EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE POLICY REVIEW

NORWAY

Arno Engel, W. Steven Barnett, Yvonne Anders and Miho Taguma

OECD

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE
POLICY REVIEW

NORWAY

Arno Engel, W. Steven Barnett,
Yvonne Anders and Miho Taguma

Photo credits:

© Khamidulin Sergey/Shutterstock.com

Foreword

Norway participated in the OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in 1999. Since then, Norway has undertaken major policy reforms in ECEC in particular to expand access and improve quality in ECEC. For 2014, Norway decided to have the changed systems reviewed by the OECD team. Thus, the purpose of this Review is to explore how the ECEC systems have changed since 1999, to review the effectiveness of the changes made, and to investigate what are the most effective, relevant and feasible policy options to further improve access and quality in its ECEC system. To this end it delivers an independent analysis of major issues in the areas of governance, funding, access and, in particular, quality of kindergarten provision in Norway, looking at past and present policy initiatives, and potential approaches for the future. The report serves to provide insights and advice to the Norwegian kindergarten authorities at all levels of government, practitioners and stakeholders, helping them to ensure high quality in all kindergartens, give even more children access to a place in a kindergarten and ensure good governance appropriate for today's and future kindergartens. The report is also intended to help other OECD member and non-member economies to understand the Norwegian ECEC systems. This report forms part of the project "Review of policies and practices for monitoring quality in early learning and development". In addition to the country review strand, Norway contributed to the data development and monitoring quality strands of this work. Accordingly, key findings from those strands are also included in the present review report.

The review was conducted based on two visits: a fact-finding mission and a policy review mission. The members of the fact-finding mission included: Miho Taguma (OECD Secretariat, ECEC project manager), Arno Engel (OECD Secretariat, co-ordinator of the Review), W. Steven Barnett (Director, NIEER, Rutgers University), Christa Preissing (Director, Berliner Kita-Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung - BeKi) and Mugyeong Moon (OECD Secretariat, seconded from Korea Institute of Child Care and Education). The members of the policy review mission included: Miho Taguma, Arno Engel, W. Steven Barnett, Christa Preissing and Masafumi Ishikawa (OECD Secretariat, seconded from Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). The report was prepared under the leadership of and reviewed by Miho Taguma. The main authors are Arno Engel, W. Steven Barnett and Yvonne Anders (Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education at Freie Universität Berlin). The Secretariat provided extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to ECEC governance, policies, provision and financing as well as the two key areas of the review, access and quality. Research assistance was provided by Christa Crusius (OECD Secretariat), Elizabeth Adamson (University of New South Wales) and Ana Sushac (Freie Universität Berlin). The report also benefitted from the comments and assistance of Ineke Litjens, Étienne Albiser, Paul O'Brien and Isabelle Chatry (OECD Secretariat). Administrative support was provided by Claude Annie Manga Collard and Kelly Makowiecki. Sophie Limoges helped with finalising the publication. Editorial support was provided by Sally Hinchcliffe. The layout was prepared by Liz Zachary.

Norway's involvement in the OECD Review was co-ordinated by Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde and Ms. Aase Birgitte Gimnes, Senior Advisers, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. A key part of Norway's preparation was the crafting of a comprehensive and informative Country Background Report (CBR) on its Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system and policies, published by the Ministry of Education and Research jointly with the present report. The review team is highly indebted to the authors of the CBR, and to all those who supported them with providing such a comprehensive and informative report. The CBR is an important output from the review process in its own right as well as the main starting point and resource for the review team. The CBR is referenced as "Ministry of Education and Research, 2015" throughout this report. The CBR follows the questionnaire and guidelines prepared by the OECD. This report and the CBR should be read together so that the readers could gain a full picture of the Norwegian policy contexts and be able to triangulate the policy issues between the reader's own assessment, the internal assessment by the Norwegian authority and the external assessment by the OECD review team.

The fact-finding mission took place on 10-13 June 2014, including visits to Oslo, Drammen and Hole. The policy review visit took place on 9-15 September 2014 and covered visits to Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø and Kåfjord. The itineraries for both visits are provided in Annex A. The visits were planned jointly by the OECD Secretariat and the Norwegian authorities. During the review visit, the team held discussions with a wide range of national, regional and local authorities; officials from the Ministry of Education and Research. Those meetings and visits sought to provide a broad perspective on ECEC policies and practices in Norway. The review team is extremely grateful for the insightful discussions, helpful comments and explanations and the time dedicated to the review by the various people it had the pleasure to meet. Our special thanks goes to Ms. Tove Mogstad Slinde and Ms. Aase Gimnes who shared their expertise and answered the never-ending questions of the review team throughout the two visits. Thanks to the hospitality of all Norwegian stakeholders, the visits were inspiring and, due to the wealth of information received, intellectually challenging but enjoyable.

This report is organised in three chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context, with information on Norway's demography, welfare state, education policies and key reforms. Chapter 2 looks at governance, funding and access with strengths, challenges and policy recommendations for all areas. Lastly, Chapter 3, the main chapter of the report, focuses on quality in the area of workforce, standards and regulations, monitoring and research, again identifying strengths, challenges and suggesting policy recommendations.

Table of contents

List of abbreviations **9**

Executive summary **11**

Chapter 1 **National context and overview of early childhood education and care** **13**

The Norwegian context: Political system, geography and demography 14
Social and education policy context 15
ECEC reforms and policy trends in Norway 19

Chapter 2 **Ensuring access through effective governance and funding** **25**

Key messages 26
Introduction 26
Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations 28
Governing and financing kindergartens 29
Integrated and local governance 29
Strong public funding and local decision making 30
Strengths 33
Challenges 34
Policy recommendations 35
Ensuring access to kindergarten 36
Strengths 36
Challenges 40
Policy recommendations 43
Annex 2.1 54

Chapter 3 **Enhancing quality in early childhood education and care** **57**

Key messages 58
Introduction 58
Concepts of quality in early childhood education and care 60
Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations 61
Workforce quality 62
Strengths 63
Challenges 66
Policy recommendations 69
Standards and regulations 74
Strengths 75
Challenges 78
Policy recommendations 79
Monitoring 82
Monitoring service quality 83
Monitoring staff quality 85
Monitoring child development and well-being 85

Strengths 86
Challenges 88
Policy recommendations 91
Research 95
Strengths 96
Challenges 98
Policy recommendations 98
Discussion and conclusion 100
Annex 3.1 110

Annex A Programmes of OECD missions 123

Programme for OECD Fact-finding mission, 10-13 June 2014 123
Tuesday, 10 June 123
Wednesday, 11 June 123
Thursday, 12 June 124
Friday, 13 June 124
Programme for OECD Review visit, 9-15 September 2014 125
Tuesday, 9 September 125
Wednesday, 10 September 125
Thursday, 11 September 125
Friday, 12 September 126
Saturday, 13 September 126
Monday, 15 September 126

Annex B Glossary of Terms used in the review report for Norway 127

Tables

Table 2.1 Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations regarding governance, funding and access 28
Table A2.1 Characteristics of legal access entitlement 54
Table 3.1 Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations regarding quality 61
Table 3.2 Curriculum frameworks in place for ECEC across the OECD 77
Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality 110

Figures

Figure 1.1 Spending on maternity and parental leave payments per child born 2011 16
Figure 2.1 Overview of kindergarten governance and funding structure in Norway 30
Figure 2.2 Public expenditure on childcare and early education services, % of GDP, 2011 31
Figure 2.3 Distribution of municipal expenditure in 2012 32
Figure 2.4 Enrolment rates at age 3 in early childhood education 36
Figure 2.5 Childcare fees per 2-year-old attending accredited early-years care and education services (% of average wage) 2012 38
Figure 3.1 Pre-primary teachers' annual statutory salary at different points in their careers (2012) ... 73
Figure 3.2 Service quality aspects inspected in childcare and nursery settings (or integrated settings for countries with an integrated system) 84
Figure 3.3 Training provision for early childhood education and care assessors and evaluators 90
Figure 3.4 Process quality aspects monitored in pre-primary education (or integrated settings) 94

Boxes

Box 1.1 Key facts about Norway 13
Box 2.1 Outreach examples from Oklahoma and Maryland (United States) 46
Box 3.1 Setting quantitative targets to foster qualifications of ECEC staff in New Zealand 71
Box 3.2 Mandatory monitoring for quality enhancement in Berlin, Germany 81
Box 3.3 Monitoring quality in the city of Bergen 88
Box 3.4 External monitoring in England: The example of Ofsted 92
Box 3.5 The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in the US Head Start programme ... 95

List of abbreviations

ABF/ ABLU	*Arbeidsplassbasert barnehagelærerutdanning* (Workplace-based Kindergarten Teacher Education, Norway)
BeKi	*Berliner Kita-Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung* (Berlin Kita Institute for Quality Development in Kindergarten, Germany)
BePro	Better Provisions for Norway's Children in ECEC (longitudinal study)
BiKS	*Bildungsprozesse, Kompetenzentwicklung und Selektionsentscheidungen im Vor- und Grundschulalter* (Educational processes, competence development and selection decision at preschool and primary school age)
BLU	Kindergarten Teacher Education (Norway)
BONDS	Behavioural Outlook Norwegian Developmental Study
CARE	Curriculum Quality Analysis and Impact Review of European ECEC
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System (assessment instrument)
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECERS-E	Four Curricular Subscales Extension to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (assessment instrument)
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (assessment instrument)
ECTS	European Credits Transfer System
ELL	English Language Learner
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (UK)
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage (UK)
FUB	*Foreldreutvalget for barnehager* (National Parents' Committee for Kindergarten, Norway)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITERS	Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (assessment instrument)
KS	*Kommunesektorens organisasjon* (Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities)
NAV	*Arbeids- og velferdsetaten* (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service)

NB-ECEC	*Nordic Base of ECEC* (database collecting peer-reviewed ECEC related publications from Norway, Sweden and Denmark)
NCKO	*Nederlands Consortium Kinderopvang Onderzoek* (Dutch Consortium for Child Care)
NCQTL	National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (US)
NEPS	National Educational Panel Study (Germany)
NIEER	National Institute for Early Education Research (US)
NOK	Norwegian krone (currency of Norway)
NOKUT	*Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen* (Norwegian Agency for Quality in Education)
NOU	*Norges offentlige utredninger* (Official Norwegian Reports, published by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministries)
NUBBEK	*Nationale Untersuchung zur Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in der frühen Kindheit* (National Study on Early Childhood Education and Care, Germany)
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (national inspection agency for early years settings, UK)
OHS	Office of Head Start (Office for the Administration for Children and Families, US)
PBL	*Private barnehagers landsforbund* (Organisation of Privately Owned Kindergartens, Norway)
PDG	Professional Development Grant (part of the Alberta Child Care Accreditation Funding Program, Canada)
PIAAC	Programme for the Assessment of Adult Competencies (OECD)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRAKUT	*Praksisrettet utdanningsforskning* (Programme for Practice-based Educational Research, Norway)
SEK	Swedish krona (currency of Sweden)
SSTEW	Sustained shared thinking and emotional well-being (assessment instrument)
TRAS	Early Record of Language Development (assessment instrument)
ZiKiB	*Zielkindbeobachtungsverfahren* (Target Child Observation, assessment instrument)

Executive summary

Norway's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system has experienced a strong expansion over the last decade. More children than ever are enrolled in its kindergartens. Norway is among the OECD countries with the highest share of public income spent on early childhood education and care, and public funding for the kindergarten sector has strongly increased over the past 15 years, enabling a rapid expansion of service provision. Workforce participation among mothers has steadily increased in Norway and the gender pay gap is low by international standards. With a generous parental leave benefit available for parents of children up to the age of one, the majority of parents enrol their children in kindergarten from age one to five. A cash-for-care benefit is available for parents not using kindergarten for their 1-year-olds. In an increasingly diverse society, efforts have been made to ensure that the education and ECEC system will become more responsive to the needs of migrant students and children.

