing care and education for children under compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content" (OECD, 2015: 19). In New Zealand, there are five main types of ECEC settings, which are broadly split between centre-based provisions (including education and care services for 0-5 year-olds and kindergartens for 2-5 year-olds), playcentres for 0-5 year-olds, and home-based education and care for 0-5 year-olds. The national curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, is mandatory in all ECEC settings for children 0 to 5 years. The monitoring of service quality is closely linked to this curriculum framework. The Education Review Office is responsible for the monitoring of service quality in all licensed ECEC settings.

New Zealand chose to be compared with Australia, Finland and Norway in this country note. In Australia, there are four types of centre-based provision: pre-schools for 4-year-olds, occasional and long day-care for 0-5 year-olds, and out-of-school-hours care for 5-12 year-olds. Home-based care services include: family day-care and in-home care for children up to the age of compulsory schooling, which is 5-years-old in most states. For Finland, the data in this note refers to 5 types of ECEC setting: home-based family day care for all children below the age of 6, 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

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

education for 6-year-olds. Data for Norway refers to kindergartens for 0-6 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 New Zealand's monitoring policies and practices in comparison with Australia, Finland and Norway. The sections address how quality is defined, the purposes of monitoring quality, areas and scope of monitoring, responsibility for monitoring, and approaches and procedures. The final part of the country note looks at the challenges for New Zealand and policy approaches that have been undertaken 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 (Kamerma, 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 (Fukink, 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 New Zealand stands in international comparison

How quality is defined in New Zealand

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.

New Zealand regulations indicate that all licensed ECEC settings 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 childhood curriculum framework describes outcomes for ECE settings in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and gives staff pedagogical guidance on how these can be achieved. This is consistent with the majority of OECD jurisdictions where quality is defined implicitly through legislation or curriculum.

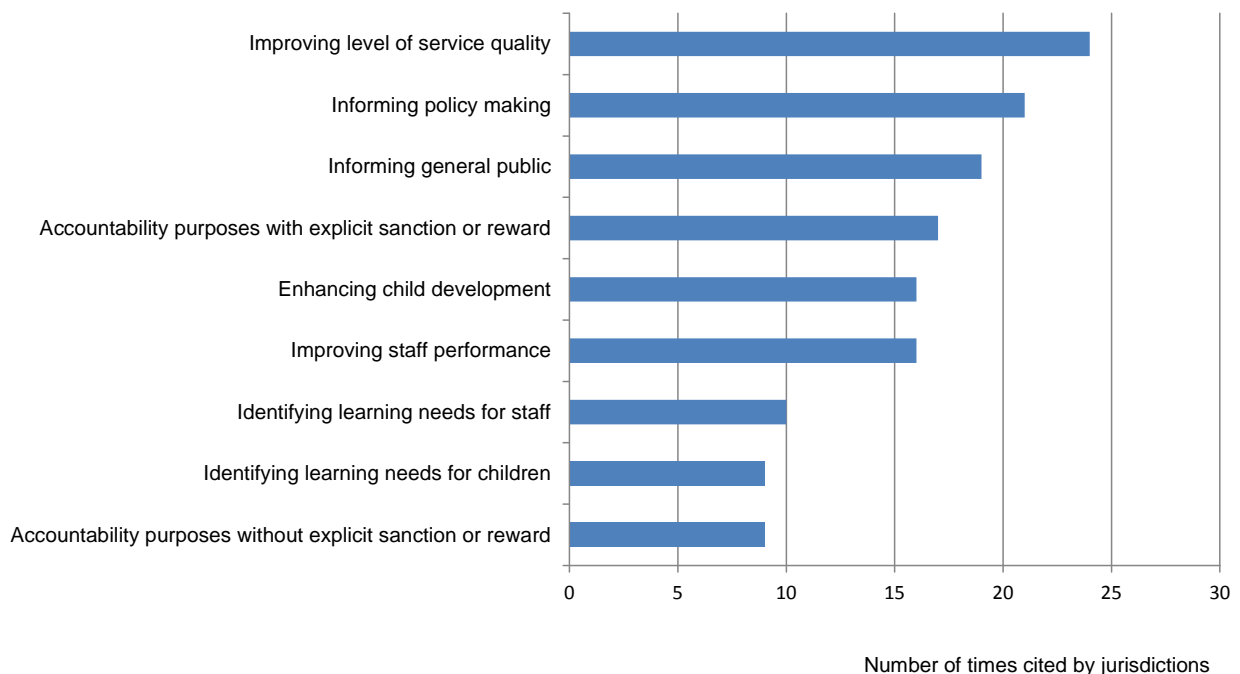
In Norway, quality is defined through legislation (Kindergarten Act) and the country's Framework Plan, which gives guidance on the content and pedagogical practices of kindergartens. In Australia, quality is defined through the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is the result of an agreement between the Australian Government and all state and territory governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children using education and care services. The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for ECEC and outside school hours care services in Australia. After assessment against the NQS, each service receives an overall rating and a rating against each of seven areas of quality regarded as highly important (OECD, 2015): 1) educational programme and practice; 2) children's health and safety; 3) physical environment; 4) staffing arrangements; 5) relationships with children; 6) collaborative partnerships with families and communities; and 7) leadership and service management.

