

## 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*.

### Germany

#### Key findings

The completion of pre-service education or training focused on working with children is virtually universal among both pre-primary staff and staff in centres for children under age 3. Moreover, at both levels of education, about 80% of staff with such an initial preparation acquired some pre-service practical experience.

Compared to other countries, staff in Germany tend to cover a relatively low number of thematic areas in their in-service training activities. This leads to a relatively low share of staff deepening their pre-service training in areas such as working with a diversity of children or pedagogy.

Compared to other countries, the percentage of staff thinking of leaving the job for health-related issues, which may indicate possible risk of burnout, is high in Germany, as reported by 25% of pre-primary staff and 22% of staff in centres for children under age 3. By contrast, at both levels of education, staff perceptions about support from their ECEC leaders are relatively positive.

Staff shortages create tensions for both staff and leaders in ECEC settings in Germany. For instance, 33% of staff at the pre-primary level and 27% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report stress from having extra duties due to absent staff, and one in five leaders at both levels of education express concerns about staff shortages hindering the capacity of their centres to provide a quality environment for children.

Just 35% of pre-primary centre leaders and 43% of leaders of centres for children under age 3 were trained on pedagogical leadership as part of their initial preparation, the lowest level among participating countries.

At both levels of education, over 80% of ECEC staff in Germany share the view that their ECEC centres provide opportunities for staff to participate in decision making.

The training profiles of ECEC staff in Germany respond to the challenges of diversity in ECEC settings. At both levels of education, the share of staff having covered contents related to working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and recent in-service training is higher in ECEC centres with higher concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged children and of dual language learners.

## Highlights and policy implications for Germany

### *Staff education, training and skills development*

The initial preparation of ECEC staff in Germany is one of the strongest across the countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong, owing to a solid emphasis on pre-service education or training focused on working with children and on workplace-based placements. In Germany, 97% of pre-primary staff and 96% of staff in centres for children under age 3 completed a pre-service programme that prepared them specifically to work with children; further, at both levels of education, the programmes of around 80% of staff included a practical module.

Across countries, fewer assistants than teachers participated in recent in-service professional development activities. In Germany, this difference is observed among staff in centres for children under age 3 only, while novice staff are less likely than more experienced staff to take part in ongoing training activities at both levels of education. As in other countries, in Germany, centre-embedded models of professional development remain less common than off-site courses or conferences; for instance, at both levels of education, at best one in five staff in Germany report having participated in formal peer or self-observation and coaching arrangements or in induction or mentoring 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. At both levels of education, a majority of ECEC staff in Germany engage in joint activities across different groups in their centres on a weekly or daily basis, but just about 40% provide feedback to colleagues about their practice with such frequency.

As in other countries, ECEC staff in Germany are most confident about their ability to promote children's socio-emotional development, but less so about working with children from diverse backgrounds or, particularly, about using digital technology to support children's learning. For instance, while 95% of staff at both levels of education report feeling that they can help children to develop self-confidence "quite a bit" or "a lot", less than 10% report the same for using digital technology to support children's learning.

At both the pre-primary level and in centres for children under age 3, staff in Germany covered a relatively low number of thematic areas in their recent in-service training activities, denoting relatively narrow thematic breadth. While the quality of professional development encompasses other dimensions, such as application to actual work situations, alongside thematic breadth, results from TALIS Starting Strong suggest that, 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. These associations hold true in Germany, albeit to a lesser extent than in other countries.

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. Compared to other countries, in Germany, a relatively low share of staff covered the same topical areas in both their pre-service and recent in-service training, for instance contents related to working with a diversity of children (34% of staff at the pre-primary level and 35% of staff in centres for children under age 3) or contents related to pedagogy (24% and 25% of staff, respectively). Cumulative training is less strongly associated with staff beliefs and practices in Germany than in other countries.

### *Staff working conditions and well-being*

Overall, staff in all of the countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong show a high level of satisfaction with the profession and their current job. The share of staff who "strongly agree" or "agree" that they are satisfied with their job is also high in Germany, both at the pre-primary level (93%) and in centres for children under age 3 (94%). However, staff in Germany also share the low levels of satisfaction with their salary reported across countries, both at the pre-primary level (26%) and among staff in centres for children under age 3 (29%), with no significant differences according to the educational attainment or experience of staff.

The way staff feel valued by others can be an important aspect of their well-being. Compared to other countries, the feeling of being acknowledged by society is relatively low among ECEC staff in Germany, being shared by 36% of staff at each level of education.

In most countries, retirement is the most likely reason to leave the role for staff, suggesting that many staff expect to spend their entire career in the ECEC profession. In Germany, this is the case for about one in four staff at both levels of education, while less than 5% of staff indicate moving to a job outside the ECEC sector as a likely reason to leave. Both results suggest a strong commitment to the sector among staff. However, compared to other countries, the percentage of staff thinking of leaving the job for health-related issues, which may indicate possible risk of burnout, is high in Germany, as reported by 25% of pre-primary staff and 22% of staff in centres for children under age 3.