Norway has integrated responsibility for ECEC provision and schooling under the Ministry of Education and Research since 2006 and, from 2012, certain tasks were delegated to its subsidiary Directorate for Education and Training, which facilitates smoother transitions of children across different levels of education and more coherent governance. In line with Norway's holistic approach to ECEC, young children of all ages are served the same settings before entering compulsory school. Municipalities play a key role in ECEC governance, and funding and stakeholders are being involved in key decisions. For instance, in 2010 a national parent's committee for kindergarten was established. Since 2011, kindergartens were included in the block grants transferred to municipalities, replacing the earmarked grants used for the expansion. Municipalities own half of Norway's kindergartens and oversee all public and private kindergartens in their districts. This allows local authorities to adapt kindergarten provision and other services to local needs. At the same time, it also makes it difficult for the national government to ensure that policies are adequately implemented across the country, especially since incentives through earmarked grants have been phased out. In 2003, a political agreement and regulation was reached to ensure more equal public funding of private and public kindergartens, and by 2014 private kindergartens received 98% of the public funding received by municipal kindergartens. However, the funding of private providers remains complex and uneven across municipalities. Norway could further consolidate its steering of the sector by attaching additional financial payments to selected targets and simplifying the funding of private providers.

Access has increased greatly in recent years, reaching high levels of participation, even at very young ages. A maximum parental fee was introduced in 2004 and fees have decreased over the past years. A legal entitlement to a place in kindergarten from the age of one was introduced in 2009. Challenges persist in rendering kindergarten more attractive for minority language and low-income families and ensuring that there is an even supply of places across the country and at all times. Norway could expand its outreach activities and create services tailored more specifically to the needs of vulnerable groups. Areas with low levels of coverage of kindergartens should receive

additional support to scale up provision. Admissions need to be handled in a more flexible way, gradually removing the autumn cut-off date for registration.

Quality issues are more salient in Norway than concerns about access, especially regarding workforce quality and monitoring. Norway has particular strengths with regard to strategies to increase the number, qualification levels, stability and diversity of pedagogical staff. The proportion of male staff has also increased and useful revisions have been made to kindergarten teacher education itself, with a new framework introduced in 2010. However, the ECEC system still suffers from persistent shortages of qualified staff and the sector offers staff insufficient status, pay and career options. There are specialised courses for pedagogical leaders and head teachers, and training programmes for pedagogical staff with lower qualifications who seek to raise their competence and foster diversity, but there are no mandatory staff training programmes in specific educational areas. The majority of assistants continue to lack relevant qualifications. Mandatory qualifications for all staff working with children are therefore recommended, backed up by a national strategy with clear quantitative targets to reduce the number of underqualified staff. The practice of allowing kindergartens dispensations from staff qualification requirements must be phased out to ensure equal quality for all children.

The Norwegian system stands out with its comprehensive Framework Plan for kindergartens, revised in 2006, and its strong regulation of structural quality standards such as kindergarten teacher-child ratios. Not all its standards are adequate or precise enough, however, especially those regarding staff-child ratios and minimum qualification levels for staff involved in the direct pedagogical work with children. With regard to monitoring, Norway provides useful national guidelines for inspection and many local monitoring practices are in place to foster quality. However, the scope of the monitoring and the roles of individual stakeholders do not seem to be well defined. Municipalities face a conflict of interest, having a dual role as both owner of some kindergartens and evaluator of all kindergartens in their districts. Furthermore, they suffer from a lack of capacity to ensure independent inspections for compliance and regular consulting for quality improvement. Those purposes need to be clarified and separated. Current monitoring practices are insufficient to assess process quality, such as the quality of interactions between staff and children, and capture children's development and well-being to identify good practices and inform staff practices. Process quality in kindergarten is the critical factor in supporting children's development and thus needs to be included in standards and regulations and regularly monitored. The Directorate for Education and Training may play a key role in ensuring more independent monitoring of quality in the long term.

Research funding and activities in the area of ECEC have increased over recent years. Many new and large studies are on the way to expand the evidence base for policy making, but more work needs to be done to link research and practice. For instance the Directorate should ensure that research informs staff practices to a greater extent and prioritise monitoring quality approaches according to research findings. Large-scale research needs to be strengthened and sustained with regard to the level, determinants and consequences of process quality. The Directorate for Education and Training and the National Knowledge Centre for Education could take further responsibility for disseminating and co-ordinating research efforts.

Chapter 1

National context and overview of early childhood education and care

Box 1.1 Key facts about Norway

Population: 5.1 million. **Fertility rate**: 1.78 in 2013. **Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita**: USD 67 123 in 2014 (current purchasing power parity [PPP] equivalent). **Children under 6 years**: 375 744 (7.35% of the population) in 2014.

Female labour-force participation: 76.1% of women (15-64) are employed; 40% of women were in part-time employment in 2013, compared with 14.1% of men.

Labour-force participation rate of women with children under 6 years: in 2010, 83% of mothers with children aged 1-2 were employed, 32% of them part-time; 86% of mothers of children aged 3-5 were employed, 29% of them part-time.

Maternity and parental leave: since 2013, 49 weeks at 100% of earnings, or 59 weeks of leave at 80% of earnings; mothers and fathers each have to take at least 14 weeks of leave after birth.

Compulsory school age: 6 years.

Social expenditure: 22% GDP in 2014. **Share of children in poor homes**: 4.4%, compared to an OECD average of 11.5% in 2010.

Total educational expenditure: 7.4% of GDP, compared to an OECD average of 6.1% in 2011.

Legal entitlement to a place in kindergarten: from one year old.

Legal entitlement to a free service: from six years old.

Funding of ECEC services for children 0-5 years: the state spent NOK 36 billion (around USD 4 billion in PPP equivalent) in 2012, amounting to 1.4% of GDP.

Major service types and duration: *Barnehager* (kindergartens) and *Familienbarnehager* (family day care) offer regular half-day or full-day, full year services for children aged 0-5 years. *Åpne barnehager* (open kindergartens) are part-time, drop-in centres for children and parents/care-givers who participate in programmes with the child.

Costs to parents (ECEC): parental fees for kindergartens and family day care are capped at NOK 2 405 per month (2014) and account for 15% of costs on average. Open kindergartens require no or very low fees.

Rate of participation in regulated services: children 1-2 years: 79.8%; children 3-5 years: 96.6% in 2013.

Designation and qualifications of key staff: in family day care, managers are not required to be qualified kindergarten teachers, but regulated family day care has to be supervised by a qualified kindergarten teacher on a regular basis. Kindergartens are staffed with pedagogical leaders (*pedagogiske ledere*) who are educated kindergarten teachers or hold comparable qualifications, and with assistants who should preferably have a four-year vocational training at upper secondary level as childcare and youth workers. Settings can request exemptions from qualification requirements for managers and pedagogical leaders if there is a lack of applicants. However, assistants do not necessarily need a diploma, and only 37.5% of staff were trained kindergarten teachers in 2013.

Child-staff ratios: The so-called pedagogue norm requires 1 kindergarten teacher per 7-9 children under the age of 3 and 1 kindergarten teacher per 16-18 children over the age of 3 when children attend more than six hours per day. Regulations for total staff stipulate that staffing must be sufficient for the kindergarten to be able to carry out satisfactory pedagogical activity, without specifying a required number of adults per child. Usually untrained staff is present in addition to the kindergarten teacher.

Source: Ministry of Education and Research, 2015; Moafi and Bjørkli, 2011; OECD, forthcoming; OECD, 2015a; OECD, 2015b; OECD 2015c; OECD, 2014a; OECD 2014b.

The Norwegian context: Political system, geography and demography

Dispersed population and strong local governance

Norway is a small country with 5.1 million inhabitants, a number which has grown by 14% since 2000 (Statistics Norway, 2014a). While about 1 million people live in the three main cities, Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim, there are many small municipalities in sparsely populated areas. In 2014, the share of the population aged 0-6 years old was 7.35%, a total of 375 744 children. The counties with the most children and youth are Akerhus, Oslo, Hordaland and Rogaland (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

There is a long-standing tradition of local self-government and decentralisation which also applies to the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. Norway has 19 counties and 428 locally governed municipalities, which vary widely in population size and geographical area. Oslo is both a county and a municipality. Both the county and municipal councils are formed of popularly elected representatives. The central government is represented at the county level through county governors.

In 2012, local government spending was around 14.7% of GDP in continental Norway, similar to the average of 14.5% in 33 OECD countries. It accounted for 34% of GDP, again similar to the OECD average of 32.5% (OECD, 2013a). According to national statistics, local government income was equal to 18% of GDP. The local government sector employs one-fifth of all Norwegian employees, reflecting their wide array of responsibilities. Local and regional authorities are organised in an association called the Kommunesektorens organisasjon (KS) which meets regularly with ministries to consult and advise on legislation proposals effects on municipalities (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2014).

A diverse population

The indigenous Sami population make up 1.5% of the country's inhabitants, or around 75 000 people; Sami and Norwegian are both official languages of Norway. The number of immigrant children and children with immigrant parents has grown by 144% between 2001 and 2014, with Europe, Asia and Africa being the most common regions of origin (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In 2013, 126 100 children, 18% of all children born in Norway, had immigrant parents and 12% of Norway's population were immigrants (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The majority of migrants come to Norway for humanitarian reasons or to be reunited with their families but increasing numbers of immigrants are entering Norway to seek employment (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The increase in the number of immigrants has been especially marked in Oslo, but smaller municipalities have also experienced increases, for instance in coastal areas where workers have been recruited for fishing.

A favourable economic environment

The country's economic situation is favourable, with low levels of unemployment (3.5% in 2014), and general government debt (34.8% of GDP in 2013), and a GDP per capita of USD 67 123 in 2014 (in current PPP equivalent, OECD, 2015a; 2015b). Norway is a high-income country achieving both high levels of political stability and social equality, with a Gini coefficient of 0.25 in 2011 which is the second lowest score on income inequality in the OECD (OECD, 2015d)

About half of Norway's exports stem from the oil and gas sector. The natural resource revenues of the Norwegian government, both as owner and through taxation, are paid into

the Government Petroleum Fund (OECD, 2014d). Due to the well-functioning fiscal framework for those revenues, the economy is expected to stay on track despite lower oil prices (OECD, 2014e). In Norway, a fiscal rule stipulates that the government may run a structural budget deficit equivalent to 4% of mainland GDP (i.e. excluding returns on the financial assets the petroleum fund holds abroad), corresponding to the expected long-term real rate of return of the fund. Even without petroleum revenues, Norway has one of the highest shares of government revenue in (mainland) GDP across the OECD, reaching 48.8% in 2014 (OECD, 2014d).

Social and education policy context

Welfare state and social policies

Social expenditure amounted to 22% of GDP in 2014 (OECD, 2014a). In line with the extensive welfare state, the two sectors that employed most people in 2013 were human health, and social work and education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Yet, compared to other Nordic countries, Norway must be seen as a latecomer to putting the state at the centre of care provision; for a long time family policies used to provide strong support to the family as provider of social care (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). Norwegian family policies can therefore be seen as following a dual model: on the one hand, they emphasise parents' freedom of choice and grant cash benefits to value care work irrespective of employment status, similar to approaches in traditionally more conservative welfare states. On the other hand, the country has implemented policies that are typical of so-called social-democratic regimes, encouraging women to work and linking family policies to labour-force participation, and providing extensive services financed through high tax revenues (Bungum and Kvande, 2013).

High labour-force participation

Kindergarten is an integral part of a coherent set of policies in Norway that supports full participation and equality in the labour market for parents. Since the 1970s, female workforce participation has steadily increased, creating a high demand for kindergarten places in Norway. Even at the turn of the millennium, supply could not meet the demand for places. This challenge would be addressed by the 2003 Kindergarten Agreement, as will be discussed in more detail later. Gradually, the focus of ECEC policies has shifted from labour-market objectives for parents to educational objectives for children.