In some countries or municipalities quality is defined at the local rather than at the national level through national legislation or a national curriculum.

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



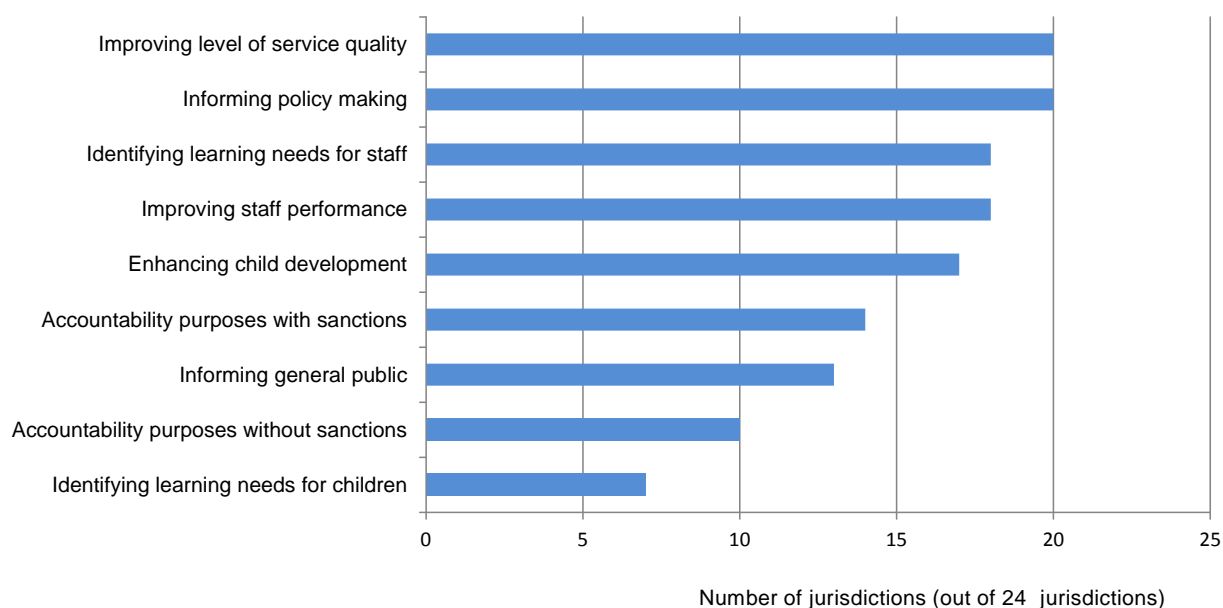
Note: Purposes of monitoring service quality are ranked in descending order of the number of times they are cited by jurisdictions.

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 New Zealand, service quality is monitored for six purposes: 1) accountability (with sanctions); 2) to inform policy making; 3) to inform the general public; 4) to improve the level of service quality; 5) to improve staff performance; and 6) to enhance child development. Early childhood services are responsible for identifying the learning needs of staff and children through internal appraisal and assessment processes. The quality and outcomes of those processes are reviewed as key aspects of ERO’s external evaluation. Australia monitors service quality for the same reasons as New Zealand, and Finland and Norway also aim to identify the children’s learning needs.

There are two main purposes for monitoring staff quality in New Zealand: 1) to improve staff performance; and 2) to identify staff learning needs. This differs from other jurisdictions, such as Australia, where the same purposes are identified for monitoring service and staff quality, since staff qualifications and systems for staff practice quality are both monitored as part of quality inspections. Finland identifies seven and Norway identifies nine reasons for monitoring staff quality, including informing policy making and improving the level of service quality.

