



FURTHER RESULTS FROM TALIS STARTING STRONG 2018

The OECD Starting Strong Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS Starting Strong) is an international large-scale survey of early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and centre leaders conducted in nine OECD countries. This note presents the findings from the second volume of results on TALIS Starting Strong 2018, *Building a High-quality Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce*.

Denmark¹

Key findings

Staff participation in recent in-service training activities is high in Denmark at the pre-primary level (78%) and in centres for children under age 3 (79%). At both levels of education, participation in centre-embedded training activities is relatively low, whereas participation in professional networks and research events is high.

Staff in Denmark have high levels of engagement in collaborative professional practices in their ECEC centres. For instance, 63% of pre-primary staff and 61% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report providing feedback to other staff about their practice on a "weekly" or "daily" basis.

At both levels of education, ECEC staff in Denmark report high levels of satisfaction with their job and feelings of being valued by society. However, similar to other countries, satisfaction with salaries is lower (36% among pre-primary staff and 32% of staff in centres for children under age 3).

"A lack of resources" and "having too many children in their classroom/playgroup/group" are the main sources of stress reported by ECEC staff in Denmark; for instance, more than one in three staff at each level of education report that a shortage of resources is "a lot" a source of stress. By contrast, staff perceptions about support from centre leadership are quite positive in Denmark, with just 25% of pre-primary staff and 27% of staff in centres for children under age 3 reporting that they need more support from their ECEC centre leader.

Leaders in Denmark on average report dedicating around 30% of their work time to pedagogical leadership at the pre-primary level and in centres for children under 3), a higher proportion of time to administrative tasks, and spending a smaller proportion in direct interactions with children.

A large majority of staff at both levels of education hold positive views on opportunities to participate in important decisions at the centre level, and on the extent to which their leaders engage in pedagogical leadership.

The training profiles of ECEC staff in Denmark respond to the socio-economic composition of the children in the ECEC centres. The share of staff trained for working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and recent in-service training is greater in ECEC centres with a high rather than a low proportion of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes, both at the pre-primary level (12 percentage points) and in centres for children under age 3 (21 percentage points).

¹ Low response rates in the survey may result in biases in the estimates reported and limit the comparability of the data.

Highlights and policy implications for Denmark

Staff education, training and skills development

Across countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong, neither pre-service education or training focused on working with children nor pre-service practical experience are universal among ECEC staff. In Denmark, 70% of pre-primary staff and 64% of staff in centres for children under age 3 completed a pre-service programme that prepared them specifically to work with children.

Approaches to in-service professional development vary across countries. In Denmark, participation in recent in-service training activities is common among both pre-primary staff (78%) and staff in centres for children under age 3 (79%). Perceptions about the relevance of in-service training offerings are largely positive, being shared by two out of three staff at both levels of education. Staff in Denmark tend to cover a relatively large number of areas in ongoing training over the course of 12 months. At both levels of education, participation in centre-embedded training activities is relatively low, with for instance less than 15% of staff participating in observation visits to other ECEC centres or in induction or mentoring activities. By contrast, participation in professional networks and in research conferences is higher, with more than half of staff at both levels of education taking part in such activities in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Collaborative professional practices provide important opportunities for informal learning, and in all countries, ECEC staff who engage more in collaboration in their centres are also more likely to participate in training activities. Staff in Denmark have high levels of engagement in such practices. For instance, 90% of pre-primary staff and 91% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report discussing with colleagues about children's development, well-being and learning on a "weekly" or "daily" basis, and 63% of pre-primary staff and 61% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report providing feedback to other staff about their practice with the same frequency.

As in other countries, ECEC staff in Denmark are more confident about their ability to promote children's socio-emotional development than about working with children from diverse backgrounds or about using digital technology to support children's learning. For instance, at both levels of education, 3 out of 4 staff feel that they can help children to interact with each other and show good social behaviour "a lot", whereas only about one in five report the same level of confidence regarding their ability to stimulate children's interest in cultural differences and commonalities.