In 2013, 66% of women and 71% of men were in employment, with actual working time of 30.7 hours per week for females and 37 for males. The fertility rate in Norway remains above the OECD average, at 1.78 per woman in 2013 (Statistics Norway, in Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In 2008-10 an Action Plan for Gender Equality was implemented (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Norway fares well in international comparisons of various indicators of gender equality. Compared with other OECD countries, it is the country with the second lowest gender gap in labour-force participation (behind Finland), the fourth lowest gender pay gap (8% in 2010) and the highest share of female board members in listed companies (38% in 2009) (OECD, 2012). In 2010, 83% of mothers with children aged 1-2 were employed, 32% of them part-time; 86% of mothers of children aged 3-5 were employed, 29% of them part-time (Moafi and Bjørkli, 2011). Yet, some challenges remain. For instance, the gender pay gap of 25-44 year-olds with children increases to 21%, just below the OECD average assuming full-time employment. Since women in Norway and elsewhere are more likely to work part-time, the gender gap in take-home wages is even higher (OECD, 2012).

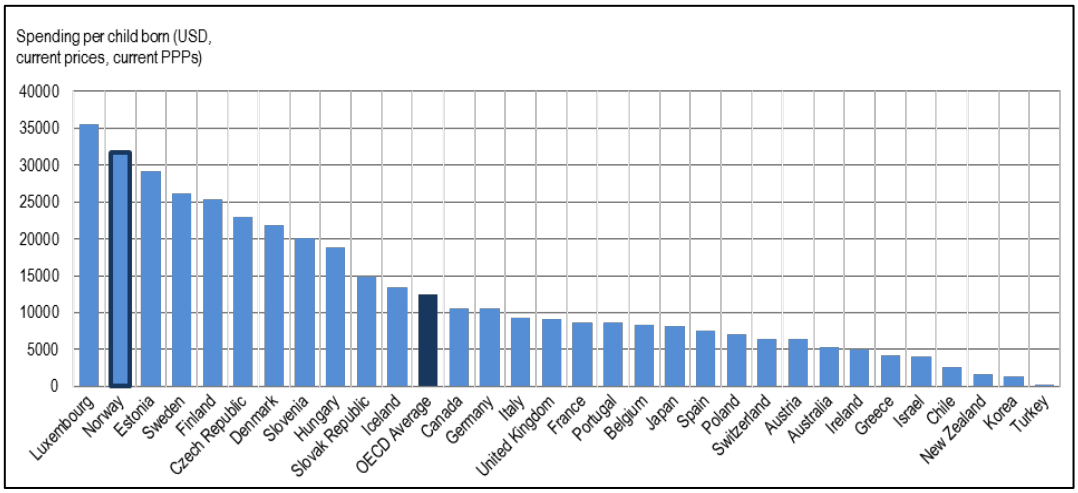
Looking only at households with small children, more than 10% lived in a household with just one parent in 2012, which means that they are particularly dependent on ECEC provision to ensure a stable household income and labour-force participation (Statistics Norway, 2014a). However, only 4.4% of children live in poor households, compared with an OECD average of 11.5% in 2010 (OECD, 2015c).

Generous cash benefits for families

Parental leave benefits have been gradually extended, reaching 49 weeks at full earnings or 59 weeks at 80% of earnings in 2013. A "daddy month" was implemented as early as 1993. In 2013, each parent was granted 14 non-transferrable weeks of leave after birth, but the current government reduced the non-transferrable quota for fathers to 10 weeks in 2014, to increase parents' freedom of choice while maintaining the total duration. As a result, few children participate in kindergarten before they turn one (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Figure 1.1 indicates how Norway compares to other countries with respect to spending on parental leave per child born. Such policies seem to be supported both from a child development and a labour market perspective. There is some evidence that, at least if quality is not assured and intensity is high, ECEC may have negative effects for children under the age of one (Mitchell et al., 2008). Making benefits related to prior salaries provides incentives for parents, especially mothers, to take up paid employment before childbirth. Reserving part of the parental leave benefit to the partner does not just allow both parents to care for their child, but also promises to mitigate a potential bias of employers who expect women but not men to take parental leave. It can therefore help to strengthen mothers' position in the labour market. A cross-country comparison shows that in the OECD, countries with more extensive ECEC provision and longer periods of paid leave have smaller gender pay gaps (OECD, 2012).

Figure 1.1 Spending on maternity and parental leave payments per child born 2011

Public expenditure on maternity and parental leaves per child born, at current prices and current PPPs, in USD



Note: Countries are ranked in descending order according to public expenditure on maternity and parental leaves.

The 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.

Source: OECD (2015d), *Social Expenditure Database (SOCX)*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm (preliminary data for 2008 and 2009).

In 1998 a cash-for-care benefit for families of 1-year-olds was introduced, extending to 2-year-olds in 1999. It granted families a monthly flat-rate allowance if their children were not benefiting from subsidised kindergarten provision. In contrast to the parental leave scheme for parents of children under one, this benefit is not conditional on prior labour-force participation (Bungum and Kvande, 2013). In the beginning, when it was still difficult to access kindergarten places for children under 3, the benefit proved very popular and the vast majority of parents of children born after the introduction of the reform received the benefit, suggesting that it was in demand across social groups (Bungum and Kvande, 2013). Uptake peaked in 2000 when more than 80% of 1-year-olds and more than 70% of 2-year-olds were beneficiaries (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, 2012). It subsequently decreased in line with the expansion of kindergarten places, by as much as 46.5% between 2007 and 2013 (Statistics Norway, 2014c). The duration and value of the benefit are subject to a controversial debate in the country. While proponents emphasise parents' freedom to choose to stay at home with their children or purchase private child-minding services, critics cite evidence that the benefit keeps children from minority or low-income backgrounds in particular out of kindergarten, and their mothers out of the labour market (Bungum and Kvande, 2013; Ellingsæter, 2003; Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007). In 2012, after participation in kindergarten had increased strongly, the benefit was again limited to 1-year-olds. The government elected in autumn 2013 has put renewed emphasis on cash-for-care (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In some communities, cash-for-care supports mothers who choose to care for children at home rather than enter the labour force because the only available employment is distant from the community. During the review visit, leaders in one rural community indicated that families would leave if the only alternative was for both parents to commute long distances to jobs when their children were very young. Cash-for-care also has a lower cost to the municipality than a kindergarten place (Ellingsaeter, 2014).

A universal child benefit for under-18-year-olds is in place, worth NOK 970 per month in 2014, with a bonus available for two remote regions. For children aged 12 and younger, parents can deduct child-minding expenses up to a value of NOK 25 000 for the first child and NOK 15 000 for each additional child from their taxable income (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Targeted measures for migrant children

The children of asylum seekers do not have a statutory right to kindergarten until their parents are granted asylum. However, the Directorate of Immigration stipulates that families in asylum centres should have access to a "child base" for at least three hours a day from the age of two to compulsory schooling. There is moreover a Ministry of Justice grant to allow 4- and 5-year-olds to attend kindergarten (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

In the area of social policies for migrants, the key document in recent years is *White Paper* No. 6 (2012-2013), "A Holistic Policy of Integration, Diversity and Social Cohesion". Among other areas, it set out measures regarding employment, health, housing and settlement; participation in democracy and civil, society; crime; and, very prominently, kindergarten, family and early childhood development. As a result of the white paper, for the period 2013-17, NOK 30 million per year was granted to foster competence development in the area of multicultural issues in the whole education sector. This includes employees, managers and owners of kindergartens (private and

public) and as well as staff of schools and teacher training institutions (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Education

Expenditure on education accounts for 7.42% of GDP. This is the fourth highest share among OECD countries (OECD, 2014c). Compulsory school starts at the age of six and 97% of schools are publicly owned (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013). Primary and lower secondary schools are owned by the municipalities while the counties own the upper secondary schools. Private school owners are organised in school boards (OECD, 2013b).

According to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, the impact of socio-economic status on performance is much lower in Norway than on average in the OECD. In the 2012 edition, Norway scored around the average for OECD countries in mathematics, above average in reading and below average in science. The share of low-performing students in sciences has increased since 2009, reaching 19.6% in 2012. PISA has also documented the increasing number of students with an immigrant background in Norway, rising from 5.6% in 2003 to 9.4% in 2012. Their average mathematic scores lie 46 points below those of other students (OECD, 2013c).

Migrant education has been high on the Norwegian policy agenda for some time. The OECD review of migrant education carried out in 2009 has proven especially influential (Taguma et al., 2009). It acknowledged that measures to tackle challenges related to the key challenges in educating migrants have been developed, but pointed at the need to develop capacity for implementation, prioritise ECEC for all children and at an early age, and render kindergarten and schools more responsive to linguistic and cultural diversity. The *Official Norwegian Report* (NOU) "Multitude and mastering: Multilingual children, youth and adults in the education system" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2010), presented by the Commission for Equal Education for Minority Language Children, Youth and Adults, suggested five key points that need to be addressed to improve migrant education: early effort, long-term second language education, multilingualism as a positive value, the need for competence building in the education sector and implementation challenges (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Results from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), suggest that in international comparisons, Norway's young adults perform below average in literacy and have average scores in numeracy. The gap in numeracy scores between men and women is one of the largest of all participating countries, with men scoring 14.8 points higher. As in other participating countries, foreign-language immigrants in Norway have lower levels of literacy proficiency in the Norwegian language than their native peers (OECD, 2013d).

Transitions from kindergarten to primary schooling has moved up the Norwegian policy agenda in recent years and in 2008 the Ministry of Education and Research published guidelines for municipalities, kindergartens and schools. Since 2010, a new "purpose clause" for kindergartens has been put in place, following the same structure and expressing the same fundamental values as the purpose clause for schools and vocational education and training. The framework plan for kindergartens and the primary school curriculum are linked, emphasising the same values and similar learning areas (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

ECEC reforms and policy trends in Norway

There are three types of kindergartens in Norway. Ordinary kindergartens (*barnehager*) can be public or private. They offer half-day or full-day service all year round for children between zero and five years of age. Family kindergartens (*familiebarnehager*) are based in private homes, where an assistant works with a maximum of five children, supervised and mentored by a qualified kindergarten teacher on a weekly basis. Open kindergartens (*åpne barnehager*) are part-time drop-in centres with programmes for parents and children to participate in together, led by a qualified kindergarten teacher (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). This report uses the term "kindergarten" in the Norwegian sense of the word, which may correspond to "preschool" in other countries such as the United States (where "kindergarten" refers to more school-like settings). While a place in kindergarten is a statutory right for the child, participation in ECEC is voluntary. In 2013, 90% of children between the ages of one and five, including 97.5% of 5-year-olds, participated in ECEC. Due to Norway's generous paid parental leave, only 3.2% of children under one were in kindergarten (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

The last OECD ECEC policy review for Norway raised various issues for consideration, which include, among others (OECD, 1999):

- The split governance structure of the sector at national level.
- The existence of strong ideas about how the Norwegian children should be and the intrinsic value of childhood in Norway, which are being challenged by a changing economy and society.
- Catering for the needs of and benefiting from the opportunities of an increasingly heterogeneous society with larger ethnic minority groups.
- Tensions between discourses of childhood, parenthood, family and gender equality, also in light of the cash-for-care benefit.
- Inequalities faced by minority-language children.
- Unequal funding arrangements for public and private providers, and across different communes.
- The comparatively low proportion of trained kindergarten teachers or pedagogues.