Figure 2. Purposes of monitoring staff quality



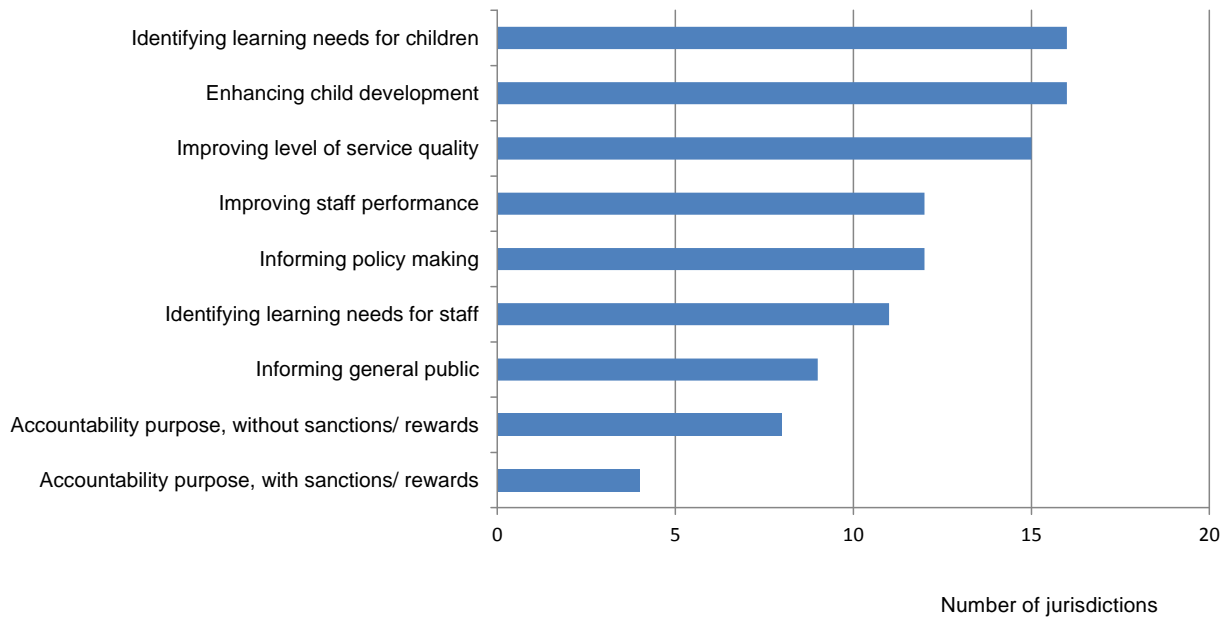
Note: Purposes of monitoring staff quality are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these purposes.

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).

In New Zealand, children's learning and development is monitored for three purposes: 1) to improve the level of service quality; 2) to identify staff learning needs; and 3) to identify children's learning needs (see Figure 3 for a complete overview of purposes). Many countries identify more purposes than New Zealand, for example, Norway, Finland and Australia also monitor children's development to improve staff performance. Improving the level of service quality is the common purpose across these four countries.

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 New Zealand, this is ERO). Evaluators who also work in the setting, such as managers and practitioners, conduct internal monitoring practices.

External practices include inspections, surveys and peer reviews (when conducted by, for example, a teacher from another ECEC setting). Internal practices include self-evaluations, peer reviews, and tests for staff (staff quality only). External inspections and internal self-evaluations are the most common methods or practices used to monitor service and staff quality. New Zealand, Australia, Finland and Norway all conduct external inspections, although in New Zealand these focus on service quality, while in the other three countries overall staff quality is also monitored through inspections. For example, in Australia the NQS assesses how practice is organised and delivered, monitored, documented and evaluated across the service, although it does not evaluate individual staff quality. Staff qualification levels, which are monitored, are mandated as part of the national legislation.

Self-assessments to monitor quality are common in Australia, Finland, New Zealand and Norway, although this practice is only used to evaluate staff performance in Finland. New Zealand indicated that staff appraisal reviews are commonly done by leaders or managers, which are indicated as peer reviews in the table below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Monitoring practices for service and staff quality

	External practices			Internal practices		
	Inspection s	Surveys	Peer reviews	Peer reviews	Tests for staff	Self- assessment/ evaluation
New Zealand*	X (Service)			X (Staff)		X
Australia*	X					X
Finland*	X	X (Service)				X (Staff)
Norway	X	X (Service)				X

Notes: *In Australia, ECEC settings must submit a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to the regulatory authority as part of the assessment and rating of a setting. As part of the QIP, providers self-assess their performance and quality against the national regulations and the quality areas of the NQS. *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. In Norway, the practices implemented to assess child development are decided at the setting level, and practices therefore differ between regions and provisions. New Zealand mainly uses narrative assessments, while Finland commonly combines these with observational tools. In Australia, direct assessments, narrative assessments and observational tools may be implemented (OECD, 2015).

Areas and scope of monitoring

There are a number of different aspects that can be monitored in relation to service² and staff quality.³ 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.

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: this is the case in New Zealand, Australia and Finland (see Table 2).

2. 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.

3. 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.