Across countries, staff who covered more areas in both their pre-service and recent in-service training tend to report a stronger sense of self-efficacy for supporting child development and to adapt their practices more to children's needs and interests. In Denmark, training indicators are positively associated with the sense of self-efficacy and practices of pre-primary staff, but not among staff working in centres for children under age 3.

Across countries, cumulative training in a given area tends to be more strongly associated with indicators of quality interactions in ECEC settings than more sporadic training. In Denmark, relatively high shares of staff covered contents related to working with a diversity of children in both pre-service and recent in-service training at the pre-primary level (57%) and in centres for children under age 3 (51%). However, at both levels of education, these training trajectories appear generally unrelated to staff's beliefs and practices.

Staff working conditions and well-being

Overall, staff in all the countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong show a high level of satisfaction with the profession and their current job. In Denmark, about 95% of staff at both levels of education "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are satisfied with their job. However, and similar to other countries, satisfaction with their salary is lower in Denmark (36% among pre-primary staff and 32% of staff in centres for children under age 3). A very large share of staff in Denmark report being employed on a permanent contract (around 90 % at both levels), which may offer them a feeling of job security and reward.

The way staff feel valued by others can be an important aspect of their well-being. In Denmark, the feeling of being valued by society is shared by 61% of staff at the pre-primary level and 55% of staff in centres for children under age 3.

In most countries, retirement is the most likely reason to leave the role for young and older staff, suggesting that most staff expect to spend their entire career in the ECEC profession. In Denmark, this is the case for 23% of pre-primary staff and 28% of staff in centres for children under age 3. The percentage of staff thinking of leaving the job for health-related issues, which may indicate possible risk of burnout, is relatively low in Denmark among pre-primary staff (7%), but higher among staff in centres for children under age 3 (11%).

Staff working hours vary notably across countries, partly driven by the time that staff spend without direct contact with children on other job tasks at the ECEC centre. In Denmark, pre-primary staff working full time work on average 37 hours per week, while staff in centres for children under age 3 dedicate a relatively small number of hours (8) per week to tasks other than working with children. Results from TALIS Starting Strong indicate that workload stress coming from work outside of hours spent with children is an important source of stress for staff in many countries. In Denmark, having too much administrative work to do is reported as a source of stress for about one out of five staff at both the pre-primary level and in centres for children under age 3.

Nonetheless, and similar to other countries, in Denmark, “a lack of resources” and “having too many children in their classroom/playgroup/group” are the main sources of stress for staff; for instance, more than one in three staff at each level of education report that a shortage of resources is “a lot” a source of stress. TALIS Starting Strong data show that factors such as support from leaders, satisfaction with salaries and sense of self-efficacy act as buffers of stress for ECEC staff in many countries. This is the case in Denmark, where salary rewards appear for instance to mitigate the stress impact of working with larger groups of children or of work related to documenting children’s development.

Support from centre leadership is another aspect of the quality of working environments. Staff perceptions in this area are quite positive in Denmark, with just 25% of pre-primary staff and 27% of staff in centres for children under age 3 “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” that they need more support from their ECEC centre leader.

Leadership and management in ECEC centres

Across most countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong, administrative and pedagogical leadership account for the bulk of leaders’ time in ECEC centres. In Denmark, on average centre leaders report that administrative tasks occupy 37% of their time at the pre-primary level and 43% of their time in centres for children under 3, in line with results for other countries. Pedagogical leadership takes up 30% of their time at the pre-primary level and 29% of their time in centres for children under 3. At both levels, the share of leaders spend a smaller percentage of their time in direct interactions with children. A large majority of centre leaders report having been trained in pedagogical leadership in Denmark (71% in pre-primary and 77% in centres for children under age 3).

In most countries, centre leaders’ pedagogical leadership is positively associated with staff attitudes and indicators of quality interactions in ECEC settings. In Denmark, 94% of pre-primary staff and 92% of staff in centres for children under age 3 “agree” or “strongly agree” that their ECEC centre leader encourages co-operation among staff to develop new ideas in their practices. Staff perceptions of the extent to which their leaders engage in pedagogical leadership are associated with staff’s own sense of self-efficacy for supporting children’s development and with staff practices with children at the centre level, at both levels of education.