These issues have to a large extent have been addressed or discussed by Norwegian policy makers in the past years. Since the last OECD ECEC policy review, there have been various government changes affecting the sector. From 1997 to 2000 and 2001 to 2005 the government was led by Prime Minister Bondevik from the Christian Democratic Party, which is a proponent of the cash-for-care benefit, but was also part of the broad political consensus in favour of an expansion of kindergarten places. From 2000 to 2001 and 2005 to 2013, Prime Minister Stoltenberg from the Social Democratic Party was in office, trying to limit cash-for-care and also furthering the expansion of quality kindergarten provision (Bungum and Kvande, 2013; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015; Norwegian Government, 2013). Since 2013, Prime Minister Solberg from the Conservative Party is heading the government, which is re-emphasising freedom of choice for families and cash-for-care, as well as the need to improve kindergarten quality

through more qualified staff and foster language support for minority-language children (Conservative Party Norway, 2013; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

With the 2003 Kindergarten Agreement (*Barnheageforliket*), political parties across different camps committed themselves to the expansion of quality kindergarten places to achieve full coverage. This initiated a phase of strong growth in the sector, facilitated by increased financial support from the central government. This agreement was based on the acknowledgement that the shortage of kindergarten places, especially for children under three, meant "freedom of choice" was not ensured (Bungum and Kvande, 2013; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In line with this commitment, Norway massively increased the state grants earmarked for providers' operating and investment costs as well as earmarked grants to municipalities, tripling the granted amount between 2000 and 2012 to NOK 36 billion or 1.4% of GDP. While public grants covered only 56% of operating costs in 2000, the share increased to 85% by 2012 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

A 2003 law stipulated that private and public kindergartens should have equal access to public funding, obliging municipalities to gradually increase grants to private kindergartens up to the level of grants to municipal centres, reaching 98% in 2014. This was a deliberate strategy to support the creation of private kindergartens as an integral part of the expansion of the sector. As a result, they account for half of all places, maintaining their important role (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

A maximum fee for parents was introduced in 2004, lowering private kindergarten costs for families across the income distribution, and making a tangible contribution to improving access, as set out in the 2003 agreement (OECD, 2013b; Bungum and Kvande, 2013).

In 2005, the 1995 Kindergarten Act was replaced by a new one. Among other changes, it adjusted the division of responsibilities between different levels of administration and reinforced the municipalities' long-standing role as kindergarten authority, supervised by the county governor (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

In 2006, to ensure greater coherence between educational institutions and to acknowledge kindergarten as first stage in the process of life-long learning, responsibility for ECEC was moved from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research. A knowledge promotion reform was also launched in 2006 in primary and secondary schools, introducing a new focus on basic skills, setting clearer standards for learning and further decentralising decision making (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015;OECDb, 2013).

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens was revised in 2006. It sets out guidelines regarding the values and purpose of kindergartens, their curricular objectives, and educational approaches. Accordingly, kindergartens should provide high quality pedagogical services (Alvestad, 2009). This was followed, in 2007-10, by a national strategy for raising staff competence, which was accompanied by a recruitment initiative (2007-11) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

An individual legal right for children from the age of one to a full-time place in ordinary kindergarten or family kindergarten entered into force in 2009 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

In line with the long-standing tradition of decentralised governance in Norway even more responsibility for the kindergarten sector has been given to the municipalities. In

2011, it was the last major sector to move from earmarked central government grants to block grants (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The conservative government elected into office in 2013 is considering a further reform of the municipal sector in Norway, fostering the establishment of larger municipalities that are better prepared to take on new responsibilities. It also seeks to ensure closer co-operation between kindergartens, schools, the child welfare service, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (Arbeids-og velferdsetaten or NAV), health clinics, and the police. Since the municipalities are in charge of most of these services at the local level, they are in a crucial position to ensure their co-ordination (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

In 2012, kindergartens were included in the portfolio of the Directorate for Education and Training (*Utdanningsdirektoratet*), in addition to primary and secondary education. Established as the executive agency of the Ministry of Education and Research in 2004, the directorate is responsible for the evaluation of the education system through the National Quality Assessment System (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015; OECD, 2013b).

In the national budget for 2015 the Norwegian parliament (*Storting*) increased state grants to introduce a nation-wide subsidy schemes for low-income families from 1 May 2015 so that these families will pay a maximum of 6% of their income for a place in kindergarten, limited by the absolute maximum fee at the top, and also to extend free core hours in kindergarten from 1 August 2015 to all 4- and 5-year-olds from low income families across Norway (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

References

Alvestad, M. (2009), "New developments: Early childhood education and care policy in Norway", *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Vol. 17/3, pp. 416-424.

Amdam, J. (n.d.), *Regional and Local Public Structure and Consequences on Planning and Development*, Volda University College, Volda.

Bungum, B. and E. Kvande (2013), "The rise and fall of cash for care in Norway: Changes in the use of child-care Policies", *Nordic Journal of Social Research*, Vol. 4.

Conservative Party Norway (2013), *New Ideas, Better Solutions – The Conservative Party's Parliamentary Election Manifesto 2013-2017*, Conservative Party Norway, http://publikasjoner.hoyre.no/hoyre/163/105.

Ellingsæter, A.L. (2003), "The complexity of family policy reform: The case of Norway", *European Societies*, Vol. 5/4, pp. 419-443.

Hopfenbeck, T., A. Tolo, T. Florez and Y. El Masri (2013), "Balancing trust and accountability? The Assessment for Learning Programme in Norway: A governing complex education systems case study", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 97, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k3txnpqlsnn-en.

Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (2012), "A holistic policy of integration, diversity and social cohesion", *White Paper*, No. 6 (2012-2013), Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Oslo.

Ministry of Education and Research (2015), *Country Background Report for the OECD ECEC Review*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Education and Research (2013), *White Paper*, No. 24 (2012-2013), Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo

Ministry of Education and Research (2010), "Mangfold og mestring – Flerspråklige barn, unge og voksne i opplæringssystemet" (Multitude and Mastering. Multilingual children, youth and adults), *Official Norwegian Report* (NOU), Vol. 2010, No.7, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo .

Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (2014), *Local Government in Norway*, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Oslo.

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (2012), electronically reported cash-for-care statistics to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Oslo.

Mitchell, L., C. Wylie and M. Carr (2008), *Outcomes of Early Childhood Education: Literature Review*, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Wellington.

Moafi, H. and E.S. Bjørkli (2011), "Barnefamiliers tilsynsordninger, høsten 2010" (Families' child care preferences, autumn 2010), Report Vol. 2011, No. 34,

Statistics Norway, Oslo, www.udir.no/Upload/barnehage/Forskning_og_statistikk/Rapporter/Barnefamiliers_tilsynsordninger.pdf.

Norwegian Government (2013), *Norway's governments since 1945*, Norwegian Government website, www.regjeringen.no/en/the-government/previous-governments/governments/modern-times/governments-since-1945/id438715/.

OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2015a), *National Accounts Statistics* (database), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/na-data-en.

OECD (2015b), Labour Force Statistics, *OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics* (database), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/lfs-data-en.

OECD (2015c), *OECD Family Database*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm.

OECD (2015d), *Social Protection and Well-being Statistics* (database), OECD, Paris. https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SOCX_AGG

OECD (2014a), *Social Expenditure Database (SOCX)*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm.

OECD (2014c), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en.

OECD (2014d), *OECD Economic Surveys: Norway 2014*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_surveys-nor-2014-en.

OECD (2014e), *Norway – Economic forecast summary (November 2014)*, OECD website, www.oecd.org/economy/norway-economic-forecast-summary.htm.

OECD (2013a), *OECD Regions at a Glance 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/reg_glance-2013-en.

OECD (2013b), *Education Policy Outlook Norway*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/edu/EDUCATION%20POLICY%20OUTLOOK%20NORWAY_EN.pdf.

OECD (2013c), "Norway", *Country Note – PISA Results from 2012*, OECD, Paris. http://www.oecd.org/education/PISA-2012-results-norway.pdf

OECD (2013d), "Norway", *Country Note – Survey of Adult Skills First Results*, OECD, Paris. http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20Norway.pdf.

OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264179370-en.

OECD (1999), *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Norway*, OECD Country Note, OECD, Paris www.oecd.org/norway/2534885.pdf.

Pfau-Effinger, B. (2005), "Culture and welfare state policies: Reflections on a complex interrelation", *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 34/1, pp. 3-20.

Solstad, K.K. (2005), "Small rural schools: A Norwegian perspective", in A. Sigsworth and K.J. Solstad (eds.), *Small Rural Schools: A Small Inquiry*, Interskola, Cornwall.

Statistics Norway (2014a), *Demographic Statistics*, Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Statistics Norway (2014b), *Kindergartens, 2013*, Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Statistics Norway (2014c), *Cash Transfers to Families with Children, 2013*, Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Taguma, M., C. Shewbridge, J. Huttova and N. Hoffman (2009), *OECD Reviews of Migrant Education: Norway*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/edu/school/43723539.pdf.

Chapter 2

Ensuring access through effective governance and funding

Norway has an integrated early childhood education and care (ECEC) system, both at the national government level and at individual kindergarten level, facilitating children's transitions from kindergarten to school, in line with the country's holistic approach to ECEC. ECEC governance and funding gives a strong role to municipalities and ensures stakeholder involvement in key decisions. This allows municipalities to tailor kindergarten provision and other services to local needs and set priorities, but also makes it difficult for the national government to ensure that policies are adequately implemented across the country, especially since the tool of earmarked grants is no longer available. The funding of private providers is complex and uneven across municipalities, despite a high public financial commitment. Norway could further consolidate its steering of the sector by attaching additional financial means to selected targets and simplifying the funding of private providers.

Access has increased greatly in recent years, reaching high levels of participation, including at very young ages. Costs for parents have fallen at the same time. Challenges persist in rendering kindergarten more attractive for minority-language and low-income families and ensuring that there is an even supply of places across the country and at all times. Norway could expand its outreach activities and create services tailored more specifically to the needs of vulnerable groups. Areas with low levels of kindergarten coverage should receive additional support to scale up provision and admissions need to be handled in a more flexible way, gradually removing the cut-off date for registration.

Key messages

- Norway has integrated responsibilities for the entire early childhood education and care (ECEC) system and schooling under the Ministry of Education and Research and its subsidiary Directorate for Education and Training. This facilitates smoother transitions for children across different levels of education and more coherent governance. A strong stakeholder involvement is being ensured in this process.
- Municipalities are the key players for policy implementation and are well positioned to adapt kindergarten provision to local needs. They have a good deal of autonomy over the amount they dedicate to kindergartens, especially since the phasing out of earmarked grants for the sector, as long as they meet their legal obligations. Municipalities own half of Norway's kindergartens and oversee all public and private kindergartens in their districts. The private share of kindergarten provision is diverse, ranging from very small settings with a single owner or promoting alternative pedagogies to kindergarten companies owning various settings. The strong local autonomy also renders it challenging for the national government to ensure equal service provision across the country.
- Norway is among the OECD countries with the highest share of public income spent on early childhood education and care, and public funding for the kindergarten sector has strongly increased over the past decade and a half, enabling a rapid expansion of service provision.
- Norway is one of the countries with the highest levels of participation in ECEC across all age groups, with a particularly strong growth of enrolment among the youngest children who are legally entitled to a place from 1 year old. It has also lowered costs for parents through a cap on fees and income-dependent fee scales. A new national minimum requirement for subsidy schemes for low-income families is to come into force in the beginning of May 2015. Service provision is diverse, catering for parents' diverse preferences and needs.
- To continue on this promising path, Norway could maintain and expand private provision by simplifying the complex funding system for private providers. Additional national grants combined with specific targets, such as expanding access in disadvantaged areas, may allow the national government to address shortcomings in local policy implementation. For instance, as already planned by the current government, such targeted measures could help to reduce waiting lists for children who move or turn one after the cut-off date in autumn.
- Kindergartens could be made more attractive to minority-language and low-income families. This could be realised through the expansion of free core hours, a more progressive fee scale and improved outreach to those groups, for instance through communication in multiple languages. The expansion of one-stop shops where parents can access other key services, such as counselling and health care, at the same time would also improve outreach.