Support from centre leadership is another aspect of the quality of working environments. Compared to other countries, staff perceptions in this area are quite positive in Germany, with only 32% of pre-primary staff and 26% of staff in centres for children under age 3 “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” that they need more support from their ECEC centre leader.

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 Germany, full-time pre-primary staff and staff working with children under age 3 spend on average eight working hours per week outside their time with children. At the pre-primary level, this differs to some extent between teachers (nine hours) and assistants (seven hours), in line with other countries.

Feelings of stress at work emerge from imbalances between job demands, resources to address these demands and rewards for effort. At both levels of education, ECEC staff in Germany signal out “extra duties due to absent staff”, “having too many children in my classroom/playgroup/group” and “a lack of resources (e.g. financial support, material resources, staff)” as important sources of stress. In turn, for staff in Germany, sense of self-efficacy consistently appears as a buffer to stress, while satisfaction with the salary and support from leaders also help with regard to some sources of stress.

Across countries in TALIS Starting Strong, staff shortages create tensions for both staff and leaders in multiple areas. Germany is no exception, with, for instance, 33% of staff at the pre-primary level and 27% of staff in centres for children under 3 reporting that having extra duties due to absent staff is “a lot” a source of stress. And at both levels of education, 20% of centre leaders report that staff shortages given the number of enrolled children hinder “a lot” the capacity of their centres to provide a quality environment for children.

### ***Leadership and management in ECEC centres***

Across most countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong, administrative leadership accounts on average for at least 30% of leaders’ time in ECEC centres, as it does in Germany at both levels of education. In turn, around 50% of centre leaders’ time in Germany is spent on pedagogical responsibilities, be it in the form of pedagogical leadership to staff or of direct interactions with children, also at both levels of education. Nonetheless, only 35% of pre-primary centre leaders and 43% of leaders of centres for children under age 3 covered topics on pedagogical leadership as part of their initial preparation, the lowest level among participating countries. Germany is one of the two countries where, for leaders of centres for children under age 3, such training is positively associated with leaders’ actual engagement in pedagogical tasks.

In most countries, centre leaders’ pedagogical leadership is positively associated with staff attitudes and indicators of quality interactions in ECEC settings. In Germany, at both levels of education, staff who perceive their leaders as being strongly engaged in pedagogical leadership, for instance by setting a clear vision for the centre or by encouraging co-operation to develop new ideas, report a stronger sense of self-efficacy for supporting children’s development and are consistently more likely to report practices for facilitating children’s early literacy and numeracy, prosocial behaviour, and emotional development.

While across countries ECEC leaders are highly satisfied with their jobs overall, they tend to report relatively low satisfaction with their salaries. In Germany, at both levels of education, more than nine out of ten centre leaders report being satisfied with their jobs and enjoying working in their ECEC centres, but only 36% of pre-primary centre leaders and 29% of leaders of centres for children under age 3 declare being satisfied with their salary. At both levels of education, between a quarter and a third of centre leaders report being dissatisfied with the influence they have over choosing centre staff.

Both leaders' and staff reports suggest that, across countries, ECEC centres generally provide opportunities for staff to participate in decision making. Such perceptions are also widely shared in Germany, with 82% of staff at the pre-primary level and 83% of staff in centres for children under age 3 "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" that their centre leader encourages all staff to have a say in important decisions. As in other countries, ECEC staff in Germany who perceive more opportunities for participating in centre decisions tend to engage more frequently in professional collaborative practices and to report higher levels of job satisfaction.

### *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. This is also to some extent the case in Germany, where the percentage of staff having covered contents related to working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and their recent in-service training is 6 percentage points higher in centres with more than 10% of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes than in centres with a lower share of children with this background, both at the pre-primary level (27% versus 21%) and in centres for children under age 3 (29% versus 23%). Staff with such a training trajectory are also more commonly working in ECEC centres with a higher rather than a low concentration of children whose first language is different from the language(s) used in the ECEC centre, again both at the pre-primary level (28% versus 18%) and in centres for children under age 3 (32% versus 18%).