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
New Zealand*	All ECEC settings	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Australia*	Family day-care, Long day-care, In-home care, outside school hours care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	Occasional care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Pre-school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Finland	All ECEC settings	X		X	X		X					
Norway	All ECEC settings	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X

Note: *For Australia, occasional care and in-home care are not part of the NQF, however, some state and territory laws do apply these attributes in some cases. *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 are different. 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* (Maori language nests). 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>.

In New Zealand, 9 (out of 11) aspects of service quality are monitored across all licensed settings through inspections conducted by ERO (see Table 2). 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. Norway monitors very similar aspects to New Zealand, with the exception that it does not monitor human resource management. In Australia, the aspects monitored differ across types of setting, for example, curriculum implementation and human resource management are not monitored in occasional care provisions. Finland has a strong focus on regulatory aspects when inspecting ECEC settings and mainly checks: staff-child ratios, health/hygiene regulations, safety regulations, and minimum staff qualifications. Similar aspects may be monitored during self-evaluations, although it is more likely that slightly different aspects will be assessed during self-assessment procedures than during external inspections (OECD, 2015).

Staff quality

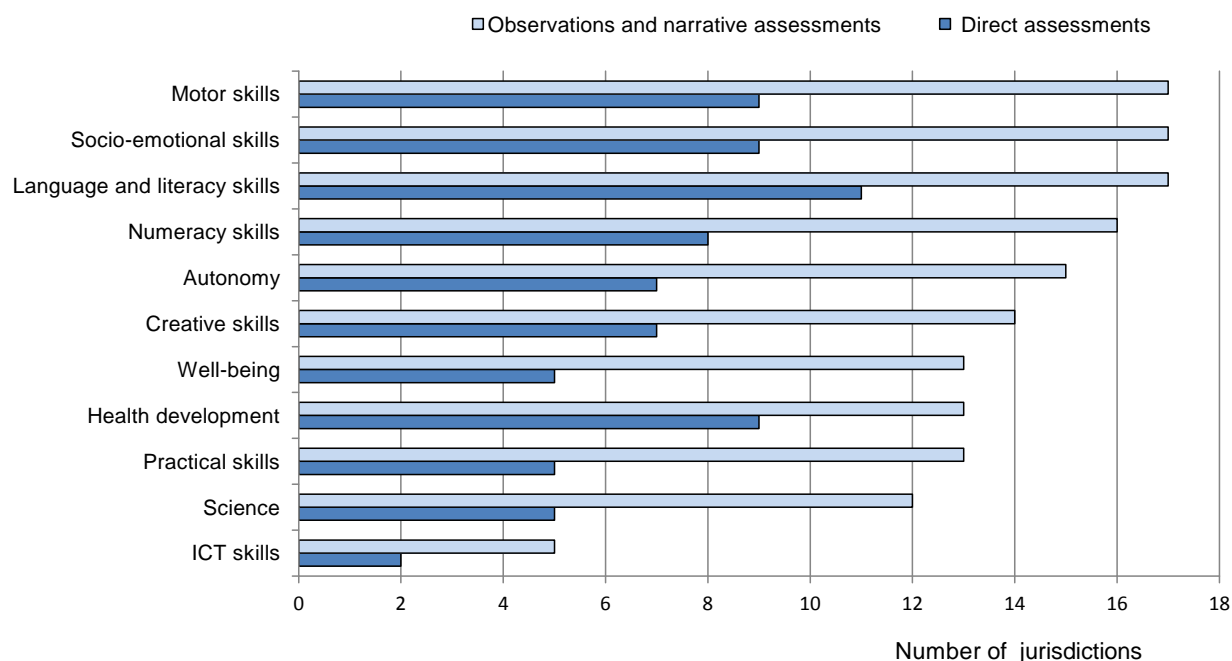
In New Zealand, ERO monitors early childhood services' systems and processes for the performance management of staff, including staff appraisal. ERO does not conduct individual staff assessments, which are conducted internally within ECEC settings, but it does investigate the quality of the systems and processes for staff appraisal. Any matters of compliance are reported to the Education Council, which is responsible for teacher registration and ongoing certification.

The performance appraisal system in a New Zealand ECEC setting focuses on the implementation of the curriculum, the overall quality of teaching and instruction, teamwork and communication, communication between staff and parents, management and leadership, and overall process quality. Norway's inspections of overall staff quality focus on fewer aspects: staff qualifications, curriculum implementation, overall quality of teaching and caring, and management and leadership. Finland has a very broad focus when monitoring staff quality through inspections, and commonly monitors process quality, the implementation of the curriculum, overall quality of teaching and teamwork and communication among staff, as well as the use of materials, time management and planning, and staff knowledge of subjects. It is one of few countries where inspections commonly monitor working conditions and professional development opportunities for staff. Australia monitors similar aspects as New Zealand, but does not usually monitor working conditions, professional development opportunities, or staff subject knowledge. The NQS in Australia includes assessments on how practice is organised and delivered, monitored, documented and evaluated across the service, although it does not evaluate individual staff quality.