Introduction

Kindergarten policy in Norway has gradually evolved over many decades, and today every child has a right to a place from the age of one to five (Thoreson, 2007). At the

beginning of this century political commitment to increase access and decrease costs to parents augmented as indicated by *White Paper* No. 27 (1999–2000), "Kindergartens for the benefit of children and parents". With the 2003 Kindergarten Agreement (*Barnheageforliket*), parties across the political spectrum committed to the expansion of quality kindergarten places to achieve full coverage, initiating a phase of strong growth in the sector, facilitated by an increased financial support of the central government to running costs and investments. Principles included universal access, maximum fees and gradual increases in grants from municipalities to private kindergartens that would equalise public funding between private and public kindergartens, as addressed in *White Paper* No. 24 (2002–2003) "Kindergarten provision for all: Economy, plurality and freedom of choice" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

The Kindergarten Act of 2005 introduced significant changes. It introduced new requirements for the quality of kindergartens, for example with respect to learning and alignment with school. This turning point in policy also was marked by the *White Paper* No. 16 (2006-2007), "No one left behind: Early interventions for lifelong learning". This described education as a means of reducing differences in society, giving everyone the same chance to develop themselves and their abilities. The white paper also discussed early intervention through accessible early childhood education and care for all, and language stimulation for all children in need of directed support. These changes in the quality of care expected have implications for teacher capabilities and costs. For example, improvements in quality will require investment in the knowledge and skills of teaching staff. Not only are there the costs of providing additional pre-service and in-service professional development, but if kindergarten teachers' qualifications are raised to the level of teachers for older children, then they will also need comparable compensation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Policy has continued to evolve, beginning with modifications of the Kindergarten Act implemented from 2004 to 2010. Among the most notable changes was the introduction in 2009 of the legal right to a full-time place in ordinary or family kindergarten for all children from the age of one. Financial support from central government for kindergarten provision in municipalities was changed from earmarked grants that could only be used for kindergartens to inclusion in the general block grants in 2011. In addition, parental leave benefits were gradually extended, reaching 49 weeks at full earnings or 59 weeks at 80% of earnings in 2013. As a result, demand for kindergarten only truly picks up when children turn one (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Another important policy that affects kindergarten participation is the cash-for-care benefit. This benefit pays parents who stay at home or otherwise provide care for their child after the first year of life. As discussed in Chapter 1, the policy was introduced in 1998, but it has been changed several times since, as has the broader policy and societal context in which it operates. With the expansion of kindergarten provision after the 2003 Kindergarten Agreement the use of cash-for-care decreased drastically and declined even further after policy changes including the establishment to a right in kindergarten introduced in 2009. The last government reduced the period during which the benefit was paid, limiting it to 1-year-olds, while the current government has increased the size of the benefit. The Norwegian parliament (*Storting*) has asked the government to explore different models to combine the cash-for-care benefit and the use kindergarten provision (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Given the high overall rates of participation, attention has turned to the small minority of children who do not participate in kindergarten, and the extent to which non-participation is concentrated among less advantaged children and those from migrant backgrounds. This has led to the development of a number of policy innovations. For example, a pilot programme for providing four free core hours of kindergarten per day, funded by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, has been implemented in neighbourhoods with a high percentage of immigrants in several Norwegian cities for several years. The Norwegian parliament (*Storting*) provided a grant to extend free core hours in kindergarten from 1 August 2015 to 4- and 5-year-old children from low-income families across Norway. Another grant for a nation-wide subsidy schemes for low-income families will be available from 1 May 2015 to limit those parents' fees for a place in kindergarten to 6% of their income while maintaining the existing maximum fee in absolute terms (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Measures to avoid long waiting times for children turning one year old after the enrolment cut-off date at the beginning of autumn are also being taken. In 2015, the parliament increased block grants to the municipalities to enable more flexible admission arrangements (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations

Table 2.1 summarises the progress made across all areas, but also the challenges that still lie ahead and policy recommendations to address them. The next sections will discuss all of those in detail. It is evident that the key challenges in Norway are not so much found in the area of access to ECEC but in other areas, such as quality.

Table 2.1 Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations regarding governance, funding and access

	Strengths	Challenges	Policy recommendations
Governance & Finance	National education governance bridges ECEC and schooling.	National policy implementation is difficult to ensure in an equal manner.	Improve policy implementation through financial incentives and closer supervision.
	Stakeholder involvement in ECEC policy decisions increases ownership and facilitates implementation.	The funding of the sector is complicated and creates unintended incentives for municipalities.	Simplify funding formula for private providers and render their revenues more stable.
	Municipalities have the funds and the responsibility to adapt ECEC provision to local needs.		
Access	Strong legal entitlement and expansion of places in kindergarten.	Participation of families with lower socio-economic status, ethnic minorities and children at risk is still hindered: • Affordability continues to be an issue for some; • A lack of information and competing incentives render decisions about participation more difficult.	Increase the attractiveness of participation for ethnic minorities and families with low levels of income and education: • Increase affordability for those with the lowest incomes and least financial benefit from participation; • Improve outreach to low-income and minority families; • Limit unintended consequences of national cash-for-care scheme.
	Increased affordability of kindergarten.	Supply constraints limit access to kindergarten, especially for children who turn age one after the autumn enrolment cut-off and those who move to a new location.	Address territorial inequity in supply and render admissions more flexible: • Ensure equal access nationwide, especially in disadvantaged areas; • Achieve a more flexible system for admission to kindergarten.
	Increased responsiveness to children`s needs and parental choice with diversified kindergarten provision.		

Governing and financing kindergartens

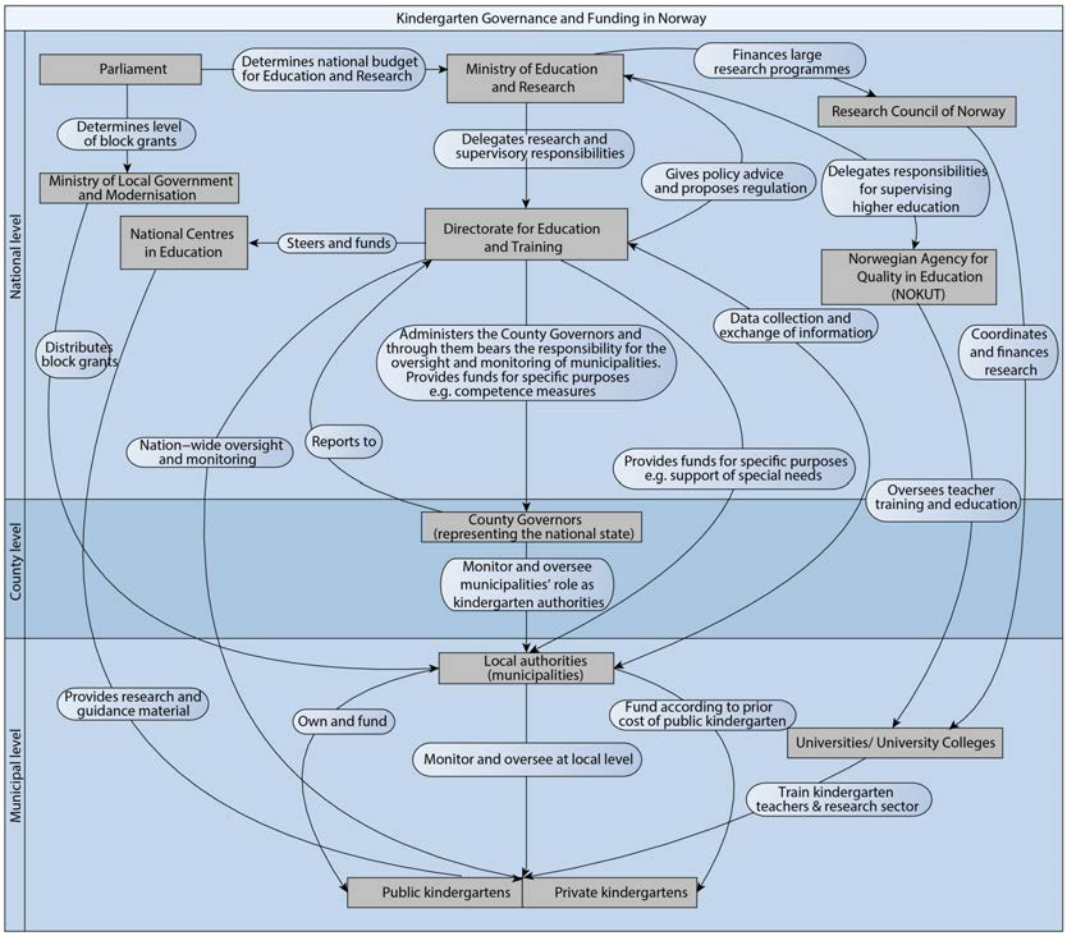
Integrated and local governance

At the national level, the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the kindergarten sector, with responsibility for monitoring and supervising the sector given to the Directorate for Education and Training. County governors represent the national government at the decentralised level, making sure that national decisions are implemented throughout the country. In 2006, the county governors were given the responsibility to ensure that municipalities fulfil their duties as kindergarten authorities. Decisions taken by municipalities as supervisory authorities can be appealed by the county governors. The governors also provide guidance to kindergarten owners, municipalities and the general public, and play an important role in efforts to raise competence levels in the sector and recruit new kindergarten teachers (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Contrary to the situation in many other OECD member countries, such as Germany or Korea, there is almost no role for the regional or state level in the ECEC sector in Norway (OECD, forthcoming). The responsibility of the elected county councils for kindergartens in Norway is limited to providing vocational education and training for the workforce at upper secondary level. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of funding and governance of kindergartens in Norway.

Municipalities are the local kindergarten authorities. They oversee and monitor kindergartens and order that inadequate or unlawful conditions are corrected. In cases of non-compliance they may close kindergartens temporarily or permanently. The county governor has to be informed about such decisions (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Chapter 3 discusses monitoring and inspection in more detail.

The child welfare service, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, is in charge of child protection. The public authorities have started a dialogue with minority group organisations to achieve a higher level of trust in the child welfare service. Kindergarten staff is obliged to alert the child welfare services if they see signs of mistreatment or seriously deficient care. In 2012, 14% of reported cases for children aged 1-5 years were communicated by kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Figure 2.1 Overview of kindergarten governance and funding structure in Norway

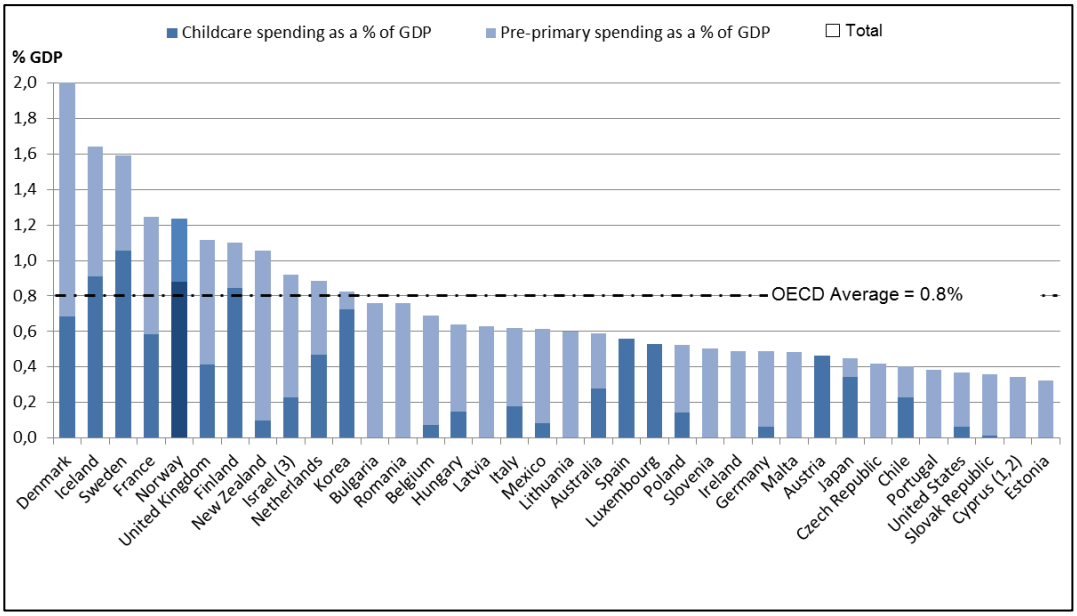


Strong public funding and local decision making

Norway massively increased the state grants for the operating and investment costs of ECEC between 2000 and 2013, more than tripling the amount granted from NOK 12 billion to NOK 38 billion or from 0.5% of GDP to 1.4%. While public grants covered only 46% of costs of private kindergartens and 66% of operating costs of municipal ones in 2000, this share increased to an average of 85% by 2012 (86% for municipal, 83.5% for private kindergartens), with the rest covered by parents (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). As Figure 2.2 shows, in international terms, Norway spends a high share of its national wealth on early childhood education and care (i.e. kindergarten in Norway): public expenditure on ECEC amounted to 1.2% of GDP in 2011, compared to 0.5% of GDP in Germany, 0.6% of GDP in Italy, and 0.4% of GDP in the United States and Portugal (OECD 2015).