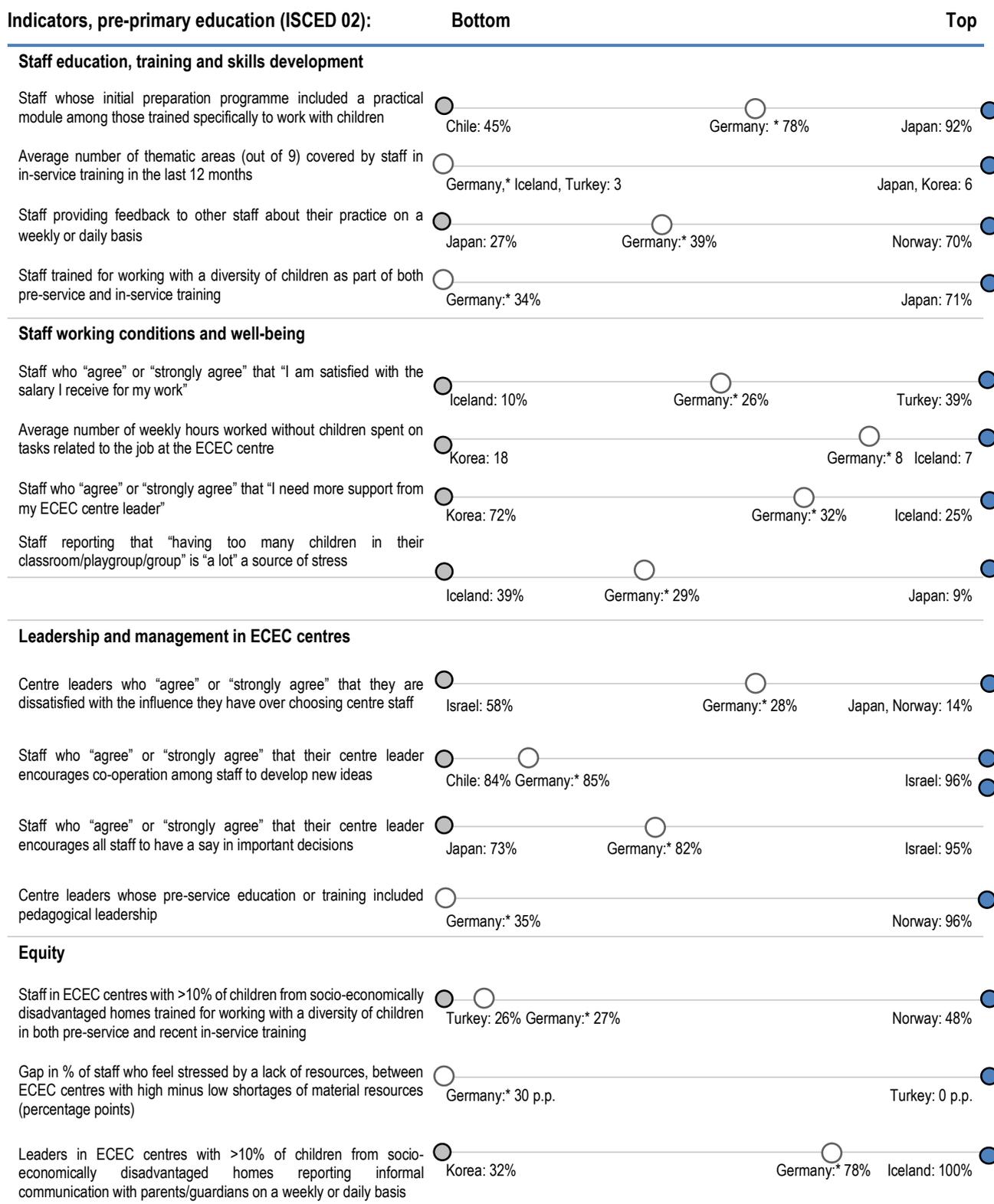
Across countries, differences between centres in terms of the composition of children or availability of resources are associated only to a limited extent with staff working conditions and well-being. However, in Germany, staff feelings of stress due to a lack of resources are substantially higher in centres where leaders report a shortage of material resources than in better-resourced centres, with a gap of 30 percentage points at both levels of education. By contrast, in centres for children under age 3, staff working in centres with a higher concentration of socio-economically disadvantaged children are more likely to be satisfied with their salary and less likely to report needing more support from their centre leaders.

At both levels of education, leaders of centres with a high concentration of socio-economically disadvantaged children report a higher frequency of informal communication with parents and guardians than leaders or centres with fewer children from disadvantaged homes.

### **Policy pointers for Germany**

- Create conditions to promote informal collaborative learning among ECEC professionals and reorient the provision of training towards centre-embedded models.
- Improve the alignment of professional development across career stages by carefully assessing staff needs, and the quality of training activities.
- Raise the status and reward of the profession by ensuring that staff's salaries are aligned with their responsibilities and by better defining pathways for career progression in the ECEC sector.
- Support the professional learning of centre leaders, by investing in new models of leadership development and facilitating continuous professional development.

## How does Germany compare?



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

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

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

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 Germany, 1 401 staff members and 247 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED Level 02) centres and 1 171 staff and 273 leaders in centres 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 Germany: ECEC centres for all age groups (0-6) (*Kindertageseinrichtungen für Kinder aller Altersgruppen*), ECEC centres for children under age 3 (*Krippen*), ECEC centres for children aged 3-6 (*Kindergarten*) as well as pre-primary classes (*Vorklassen*).

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory; to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries; and to the name of any territory, city or area.

**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/oecd-talis-starting-strong-data.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/school/oecd-talis-starting-strong-data.htm)

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

---

**Questions can be directed to:** TALIS Starting Strong team, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills  
[StartingStrongSurvey@oecd.org](mailto:StartingStrongSurvey@oecd.org)

---