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 New Zealand, the areas assessed vary by setting and within settings. In Australia and Norway, all aspects can be monitored, while in Finland only ICT skills are not commonly monitored (see Figure 4).

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 developmental areas.

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

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

Monitoring system design, responsibilities and evaluator training

Design

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

In 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 are a small but unique part of its ECE sector.

In Finland, there is no one single monitoring system in place; municipalities themselves are responsible for developing their own monitoring system. However, Finland acknowledges the importance of a national monitoring system, and the new ECEC Act (*Päivähoitolakia*), which came into effect in August 2015, indicates that all ECEC settings should be internally and externally evaluated at the municipal and setting level. The National Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) (*Koulutuksen arviointikeskus*) has been responsible for planning national evaluations of ECEC since August 2015 (Act on ECEC). In Norway, municipalities hold overall responsibility for developing monitoring systems, however the Ministry of Education and Research (*Kunnskapsdepartementet*) develops guidance material on the inspection process. The Australian Government, in collaboration with the state and territory governments, sought advice from early childhood experts to design and develop the NQF and the NQS for all ECEC settings. Australia's national child development monitoring system was developed over a number of years, in combination with various stakeholders and experts. The Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) received federal funding to pilot the instrument in more than 60 communities, and as a result the AEDI (Australian Early Development Index) was created.

Responsibility

Across OECD countries, various stakeholders are involved in the design and monitoring of service quality, staff quality and child development outcomes. These generally involve the ministry in charge of ECEC itself (national or regional), an independent national monitoring agency, or local authorities.

Among the 24 participating countries and jurisdictions, half have integrated systems of governance for ECEC, and half have split systems of governance. In integrated systems, the responsibilities for childcare and early learning are within one ministry or authority, and ECEC services generally provide integrated care and education. In split systems, the responsibilities for childcare (usually for children 0 to 3 years) and early education (generally for children aged 3 or 4 and above) are split between different ministries or authorities. There also tend to be different providers for childcare and early education. New Zealand, along with Norway, Finland and Australia, has an integrated ECEC system, with the Ministry of Education responsible for regulations, licensing and funding of ECEC.

In New Zealand, responsibility for key aspects of ECEC (financing, minimum standard setting, curriculum development and monitoring of quality) are held at the central government level.

Australia has an integrated ECEC system at the federal level, however many of the responsibilities are decentralised to the state and territory level. Most states and territories also have an integrated ECEC system where one department is responsible for ECEC. At the federal level, the Australian Government has responsibility for supporting the delivery of ECEC through improving affordability for families and providing programme support for ECEC services. State and territory governments fund pre-schools, and

regulate for quality and minimum standards against national legislation and frameworks. The Australian Government and state and territory governments work in partnership to implement the NQF and the NQS, with national oversight and guidance provided by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). This partnership resulted in a national curriculum – the Early Years Learning Framework – that is a key component of the NQF.

In Finland and Norway, main responsibilities for monitoring, financing and standard setting are shared between the central and municipal level. ERO is responsible for monitoring all types of ECEC services. It employs review officers (evaluators) who are largely recruited from the education sector and who usually have a background in management/leadership and/or teaching in schools or early childhood services.

Funding for monitoring ECEC services in OECD countries comes from a mix of public and private sources. Public funding can be from national, regional or local/municipal governments. In some countries, the funding sources for monitoring quality differs depending on the type of setting. In New Zealand the monitoring of ECEC is financed by public funding at the central level. In Australia, ECEC monitoring is financed by public funding, largely at the state and territory government levels, while in Norway municipalities are responsible for financing the monitoring systems. In Finland, the National Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) has been responsible for national evaluations of ECEC since August 2015, and funding for monitoring comes from national public funding. However, evaluations of individual settings, planned and conducted by themselves, remain the responsibility of municipalities and are funded at the municipal level (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 and/or other types of training are offered to evaluators. Two-thirds of jurisdictions (16) reported that external assessors/evaluators receive on-the-job or in-service training. Training for assessors focuses on various skills or aspects of ECEC. In New Zealand, ERO evaluators participate in on-the-job or in-service professional learning and development. ERO places a strong emphasis on the importance of continuous learning. In addition, evaluators have the opportunity to undertake further tertiary-level study in evaluation. ECEC professionals and managers with evaluator roles also receive evaluation training, although this training differs from the training for ERO evaluators.