Figure 2.2 Public expenditure on childcare and early education services, % of GDP, 2011

Public spending on childcare including pre-primary education



Notes:

1. Footnote by Turkey: the information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

2. Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: the Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

3. The 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.

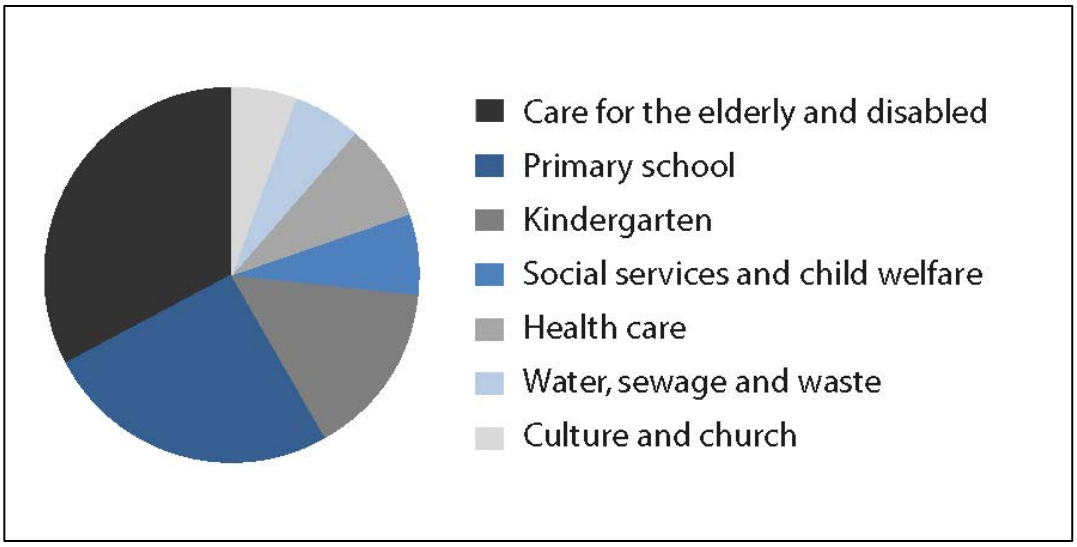
Source: OECD (2015), *OECD Family Database* (database), OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm: Chart PF3.1A (Social Expenditure database 2014; OECD Education database; Eurostat for Non-OECD countries).

In line with the decentralised nature of Norway's overall governance structure, the use of public funds lies largely in the hand of municipalities. However, they are obliged to ensure that private kindergarten providers are funded at almost the same level as municipal kindergartens, so that private providers receive 98% of municipal kindergarten funding. As noted above, central government funding for kindergartens has not been earmarked since 2011, except for the purpose of enhancing minority children's language development (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Instead, the central government has increased the block grant to municipalities accordingly, leaving decisions about how to prioritise different services and benefits in their hands. Of the 18 countries and jurisdictions providing funding information in a recent study (OECD, forthcoming), only Sweden has similarly phased out the use of earmarked grants to finance the ECEC sector. Local authorities are also the only source of public funding in

other European countries such as Croatia, Denmark, Iceland and Poland (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). Many countries, such as Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal, also assign key responsibilities like funding and monitoring at least partly to their local authorities (OECD, forthcoming).

There are several different transfers from the national government to municipalities. The General Grant is mostly distributed on a per capita basis. There are additional grants for rural and peripheral areas, small municipalities (less than 3 200 inhabitants), and the four largest municipalities. A discretionary grant can be used to address specific local and regional circumstances left out of the General Grant Scheme (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2014).

Figure 2.3 Distribution of municipal expenditure in 2012



Source: Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (2014), *Local Government in Norway*, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Oslo.

Municipalities also collect their own revenues through local taxes, and kindergartens charge parents fees up to a legally determined ceiling (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). These fees provide 15% of kindergartens' total costs, on average (OECD, forthcoming). Until recently, private kindergartens were funded according to the budgeted cost of public kindergartens in the respective municipality. The review team was informed that the model has now moved to using the cost of public kindergartens as a reference. Private kindergartens are allowed to make a reasonable net profit on the condition that all expenses in the profit and loss account are related to running the kindergarten, payments for internal transactions are not above market price and personnel costs per full-time place are not significantly lower than in public settings (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Kindergarten is one of the main areas of municipal expenditure, after care of the elderly and disabled, and primary school (see Figure 2.3).

Strengths

National education governance bridges ECEC and schooling

The responsibility for ECEC was allocated to Ministry of Education and Research in 2006, emphasising the pedagogical aspect of kindergarten provision. This is in line with a trend in many OECD countries to move ECEC to education ministries (OECD, forthcoming). The Directorate for Education and Training is charged with the national monitoring and inspection of ECEC, evidence-based policy making, and providing national statistics across all age groups in kindergartens and schools. It is responsible for strengthening efforts to improve kindergarten quality and the linkages between kindergarten and primary schooling. This is also reflected in the Kindergarten Framework Plan which has been aligned with primary school curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Such an integrated system can create a favourable institutional environment for facilitating the transition between ECEC services and to primary school. The directorate is also in charge of administering national means for continuous professional development of staff.

Stakeholder involvement in policy decisions increases ownership and facilitates implementation

Stakeholders play an important role in advising on ECEC policy decisions and implementation. The key groups that regularly meet with the Ministry of Education and Research include the Organisation of Privately Owned Kindergartens (*Private barnehagers landsforbund* or PBL); the teachers' union, the Union of Education Norway (*Utdanningsforbundet*); and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (*Kommunesektorens organisasjon* or KS). Another important stakeholder regarding the Sami as the indigenous people in Norway is the Sami parliament (*Samediggi/Sametinget*). Since 2010 there has also been a National Parents' Committee for Kindergarten (Foreldreutvalget for barnehager or FUB) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Stakeholders such as parent representatives, local authorities and trade unions are consulted at an early stage in the decision-making process. There is a formalised consultation process to involve the KS in decisions affecting municipalities. The review team's fact-finding mission, which included meetings with all of those groups and the Ombudsman for Children, found a high awareness of national policies among stakeholders as well as a culture of open discussions on policies and (conflicting) interests.

Municipalities have the funds and the responsibility to adapt ECEC provision to local needs

Block grants offer local government the flexibility to meet the varying and, over time, changing needs of children and families for kindergarten. Block grants also are intended to increase local initiative, and address some of the unintended consequences arising from earmarked grants. Since municipalities are also in charge of providing other welfare services, they have the freedom to align service delivery in the best interest of families and children. In Oslo, for example, there is a formal co-operation agreement between kindergartens and the child welfare service to work together for the good of the child and clarify responsibilities, share information and ensure privacy of users (City of Oslo, 2013). In Oslo's Alna district, for instance, the review team was informed that

kindergartens and the local child welfare services held regular meetings, and that kindergartens are taking a growing role in reporting cases of suspected abuse. Municipalities themselves own about half of Norway's kindergartens and engage in their quality development. This means that for those kindergartens they play a double role, being both supervisory authorities and providers. This will be discussed in detail in the monitoring section of Chapter 3.

To ensure the implementation of national policies and compliance with regulation, county governors supervise and guide municipalities for the central government and monitor policy implementation. In Troms, for instance, the county governor provides an assessment tool (*Sjumilsteget*) for local municipalities to ensure the protection of children's rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, across health and social services, child welfare providers, kindergartens and schools. This approach capitalises on the pivotal role of municipalities in seeing the whole child rather than only the facets covered by single services (County Governor of Troms, n.d.).

Challenges

National policy implementation is difficult to ensure in an equal manner

Since half of all municipalities have fewer than 5 000 inhabitants, many local authorities lack staff who are able to effectively implement certain national initiatives as well as the local inspection of kindergartens. In discussions with the KS, the review team learnt that municipalities report problems in interpreting and implementing national regulations. Small municipalities in particular face trade-offs between their various tasks in the welfare and educational sector, and beyond.

The process for sanctioning municipalities that do not fulfil their duties is lengthy and appears to be rarely applied. With the phasing out of earmarked grants, it is difficult to create financial incentives to improve kindergarten quality and access at the local level, despite the legal entitlement to a place in kindergarten for children over one year old. County governor's offices have too limited a mandate and capacity to regularly check whether municipalities are complying with national regulations, such as monitoring kindergartens, and licensing and funding private providers. This is particularly pertinent given the municipalities' dual role of both running and monitoring kindergartens.

The funding of the sector is complicated and creates unintended incentives for municipalities

With the move to block grants, municipalities bear more responsibility than ever for allocating sufficient resources to kindergartens. Since private providers are funded according to the average cost of public kindergartens in the municipality concerned, municipalities have an incentive to reduce spending for municipal settings, at least regarding the reported costs. Private providers are faced with financial insecurity, as their funding depends on changes in the municipal sector and since 2011 they no longer benefit from earmarked investment grants to finance extraordinary capital expenses. This may prevent them from setting up new kindergartens or expanding places. While the number of private kindergartens has fallen since the move to block grants, they are taking more children than ever (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). At the same time, there are concerns that some private providers are, despite quality regulations, able to extract significant profits from the sector, through complex company structures and lower pensions for staff (Telemarksforskning, 2011). The KS informed the review team

that private providers often complain about the amount allocated to them. Municipalities themselves also face the challenge of having to fund "their" children even if they attend settings in neighbouring municipalities, which they may only become aware of after a time lag, creating financial insecurity.

Policy recommendations

Improve policy implementation through financial incentives and closer supervision

Reconsidering the use of earmarked grants may foster the creation of kindergarten places in priority areas and improve quality standards. In Sweden, grants earmarked for staff improvements have improved structural quality while the previous use of earmarked investment grants in Norway facilitated the creation of new centres (Korpi, 2007; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In Ireland, the 2000-2006 Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme was funded through separate capital and staffing grants to ensure that the expansion of places in ECEC did not come at the expense of quality (Irish Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2000).

Providing financial incentives to form kindergarten clusters or federations could improve small municipalities' capacity and professionalism in kindergarten management. Findings from the school sector suggest that this promises to ensure greater awareness and better implementation of national guidelines and requirements in small settings (Ares Abalde, 2014). The kindergarten sector should also be prominently included in the ongoing discussion about the merging or clustering of small municipalities. For those municipalities that fail to fulfil their duties in the sector there should be offers to support capacity building and, if those efforts fail, there should be an obligation to pool responsibilities and resources with other municipalities.

Simplify funding formulas for private providers and render their revenues more stable

Basing funding on actual costs instead of the average expenditure reported by municipally owned settings would reduce the financial uncertainty of private providers. The government's decision in June 2014 to base the funding on public-provider expenditure from two years before has already created more certainty over funding. To smoothen financial flows further, the transfer could be based on a moving average of the expenditure of the previous two years, adjusted by changes in the cost of living. This would allow private providers to plan over a longer time horizon and make it easier for them to create places and improve quality. The government should also consider updating a model formula prepared by the KS and the PBL according to the new regulations and rendering it compulsory for municipalities to achieve a nationwide standard for the calculation of the transfer to providers and create transparency for them. This may also help to provide more transparency about the extent to which some private providers make profits out of public subsidies.

