

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*.

Norway

Key findings

Staff participation in recent in-service training activities is very high in Norway at pre-primary level and in centres for children under age 3. Perceptions about the relevance of in-service training offerings are very positive among staff at both levels.

Staff in Norway stand out for their strong engagement in professional collaborative practices. For instance, 70% of pre-primary staff and 69% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report providing feedback to other staff about their practice on a weekly or daily basis.

ECEC staff in Norway report positively on many aspects of their working conditions and well-being, especially in pre-primary education, but also to a large extent in centres for children under age 3. A relatively low percentage of staff report needing more support from their centre leader. Similarly, working conditions seem to be especially favourable for centre leaders in Norway.

In Norway, working hours of staff working full time are relatively low, with little variation within the country. Average working hours per week outside their time with children are higher for teachers than for assistants.

Centre leaders in Norway at both levels of education spend the largest share of their working time on administrative leadership among countries. In turn, the share of time centre leaders dedicate to interactions with children and parents or guardians is relatively low.

The extent to which staff perceive leadership as being shared in their ECEC centres is relatively low in Norway compared to other countries, with 77% of staff in pre-primary education and 81% of staff in centres for children under age 3 agreeing that their centre leader encourages all staff to have a say in important decisions.

As in other countries, the training profiles of ECEC staff in Norway responds to the socio-economic composition of the children in the ECEC centres. The share of pre-primary staff trained for working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and recent in-service training is 15 percentage points greater in ECEC centres with a higher share of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes.

Highlights and policy implications for Norway

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 Norway, 77% of pre-primary staff and 74% of staff in centres for children under age 3 completed a pre-service programme that prepared them specifically to work with children; among these staff, 74% of staff at the pre-primary level and 78% in centres for children under age 3 completed practical modules as part of their programmes.

Approaches to in-service professional development vary across countries. Participation in recent in-service training activities is very high in Norway for both pre-primary level and in centres for children under age 3. Consistent with this, perceptions about the relevance of in-service training offerings are very positive among staff at both levels. However, during such training, staff in Norway tend to cover a smaller number of areas than in other countries. Also, participation in induction or mentoring activities as part of their in-service training is especially low in Norway, both among staff in pre-primary centres and those in centres for children under age 3.

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 Norway stand out for their strong engagement in such practices. For instance, 70% of pre-primary staff and 69% of staff in centres for children under age 3 report providing feedback to other staff about their practice on a weekly or daily basis.

As in other countries, ECEC staff in Norway are most confident about their ability to promote children's socio-emotional development, but less so about working with children from diverse backgrounds or about using digital technology to support children's learning. In Norway, more experienced teachers report considerably higher capacity to adapt their work to individual children's needs than less experienced teachers.

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. Norway is one of two countries where training indicators show a more consistently positive association with staff practices, including also with practices for behavioural support, as well as a positive relationship with staff sense of self-efficacy.

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 Norway, moderate 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 (50%) and in centres for children under age 3 (46%).

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. This is also the case in Norway, where 97% of staff at both levels "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are satisfied with their job. Similar to other countries, satisfaction with their salary is generally lower in Norway (30% among both pre-primary staff and staff in centres for children under age 3). A very large share of staff in Norway report being employed on a permanent contract (88% 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. Compared to other countries, staff perceptions in this respect are relatively high in Norway, with a majority of staff feeling valued by society at the pre-primary level (53%) as well as in centres for children under age 3 (58%).

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 Norway, this is the case for 26% of pre-primary staff and 31% of staff in centres for children under age 3. Norway is one of a few countries in which staff who envisage a career progression look outside the ECEC sector. 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 relatively low in Norway (10% of staff at each level of education).

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 Norway, the working hours of staff working full time are relatively low and there is little variation within the country. On average, full-time pre-primary staff in Norway dedicate eight working hours per week to tasks other than working with children, although this differs significantly between teachers and assistants, with teachers spending significantly more time on 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 in many countries, but not in Norway (both levels).

In Norway, 32% of pre-primary staff and staff in centres for children under age 3 “agree” or “strongly agree” that they need more support from their centre leader, a relatively low percentage compared to other countries.