Norway mainly prepares external evaluators through on-the-job training, while staff are prepared for evaluations during their pre-service education programme. Finland does not provide specific training for external or internal assessors/evaluators (see Table 3). In Finland, some evaluators have specific formal training, but it is not systematic. In both New Zealand and Australia, training is provided to external evaluators in the areas of: theoretical and technical knowledge of evaluation, implementation skills, and interpretation of monitoring results (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
New Zealand	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors			X
Australia	External assessors		X	
	Internal assessors	X		
Finland*	External assessors	X		
	Internal assessors	X		
Norway	External assessors			X
	Internal assessors		X	

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

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

Implementation of monitoring practices

Monitoring tools (instruments)

Service quality

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

In New Zealand, external evaluations are carried out in all licensed ECEC settings, and the same four tools or data gathering processes are used: observations, interviews, results of internal evaluations, and analysis of settings' internal documentation. However, there are some differences across setting types. ERO has evaluation indicators in place for its reviews of education and care centres, kindergartens and playcentres; it also has separate evaluation indicators for its reviews of Maori language nests (*Kōhanga Reo*). ERO has recently developed evaluation indicators for reviews of home-based education and care services and is in the process of developing evaluation indicators for reviews of hospital-based services.

In Australia, similar data gathering instruments or tools to New Zealand are used during external inspections or evaluations. The NQS in Australia includes evaluation indicators across seven quality areas. Inspectors gather information against the NQS evaluation indicators for all service types regulated under the National Quality Framework. In Norway, surveys taken by inspectors, checklists and parental surveys are commonly used in combination with interviews and analysis of internal documentation. In Finland, no data collection instruments are prescribed nationally, and these therefore differ between municipalities or ECEC settings.

Internal evaluation is often used in combination with external evaluation/inspections to monitor service quality; this approach has been adopted by New Zealand. In 2012-13, ERO adopted a revised approach to reviews of centre-based early childhood services. A feature of the revised approach to external evaluation is the use of a “self-report” (self-evaluation) that each early childhood service and its staff complete at the beginning of the external evaluation process. This provides an opportunity for leaders and teachers in each setting to share with the review team what they know about the effectiveness and impact of their processes and practices in relation to the key aspects of the review framework.

The most common self-evaluation tools used across countries are self-reported questionnaires/surveys (12), self-reflection reports/journals (12), checklists (11), and portfolios (8).

Video feedback is used in three jurisdictions: the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. The data collection processes or instruments used to carry out internal evaluations in New Zealand vary across settings. In Finland and Norway, individual settings have the discretion to determine which collection processes or tools are used. In Australia, service quality is not commonly monitored through internal assessments.

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 New Zealand, staff quality is monitored through self-assessments and peer reviews. ERO reviews the systems of staff appraisal in place in ECEC settings but does not evaluate the performance of individual staff. In Australia, the monitoring and inspection of service and staff quality are integrated. Internal monitoring practices for staff quality are not mandatory, but self-evaluations can be conducted in ECEC settings. Inspections in Australia may make use of surveys conducted by the inspectors or evaluators, observations, results of staff self-assessments, and analysis of staff documentation.

The monitoring of individual staff quality in New Zealand is conducted at the setting level; with nationally mandated teacher criteria indicating the requirements staff should meet. Evaluation processes used for peer reviews in New Zealand are: observations, results of the staff member's self-evaluation, analysis of assessment documentation, and portfolio evidence prepared by staff. Peer reviews are not commonly used in Australia, Norway or Finland. Portfolios are also used in New Zealand, together with self-reflection reports or journals, during staff self-evaluations. In Australia, internal staff evaluations are the responsibility of each service provider under the NQS (leadership and service management quality area). In Norway, portfolios are commonly used during internal staff evaluations, alongside self-reported questionnaires, checklists, and video feedback (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
New Zealand			X	X		
Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finland*			X	X	X	X
Norway*	Settings decide what tools to use					

Notes: *In Finland, all monitoring tools/instruments of child development are used, but municipalities decide what to use, and there is no standard national test for children. *In Norway, narrative assessments and observational tools are most common. Direct assessments are mostly used outside ECEC settings, in health checks or special needs assessment.

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

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).

The majority of jurisdictions use observational tools (primarily checklists), however these often vary by types of ECEC setting. Narrative assessments are also common, while direct assessments through testing and screening are used less often. In New Zealand, narrative assessments using portfolios and storytelling are most commonly used to assess and monitor child learning and development. As Table 4 shows, there is some variation in the combination of tools used: Australia reports using all three methods (with six tools), and Finland reports using both narrative assessments and observational tools.