While hardly lending itself to becoming a national strategy, putting the running of kindergartens out to tender, as has been tried in Oslo, may help some municipalities to elicit further information about actual running costs in specific cases. For this, it would be key to clearly specify rules to ensure that quality and working conditions (e.g. regarding pensions) are at least equal to the ones in public kindergartens. One relevant example for such an approach is Singapore, where commercial childcare centre operators bidding for

the premises of the Housing and Development Board are not only evaluated on cost criteria, but also on dimensions such as track record, affordability, quality of the programmes, and community assistance and integration (ECDA, 2013; 2014).

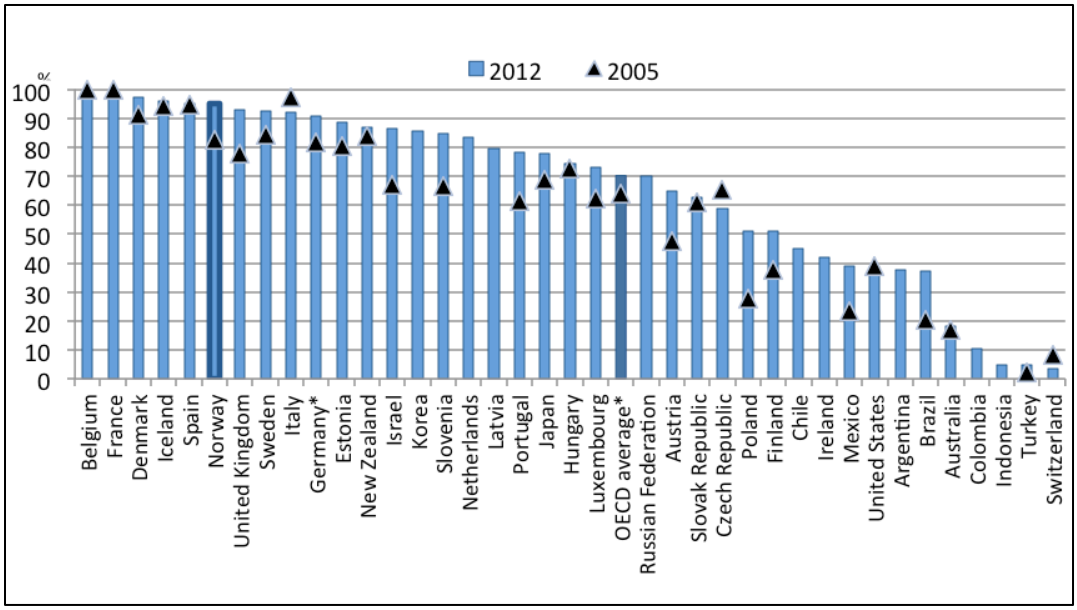
Ensuring access to kindergarten

Strengths

Strong legal entitlement and expansion of places in kindergarten

Norway provides, and largely realises, a strong legal entitlement to universal early childhood education and care in the best interests of parents and children. As shown in Table A2.1 in the Annex, Norway is among the leading countries in this respect in international comparison. The result of the policy developments described above, including a strong commitment to equal funding for public and private providers, has been to transform access to ECEC. In 2000, participation was 37% at ages 1-2 and 78% at ages 3-5. By 2013, this had risen to nearly 70% among 1-year-olds, more than 90% among 2-year-olds and more than 95% at ages 3-5 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The OECD averages in 2010 were 33% under the age of three, compared with 54% in Norway, and 81% from ages 3-5 (96% in Norway) (OECD, 2015). Looking at 3-year-olds only, Figure 2.4 shows that in 2012 Norway had the sixth highest enrolment in early childhood education in the OECD (see Figure 2.4, OECD, 2014b). Few other countries surpass Norway in participation among 1-year-olds, most notably Denmark with 86% enrolled at age 1 in 2010 (Ellingsæter, 2014.).

Figure 2.4 Enrolment rates at age 3 in early childhood education



Note: * For Germany, the year of reference is 2006 instead of 2005. The OECD average refers to all OECD member countries.

The 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.

Source: OECD (2014b), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, Chart C2.1, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933118466.

A child's right to a place is independent of parental labour-force participation, with kindergarten designed in the best interest of the child. This is an exceptionally strong policy even for the Nordic countries and has two key implications. First, a child's access to kindergarten is not limited by a parent's inability or disinclination to participate in the labour force. Second, the child's right encompasses the quality of kindergarten experiences and not simply access to a place. The establishment of a legal right to a kindergarten place at one year old has been taken very seriously by government and efforts to make this possible have been vigorous and highly successful. Minority-language children lag behind in participation, but the gap declines with age and has nearly disappeared by the age of five.

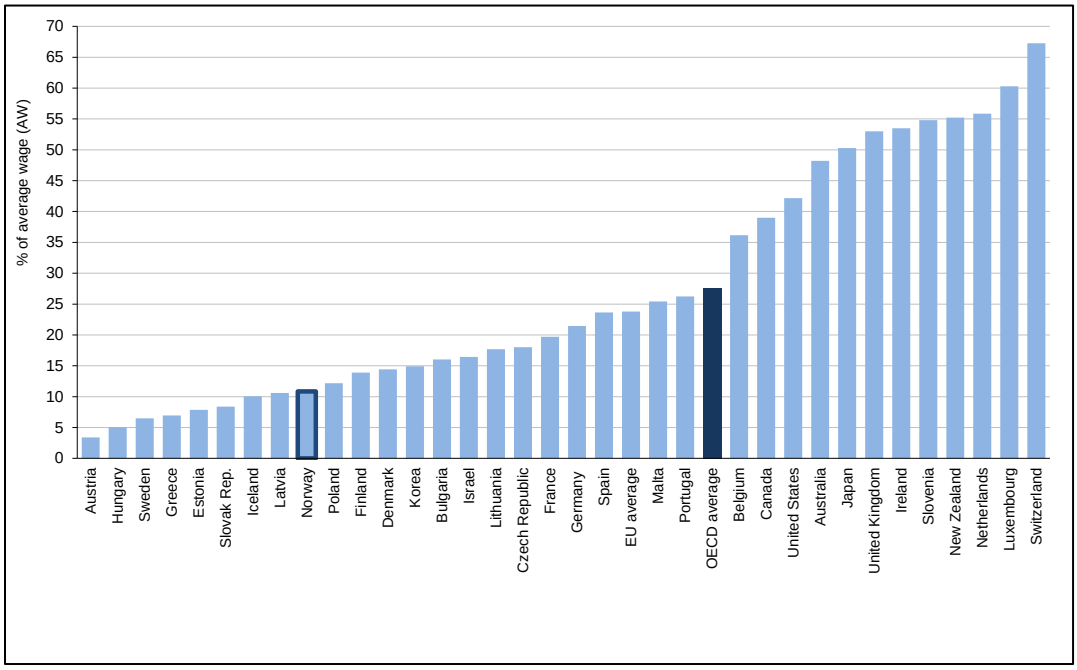
A substantial body of evidence indicates that high-quality ECEC supports better educational, social, and economic outcomes, particularly for the least advantaged children including those from migrant backgrounds (Barnett, 2011; Burger, 2010; Ruhm and Waldfogel, 2012). There is less research supportive of substantive benefits for children under the age of three, but it is for the youngest children that quality is most expensive (and in many countries most lacking), which suggests that a shift from informal to high-quality formal care might have a substantive benefit. In Norway, research has found that parental leave and kindergarten policies led to an increased participation in kindergarten and a reduction of informal care for infants and toddlers. This led to increased educational attainment, with larger effects for children of less well-educated parents (Carneiro, Løken, and Salvanes, 2011; Havnes and Mogstad, 2011; Moafi and Bjørkli, 2011). Kindergarten provision may have a much more substantial impact on social equality due to its effects on child development than through any effects of maternal labour-force participation (Havnes and Mogstad; 2011, 2014).

Increased affordability of kindergarten

Even as capacity has been increased and the goals for kindergartens enhanced, kindergarten has also been made more affordable. This has been accomplished through a substantial commitment of public resources. The real cost of a kindergarten place to parents has been substantially reduced, fees have declined as a share of income and parents now pay a much smaller portion of the cost than they did a decade ago. Figure 2.5 illustrates that fees for 2-year-olds only account for a small share of the average salary in Norway. In 2014, the maximum fee, which was first introduced in 2004, was NOK 2 405 per month, a relative decrease of 35% in the fee from 2005. The proportion of operating costs covered by parents was reduced from 37% in 2002 to 15% in 2012. In addition, municipalities are legally obliged to offer reduced fees for siblings and put in place subsidy schemes for low-income families. In practice, there are strong variations between municipalities in this regard as there is no detailed definition of the subsidy schemes nor of 'families with low income' (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Schemes to provide free core hours of kindergarten in targeted areas for children aged 3 or 4-5, depending on the location, have been piloted in several districts and the provision of free core hours will be extended to all 4-5 year-olds from low-income families across the country from 1 August 2015. The Norwegian parliament has included a NOK 51 million grant for this purpose in the 2015 budget. Parental fees for low-income families will be capped at 6% of their income from 1 May 2015, facilitated by a NOK 235 million state grant to establish a nation-wide subsidy scheme for those families (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Figure 2.5 Childcare fees per 2-year-old attending accredited early-years care and education services (% of average wage) 2012



Note: The average wage reflects the earnings of an "average worker"; see OECD (2007), pp. 186-7 for detail.

The 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.

Source: OECD (2015), *OECD Family Database* (database), OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm, Chart PF3.4. Tax-Benefit model 2014.

Increased responsiveness to children's needs and parental choice with diversified kindergarten provision

As progress over the past few decades has shown, Norway's kindergarten system has the flexibility to respond to local variations in need and changes over time, including changes in the population and its needs. The flexibility of the system is due to elements such as: delivery by public and private programmes, municipal control and administration, and the recent introduction of block grants for most municipal funding while some central government support remains. The private sector is itself diverse with owners including parents, other individuals, religious organisations, workplaces and limited liability corporations.

Diversity in kindergarten provision indicates responsiveness to parental demands. Alternative approaches to kindergarten are offered including the Open Kindergarten and Nature Kindergarten. The review team visited kindergartens of very different sizes, including some with large outdoor areas and tents. Some municipalities offer alternative types of kindergartens to meet the needs of parents who may not wish to have their children in an out-of-home arrangement at a very young age or who may wish to accompany their very young children to programmes.

This mixed public and private system has demonstrated that it can quickly respond to changes in demand by expanding or decreasing capacity for enrolment. The kindergarten system rapidly expanded enrolment in response to the political commitment to universal access and provided for a shift from homes to centres. Between 2000 and 2013 the number of children attending kindergarten increased by 51.3%, from 189 837 to 287 177 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Private kindergartens in one municipality can enrol children from another municipality who do not have access to kindergarten in their neighbourhood, including children under the age of one. In 2013, just 4% of children were cared for in informal childcare – i.e. by a child minder at the child minder's home or the child's home or by family members other than parents or friends of the family – compared to the EU-28 average of 24% in the same year, which underlines that parents have embraced centre-based ECEC provision (Eurostat, 2015).

Norway seeks to integrate all children into the kindergarten system, paying particular attention to the inclusion of ethnic minorities and children with greater needs, and places for children with disabilities or social welfare issues are prioritised. Additional financial and technical support is provided by the national government for children who may be at risk of higher rates of non-participation. Kindergartens with children who need additional or more intensive services (for example, those with special needs or from minority language homes) receive additional funding from the central government and municipalities to support these efforts. In 2008, children with disabilities accounted for 5.5% of kindergarten enrolment, which is comparable to the average percentage of children with disabilities served under a universal entitlement to preschool education for children with disabilities at ages 3 and 4 in the United States (Ellingsæter, 2014; Barnett et al., 2013).

Government data are available that disaggregate participation rates in ways that usefully inform policy. For example, participation rates are broken down by municipality and for rural as well as urban populations. The health system can provide data on nonparticipant children and their language development at ages two and four (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Some municipalities systematically collect this information and use it to encourage increased participation, especially for children from migrant backgrounds.