Similar to other countries, in Norway, “having too many children in their classroom/playgroup/group” is the main source of stress for staff (31% at pre-primary level and 25% in centres for children under age 3). However, results from TALIS Starting Strong show that in some countries, staff exposed to some sources of stress benefit from some buffers of stress, such as support from leaders, satisfaction with salaries and sense of self-efficacy. This is the case in Norway, where job resources and rewards appear to buffer the effect of working with larger groups of children on stress at both levels of education.

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. Among all of the participating countries, Norway has the centre leaders who report spending, on average, the largest share of their time on administration (48% at both levels). The share of time dedicated to pedagogical leadership in Norway is similar to that in other countries, but Norwegian centre leaders spend relatively little time on direct interactions with children and parents or guardians.

A particularly high share of centre leaders report having been trained in pedagogical leadership in Norway (96% in pre-primary and 94% in centres for children under age 3), which is the highest share among countries participating in TALIS Starting Strong.

In most countries, centre leaders’ pedagogical leadership is positively associated with staff attitudes and indicators of quality interactions in ECEC settings. Also in Norway, a positive association is observed between leaders’ engagement in pedagogical leadership tasks and staff’s actual reported practices with children at the centre level, as well as with staff sense of self-efficacy for supporting children’s development, at both levels of education.

Working conditions seem to be especially favourable for centre leaders in Norway, with a comparatively high share of leaders at both levels of education reporting being satisfied with their salary (54% in pre-primary, 56% in centres for children under age 3) and a low share of leaders reporting requiring more support from their authorities (21% in pre-primary, 26% in centres for children under age 3). A large share of centre leaders in Norway report having significant responsibilities for hiring staff (85% in pre-primary, 77% in centres for children under age 3) and low levels of dissatisfaction with their degree of influence (14% in pre-primary, 8% in centres for children under age 3).

Findings from TALIS Starting Strong 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. While staff perceptions of distributed leadership are shared by a majority of staff in Norway, they are relatively low compared to other countries. In Norway, 77% of staff in pre-primary education and 81% of staff in centres for children under age 3 “agree” or “strongly agree” that their centre leader encourages all staff to have a say in important decisions. Staff perceptions of the extent to which their centre leader encourages co-operation among staff to develop new ideas in their practices are similar to other countries (89% at the pre-primary level and 91% 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. Norway is one of the countries in which staff training for addressing diversity responds more to the socio-economic composition of the children in the ECEC centres. The share of pre-primary staff trained for working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and recent in-service training is 15 percentage points greater in ECEC centres where more than 10% of children come from socio-economically disadvantaged homes than in centres with more advantaged children (48% versus 33%). In centres for children under age 3, the share of staff trained for working with a diversity of children in both their pre-service and recent in-service training in centres with a larger share of children from disadvantaged homes is lower (33%), as is the difference with centres with a smaller share of children from disadvantaged homes (3 percentage points).