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 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 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 frequency of monitoring in Australia is also based on the last monitoring result. The frequency in Finland varies by municipality, and in Norway the frequency of monitoring service quality is not regulated.

Staff in New Zealand ECEC settings are usually internally evaluated once per year. In Norway and Finland, this is not regulated and the setting decides how often staff are assessed. Child development is, in general, monitored on a more frequent basis, usually continuously through observations and/or contributing to portfolios.

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 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. The national evaluation reports provide system level information in relation to specific topics, inform policy decisions and provide ECEC services with examples of good practice (OECD, 2015). ERO's system-wide evaluations also influence national debate and support the government in the development and implementation of education policy and practice. In Australia, inspection results have to be made available. In Finland, service providers have discretion over whether or not results are made available, however they are usually published. In Norway, results of inspections are made available to the public upon request. Aggregated results of staff evaluations and monitoring staff quality are also usually available to the public, while individual staff evaluations are not, due to privacy matters.

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 New Zealand, the potential consequence from a poor ERO evaluation result is initially a follow-up evaluation. ECEC services that underperform are required to address their issues and work with the Ministry of Education to develop an action plan. Only when no improvement is shown, or when settings frequently do not meet the regulations, does the Ministry re-assess the setting's licence and decide on whether or not it should be closed. In Australia, underperforming settings are required to take measures to address shortcomings. Management/staff may also be obliged to participate in training. In Finland, staff in underperforming settings are required to participate in training, or follow-up inspections are

planned. In Norway, licences can be revoked and services closed if an ECEC setting drastically underperforms on a continuous basis.

Challenges and policy options

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

1. Improving quality through external evaluation.
2. The efficient management of ERO's external evaluation processes and resources.
3. Increasing the capacity and capability of early childhood services to evaluate their own performance.
4. Strengthening continuity.

New Zealand has already started to address these challenges through the development of robust evaluation indicators of quality ECE and the implementation of cluster reviews, the development of resources to help settings in internal evaluations, and the collection of best practices and strengthening collaborations to emphasise the importance of continuous learning. New Zealand's strategies to overcome their challenges are explained below.

Challenge: Improving quality through external evaluation

One challenge for New Zealand has been to strengthen the role of ERO's external evaluations in improving quality in early childhood services. As part of an ongoing methodology revision, ERO updated its evaluation indicators to better reflect the evaluation and research evidence about high quality in ECEC. In 2011-12, ERO developed a new set of evaluation indicators for reviews in centre-based services, and more recently it has developed evaluation indicators for reviews in home-based education and care services and hospital-based services.

Development of robust new evaluation indicators

ERO's evaluation indicators are based on current national and international evaluation and research, ERO's national evaluations, and many years of reviewing experience within ERO. The indicators focus on which factors in an early childhood service are found to contribute to positive learning outcomes for children and indicate high quality – they do not represent quality practice on their own. They are statements that can be verified through data collection and analysis. The evaluation indicators are a resource to inform the judgements that ERO reviewers make about different aspects of the performance of early childhood services. They also make transparent the basis on which ERO evaluates early childhood performance, and assist early childhood services' internal evaluation processes.

As part of its revised approach to external evaluation in early childhood services, ERO decides the timing of the next review based on the outcome of each service's review. ERO has four options for the timing of the next review. Where a service is found to be very well placed to promote positive learning outcomes for children, the next ERO review will be in four years. A service that is judged to be well placed will be reviewed in three years. For services that require further development to make significant improvements, and ERO has some confidence that the service can improve with support, the next review will be in two years. In this situation the Ministry of Education works with the service to develop a plan of action to address the areas that need improving and works with ERO to determine the timing of the next review within the two-year period. When a service is not performing adequately, is not meeting legal requirements and does not have the capacity to make improvements without support or Ministry

involvement, ERO will not review the service again until the Ministry of Education is satisfied that the service meets licensing requirements.

This challenge is ongoing as ERO regularly revises its evaluation indicators to reflect current evidence about high quality ECEC; continues to build the capacity and capability of leaders and teachers in ECEC services to use the indicators as part of their internal evaluation processes; and evaluates the impact of its differentiated approach in improving quality across all services.

Challenge: The efficient management of ERO's evaluation processes and resources

As part of the revision of its methodology for external evaluation in ECEC, ERO has introduced cluster reviews for early childhood services that operate under an umbrella organisation or association. These cluster reviews aim to improve the efficient management of evaluation procedures. For example, cluster reviews now take place in kindergartens, playcentres and some education and care and home-based services that are part of a chain or group of centres owned and operated by the same provider.