Findings from TALIS Starting Strong also indicate that staff who perceive more opportunities for participating in decision making in their ECEC centres tend to engage more frequently in professional collaborative practices, and to report higher levels of satisfaction with their job. Positive perceptions of distributed leadership are held by a large majority of staff in Denmark, with 86% of staff at both levels of education “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” that their centre leader encourages all staff to have a say in important decisions. In turn, strong agreement with this view is associated with indicators of staff’s job satisfaction.

Leaders’ reports paint a mixed picture of their working conditions in Denmark, with a relatively low share of leaders reporting being satisfied with their salary (39% in pre-primary, 34% in centres for children under age 3)

but one of lowest share of leaders reporting requiring more support from their authorities (31% in pre-primary, 33% in centres for children under age 3).

Equity

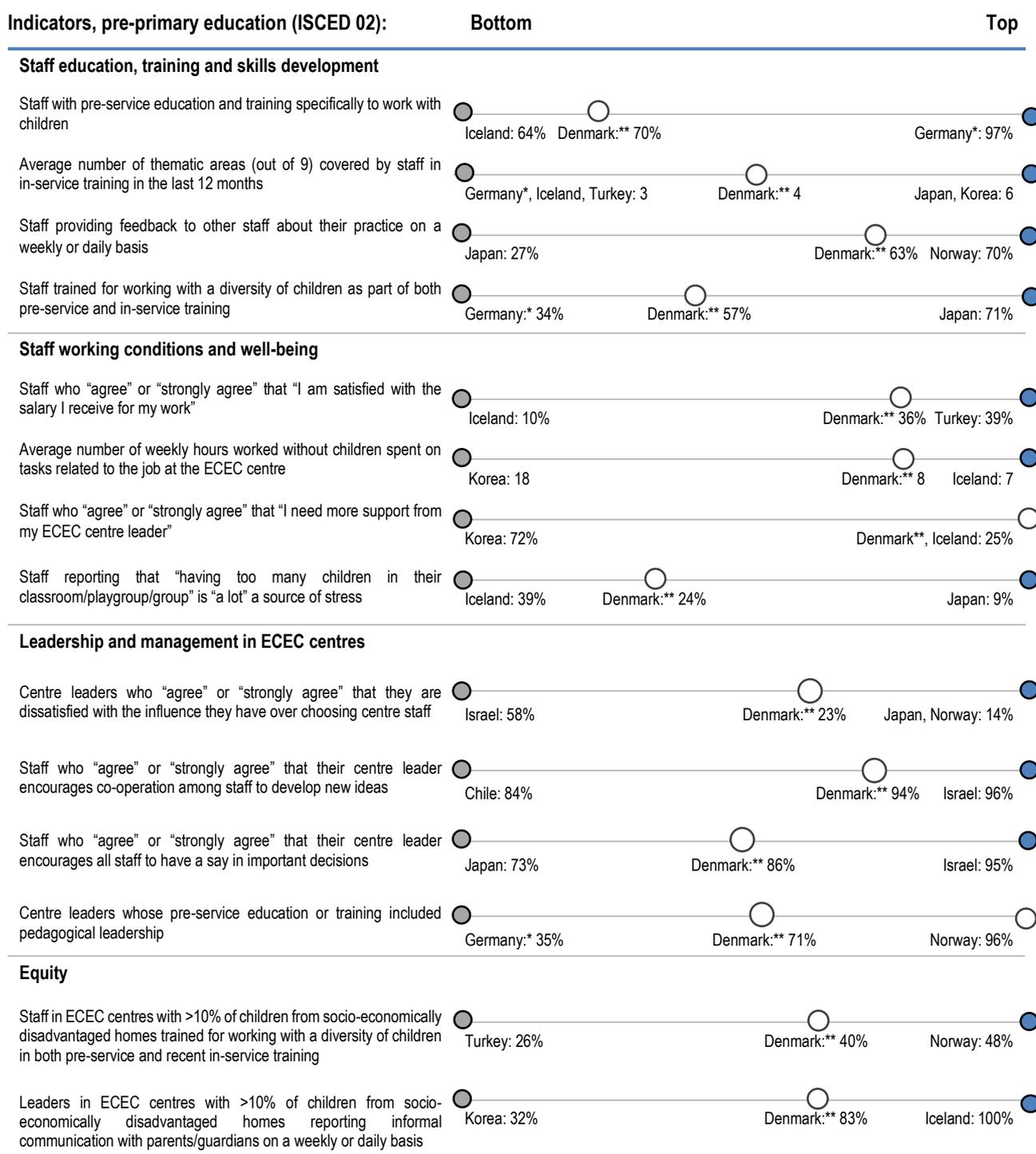
In most countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong, staff training profiles respond to the socio-economic and cultural/linguistic composition of the populations of children in the ECEC settings. The share of pre-primary staff trained for working with a diversity of children as part of both their pre-service and recent in-service training is 12 percentage points greater in ECEC centres where more than 10% of children come from socio-economically disadvantaged homes than in centres where 10% or less children do so (40% versus 28%), and the difference is even larger among staff in centres for children under age 3 (44% versus 23%). Denmark is thus one of the countries in which staff training for addressing diversity reflects to a greater extent the socio-economic composition of the children in the ECEC centres.