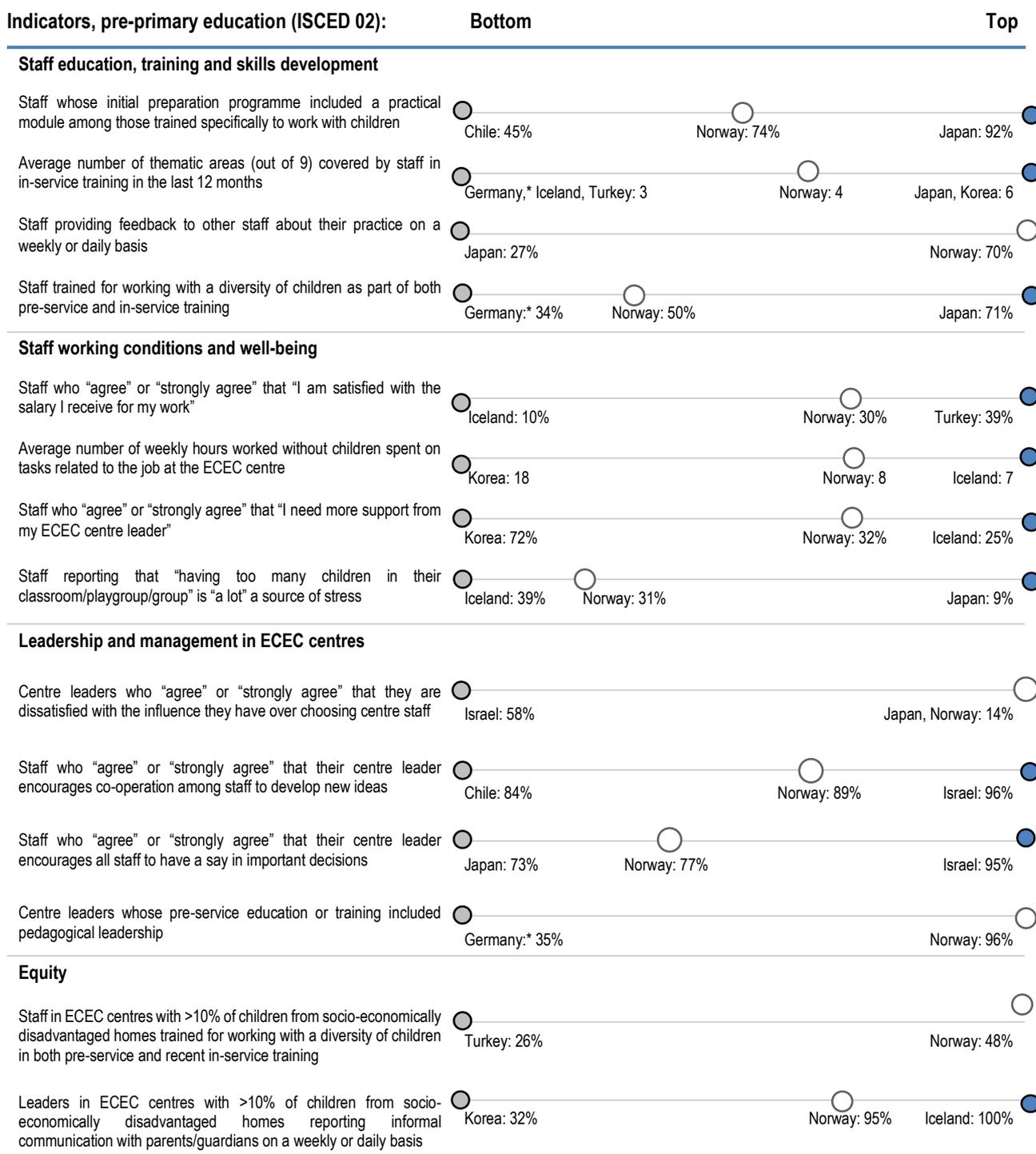
Across countries, differences between centres in terms of the composition of children or availability of resources are associated only to a limited extent with staff working conditions. This also holds true for Norway (both levels of education). Indeed, Norway is one of only two countries at the pre-primary level in which staff working in centres with more than 10% of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes are less likely to report needing more support from their leaders. However, staff in centres for children under age 3 with a higher share of children from disadvantaged homes are more stressed by a lack of resources.

In Norway, at both levels of education, staff perceptions about encouragement from leaders to co-operate to develop new ideas in their practices in centres with a larger share of children from disadvantaged homes are least favourable, compared to other countries. However, leaders of both pre-primary centres and centres for children under age 3 report particularly high levels of informal communication with parents or guardians when their centres work with a higher share of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes.

Policy pointers for Norway

- Adopt high standards for ECEC initial preparation programmes for all staff, and build on their comprehensive curricula to design in-service training activities that enable targeted skills upgrading.
- 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.
- Better design regulations around working time to ensure that staff have the time to perform the variety of tasks that are under their responsibilities.
- Support the development of distributed leadership structures in ECEC centres, without creating a burden on staff.
- Target enhancements in working conditions in ECEC centres with more vulnerable and diverse populations of children.

How does Norway 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 Norway?

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 Norway, 815 staff members and 152 leaders in pre-primary education (ISCED Level 02) centres and 938 staff and 163 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 Norway: kindergartens for children aged 0-5 (*barnehage*).

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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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