Implementing cluster reviews

Cluster reviews enable ERO to focus its external evaluation process on those who are responsible and accountable for quality and meeting regulation requirements. ERO works with the overall umbrella organisation or association to build the capability of organisation leaders to engage in internal evaluation. In using cluster reviews, time and resources can be used more efficiently. ERO reports its findings publicly for each individual service in the cluster.

Challenge: Increasing the capacity and capability of early childhood services to evaluate their own performance

ERO aims to build the capacity of early childhood services to review, evaluate and improve their own practice. ERO's external evaluation process is both proportional and responsive to each service's internal evaluation. The intention is for evaluation to become embedded in the day-to-day practice of leaders and teachers. Findings from ERO's national report highlight that internal evaluation remains an area for improvement for many early childhood services.

Development of resources to help settings in internal evaluations

ERO has recently worked with the Ministry of Education to develop a resource to help schools engage in effective internal evaluation. This resource describes what effective internal evaluation is, what it involves, and how to go about it in ways that will enhance educational outcomes for students. It draws on current knowledge about internal evaluation and on case studies of New Zealand schools that have used internal evaluation to inform the development of successful strategies to raise achievement. The resource includes new and relevant information about the importance of evaluation reasoning and thinking – not just processes.

There is some interest from early childhood services in using this new resource to improve their capability and capacity to do and use internal evaluation for improvement. Although the Ministry of Education has previously developed a resource to help ECEC services undertake self-reviews (internal evaluations), this was published 10 years ago. The next step for ERO will be to align ECEC and school internal evaluation resources. Improved understanding and implementation of internal evaluation throughout the education pipeline will complement ERO's external evaluation process and support improved outcomes for all learners.

The state of Berlin, Germany, where external reviewers or assessors act more as advisors of the evaluation process, developed toolboxes for internal evaluators in order to tackle the challenge of

improving the capacity of internal evaluators Internal staff have the primary responsibility for facilitating the evaluation.

Box 1. Enhancing quality through internal evaluation

Berlin has made changes to its evaluation processes in the last decade that place emphasis on the competency of internal evaluators. This approach allows external inspectors to undertake more targeted reviews.

Following implementation of the mandatory Berlin Educational Program (*Berliner Bildungsprogramm*) in 2004 (updated in 2014), the Berlin Ministry responsible decided that proper implementation of the curriculum required a system of regular monitoring in ECEC centres. The aim was to monitor the implementation of the curriculum through internal and external evaluations and offer targeted support to ECEC services to improve their pedagogical practice and establish “best practice” ECEC settings. In this way, the system sought to better align external and internal practices of service and staff quality.

Since 2005, Berlin has provided material and a toolbox for internal evaluation that considers eight areas for evaluation: 1) creating a rich learning environment; 2) supporting children’s development; 3) responding to the lives of children; 4) observation and documentation of children’s learning processes; 5) co-operation with parents; 6) transition from ECEC to school; 7) rooms and material; 8) strengthening participation and democratic values in ECEC practice.

ECEC providers and their teams are free to choose other methods and tools if these reflect the relevant quality criteria of the curriculum, and the pedagogues working in the settings are encouraged to be involved in this process. The manager of the setting usually facilitates the internal evaluation, and 200 specially trained facilitators support the internal evaluation process externally. However, the pedagogues in the centres have primary responsibility for carrying out the internal evaluation. They discuss the level of quality that has been achieved, consider perspectives of further quality development, and agree on next steps. They are obliged to develop and implement plans for further education of staff in light of the evaluation results.

Source: Draft case study submitted by the German Youth Institute, edited by the OECD Secretariat.

Challenge: Strengthening continuity

A current focus in New Zealand is on how to strengthen continuity for learners as they transition from early childhood education to school. ERO recently undertook a national evaluation that focused on this topic. It highlighted effective practice and raised some of the challenges associated with continuity for learners in a system where schools and early childhood services have different curricula and assessment processes.

Collect best practices and improve collaborations

A working group was established in 2014 by the Minister of Education to make recommendations on how to strengthen the implementation of the early childhood curriculum framework, *Te Whāriki*, and support the continuity of early learning from early childhood education to school.

New Zealand is also implementing a new policy initiative “Investing in Educational Success”. As part of this, communities of learning (CoLs) that involve early childhood services are being set up throughout New Zealand. Although some schools and ECEs in some parts of New Zealand have worked both formally and informally in clusters focused on particular professional activities, for the most part these have not aimed to work across a learning pathway.

In this changing landscape, ERO’s external evaluation process needs to be sufficiently flexible to ensure equity and excellence for all learners. ERO is currently providing regional level reports that are used as part of a CoL’s evidence base as they consider their achievement priorities and develop their challenges. The reports are designed to identify what is working well and can be further enhanced, and also to identify areas to focus on.

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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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