In Denmark ECEC centres serving a high proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged children are highly engaged with the families of children attending such centres. For instance, 83% of leaders of such centres at the pre-primary levels and 100% of leaders of such centres for children under age 3 report that informal communication with parents or guardians takes place on a "weekly" or "daily" basis.

Policy pointers for Denmark

- Consolidate conditions to promote informal collaborative learning among ECEC professionals, and reorient in-service professional development towards centre-embedded (i.e. on-site) training activities.
- Improve the alignment of professional development across career stages by better assessing staff needs and the quality of training activities, with the goal that training better supports process quality in ECEC settings.
- Better design regulations around working time to make sure that staff have the time to perform the variety of tasks that are part of their responsibilities
- Support the professional learning of centre leaders, by investing in new models of leadership development and facilitating continuous professional development.

How does Denmark compare?



* Estimates for sub-groups and estimated differences between sub-groups in the TALIS Starting Strong 2018 data need to be interpreted with care.

** Low response rates in the survey may result in biases in the estimates reported and limit the comparability of the data.

Source: OECD (2019), TALIS Starting Strong 2018 Database.

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

TALIS Starting Strong is an international, large-scale survey of staff and centre leaders in early childhood education and care (ECEC). TALIS Starting Strong uses questionnaires administered to staff and centre leaders to gather data. Its main goal is to generate robust international information relevant to developing and implementing policies focused on ECEC staff and centre leaders and their pedagogical and professional practices, with an emphasis on those aspects that promote conditions for children’s learning, development and well-being. TALIS Starting Strong data are based exclusively on self-reports from ECEC staff and centre leaders and, therefore, represent their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and accounts of their activities.

TALIS Starting Strong 2018 includes nine countries: Chile, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Norway and Turkey. All of these countries collected data from staff and leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED Level 02) settings typically serving children aged 3-5. In addition, four of the nine countries (Denmark, Germany, Israel and Norway) collected data from staff and leaders in settings serving children under age 3. Only data on centre-based provision are reported in the first and second volumes of results and this country note.

The survey aims to obtain a representative sample in each participating country of staff and centre leaders for each level of ECEC in which the country participated. In Denmark, 544 staff members and 102 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED Level 02) settings, and 563 staff members and 93 leaders in settings for children under age 3 completed the TALIS Starting Strong questionnaires.

TALIS Starting Strong data analysed in the first and second international reports cover the following ECEC settings in Denmark: kindergartens, integrated institutions, nurseries and day-care facilities.

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Note regarding data from Israel: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

References

OECD (2020), *Building a High-quality Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce: Further Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b90bba3d-en>.

OECD (2019), *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/301005d1-en>.

OECD (2019), TALIS Starting Strong 2018 Database, www.oecd.org/education/school/oecdalisstartingstrongdata.htm

For more information on TALIS Starting Strong 2018 visit: www.oecd.org/education/school/oecd-starting-strong-teaching-and-learning-international-survey.htm.

Data can be found also on line by following the **StatLinks**  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: <http://gpseducation.oecd.org>.

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