Both national and municipal governments have made special efforts to support equality of participation. This includes fee reductions or exemptions for families with lower incomes and reduced fees for families with more children in kindergarten. Pilot programmes include the provision of up to four hours free core time per day in kindergarten at ages 3 or 4-5, depending on the location, targeting areas with higher concentrations of children from lower-income and minority-language families (Daly, 2013). The free core hours scheme will be extended to all 4-5 year-olds from low-income families across Norway (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Outreach programmes that go door-to-door, and one-stop shop services for families, educate parents about the importance of early child development and kindergarten's role in supporting development. Some municipalities have developed outreach programmes to encourage greater participation by minority-language children in particular. Evaluating the success of the various efforts developed to support greater equality of participation should provide a basis for deciding which efforts might usefully be adopted on a larger scale.

Challenges

Participation of families with lower socio-economic status, ethnic minorities and children at risk is still hindered

Even though participation rates are fairly high across all groups, the children who do not participate are much more likely to be ethnic minorities and from lower-income and less educated families more generally. This undermines the kindergarten policy goals of equality and social integration and education. Participation rates for minority-language children are only negligibly different from the general population at the age of 5, but the gap increases sharply for younger children. The gap is quite modest among 4 and 5-year-olds (less than 4 percentage points at age 4, 93.5% v. 97% overall), but widens to 9 percentage points among 3-year-olds (86% v.95%), 18 percentage points among 2-year-olds (72% v. 90%) and 30 percentage points at among 1-year-olds (39.5% v. 70%) (Statistics Norway in Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The problem of lower rates of minority participation is not unique to Norway, but is pervasive throughout Europe.

Affordability continues to be an issue for some

Affordability continues to be barrier to participation for some families, including those for whom the child's educational benefits would be relatively high. Fees account for 15% of costs, which is much lower than in the past, but remains above the levels in some other countries such as Sweden (7%) (OECD, forthcoming). Many other countries have already introduced free ECEC provision for a year or more before primary schooling (see Table A2.1 and OECD, forthcoming). Some families do not participate because of cost and sensitivity to fees can be quite strong for lower-income families. Research on a pilot project in Oslo to offer free core hours found that introducing a fee equivalent to EUR 80 per month reduced participation by one-third (Stewart et al., 2014). A 2010 study found that 9% of all families gave high costs as a reason not to apply for a place in kindergarten but that rose to 19% among low-income families. The study also found that kindergarten attendance was lower at lower levels of income and education (Moafi and Bjørkli, 2011).

The widespread usage of flat fees contributes to lower rates of participation by low-income families. Only 24% of municipalities have fees that vary with income (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015), although this covers a majority of children because more populous municipalities are more likely to have sliding fee scales. The impact is muted because municipalities vary in the degree to which fees are reduced and the amounts can be relatively small. As a result, parents with lower incomes often find that fees amount to a substantial share of their income despite the relatively small percentage of the cost covered by the fee. On average, low-income families pay a much higher percentage of their incomes for kindergarten than do high-income families, 2 to 3 times as much (Ellingsæter, 2014).

Families which would see little or no labour market benefit are less likely to participate in kindergarten even though the benefits to the child may be relatively high. Research finds lower participation rates for children from low-income families including families with high levels of unemployment and/or welfare benefits. This is predictable as the economic benefit to the parent is much smaller, but the cost is not much different.

Costs other than fees for attendance also can be barriers to participation. Providers may charge additional fees for meals or require that parents provide meals at their

expense. It is possible that the cost of meals are sufficiently high at some kindergartens (meal fees can exceed the equivalent of EUR 89 per month) that they discourage participation. In addition to discouraging participation, added costs to parents can increase sorting by income among programmes, so that groups become more homogeneous in terms of parental income and the potential benefits from social and economic integration of children in the kindergarten decrease. Transportation costs can be substantial in both time and money for families who are located at some distance from the nearest available kindergarten, with this barrier highest for those with most limited access to private and low-cost public transportation.

A lack of information and competing incentives render decisions about participation more difficult

Research finds that while income and fees play a role in participation rates, it is not the only relevant factor. Non-participation is higher for: 1) families from immigrant backgrounds where the mother does not participate in the labour force; 2) families from ethnic Norwegian backgrounds with strong religious beliefs where the mother does not participate in the labour force; and 3) families who believe that a home environment is preferable to kindergarten for child development and who have the financial capacity to care for their children entirely at home (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014; Seeberg, 2010).

The cash-for-care benefit appears to decrease participation, especially for children from migrant and lower-income families. Participation rates are much lower for children at age one, when the cash-for-care benefit is offered. Participation rates have changed when the cash-for-care benefit and childcare access and benefits have changed (Ellingsæter, 2014; Bungum and Kvande, 2013). Families where mothers only have the least attractive labour market options will find the cash-for-care benefit most attractive. Estimations of a 2009 study suggest that the cash-for-care benefit may have reduced the labour supply of the immigrant women concerned by around 15% (Hardoy and Schøne, 2009).

Ethnic minority families may be less likely to participate than other families partly because of issues that equally apply to other families, such as financial ones, but which are more common among minorities. The application procedures require skills some parents, especially migrant parents, may not have, including Norwegian language skills. Ethnic minority families may more often be located in areas of short supply due to rapid population shifts or where distance is a barrier.

Lower participation rates also reflect issues specific to minorities. Minority families are more likely to resist full integration of their young children into Norwegian society through the kindergarten. Specifically, ethnic minority families may be concerned their children will lose their home language and culture. This may be especially likely where kindergartens have only rudimentary support for their home language and culture. Local authorities have expressed concerns about the capability of kindergarten staff to support language-minority children's language development (Ministry of Education and Research, 2007). Language development gaps can begin before children are 18 months old, and the later children enter preschool the less opportunity there is to prevent language-minority children from falling behind (Barnett and Lamy, 2013). Unfortunately, minority parents may delay entry to kindergarten because they greatly underestimate the difficulty and time required for children to adequately learn Norwegian to prepare for school (Bråten and Latif Sandbæk, 2014). All of these barriers to ECEC participation also have been found in the United States for immigrant families (Adams and McDaniel, 2012).

Better information is needed on how supply and demand affect participation. This information should be used to inform policy regarding kindergarten offerings, fees and effective outreach. Not all municipalities collect data on who does not participate in kindergarten, and even when the information is collected, the response to the family varies. The health system is the major source of this information, but does not obtain this information prior to age 2, while the participation gap for language-minority children is largest among 1-year-olds.

A related issue is maintaining a high rate of attendance. While the average attendance time is as high as 35 hours per week, the outliers need to be considered (Ministry of Education, 2015). Both the municipalities and the national government use parent reports to gather information about attendance. Just because children are enrolled does not mean that they actually attend regularly. If children do not attend regularly, they cannot be expected to benefit much. Irregular attendance might be expected to be more common among children from socio-economically disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds, as has been found, for example, with kindergarten in the United States (Chang and Romero, 2008). However, the extent to which this occurs in Norway was not determined.

With 428 municipalities, and 6 370 kindergartens it may be difficult for some municipalities to afford the capacity required to assess needs (current and future) and barriers to participation, and to develop responses that improve access including outreach to the relatively small percentage of nonparticipants. The small size and large number of kindergartens poses significant administrative challenges for both small municipalities with modest capacity, and large municipalities responsible for many providers with relatively little site-based administrative capacity. This may be less of an issue for larger municipalities. In Oslo, for instance, districts collect information on long-term absences and there have been investigations into why children do not attend kindergarten, the review team was informed.

Supply constraints limit access to kindergarten, especially for children who turn one after the autumn enrolment cut-off and those who move to a new location

Despite the overall outstanding success in offering access across the entire country and for children down to the age of one, some challenges remain. For children who turn one after the autumn enrolment cut-off a place cannot always be guaranteed. Parents are understandably eager to expand access so that children who turn one after August do not have to wait until the next year for entry. The wait can result in nearly an extra year out of the labour force, informal arrangements, or entirely fee-paid informal care. This could impose long-term costs on society as well as short-term costs on families; the net effect is unclear as these children still receive the same number of years of kindergarten. To meet this demand would mean increasing the proportion of the youngest children attending kindergarten. As the cost is higher for younger children than for older, expanding provision to more children at the youngest age will cost proportionally more per additional child.

Families who move to a new location may have to wait as much as 1.5 years for a place in a kindergarten. This is a very long time to wait for a kindergarten place. Statistics from 2014 suggest that more than 8 000 children were on waiting lists for a place in kindergarten in that year, most of them under the age of three (Statistics Norway, 2014). This problem was mentioned by the City of Oslo, for instance, and seems to be prevalent in cities with many parents on the move. Societal costs are likely

to be higher if such children are disproportionately from lower socio-economic and migrant backgrounds as they will receive fewer years of kindergarten. Some geographical areas persistently report a greater supply problem. Remote areas with small (and perhaps declining) and/or widely dispersed populations can have difficulty attracting teachers and may have problems scaling up provision. When programmes are already full, one additional child could necessitate the addition of an entirely new group, given the fixed ratios of staff to children. A representative from Nordland county mentioned this problem. Also, municipalities with rapidly growing populations, such as Oslo, can find it difficult to expand kindergarten fast enough to keep pace and kindergartens can end up inefficiently distributed (too much capacity in areas of declining population and too little in areas of increasing population). Rapid expansion of supply can drive up costs, at least in the short run as higher teacher salaries or hiring bonuses may be required, for example.

Policy recommendations

Despite the high levels of access already provided, there are opportunities to increase participation further in specific instances by increasing the financial attractiveness of kindergarten for low-income and minority families, increasing outreach, removing barriers, expanding coverage, and stimulating supply. Each of these has costs as well as benefits. Increasing the financial attractiveness of participation might have the largest impact on participation. Improving outreach and removing barriers to participation for the lowest-income families and children with migrant background may have the greatest benefits at the least cost.

Increase the attractiveness of participation for ethnic minorities and families with low levels of income and education

Increase affordability for those with the lowest incomes and least financial benefit from participation

Several options are available to increase affordability for those with the lowest incomes and who will see the least financial benefit from participation, and this could lead to greater participation at the younger ages by the children who stand to gain the most from participation (from language-minority and low-income families generally). Such policies have been highly effective in Sweden, for example (Van Lancker and Ghysels, 2012).

The most obvious strategy is to increase the extent to which fees are adjusted by income, lowering fees at the bottom. If fees were raised at the top without changing fees in the middle, such a change could be cost neutral for the budget and the benefits would be focused on those with the greatest need. The state could set a national maximum percentage of income for fees. This has been done in Sweden where in 2002 a maximum fee was introduced and set at 3% of gross income for the first child (capped at SEK 1 260, Swedish kronor, around EUR 140, per month), 2% for the second (up to SEK 840, around EUR 90) and so on (Skolverket, 2007).

Another way of increasing affordability is to offer free core hours, targeting specific neighbourhoods or income levels. Some municipalities have already experimented with this offer. Among OECD countries it is fairly common to offer free ECEC for a limited number of hours to all children. In Luxembourg, children aged 3-5 have a legal entitlement to free access to ECEC for 36 weeks per year, 26 hours per week. In Italy,

children aged 3-5 enjoy unconditional free access to ECEC for 40 hours per week. The Flemish Community of Belgium, provides 23.33 hours per week to all 2.5-5 year-olds, in Chile it is 22 hours for all 2-5 year-olds and Sweden offers 15 hours per week for children aged 3 to 6 (see Table A2.1 and OECD, forthcoming). However, such a policy is relatively expensive and creates a sharp price-spike for parents in the labour force who need additional hours. Moreover, the smaller number of hours may reduce benefits to the child, including the Norwegian language development of children from minority-language homes.

The ongoing pilot programme(s) offering free core hours should provide information to inform the development of broader policy. This is being scaled up with the inclusion in the 2015 budget agreement of a supplementary grant to offer free core hours for 4-5 year-olds from low-income families across the country (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). There is also a new policy establishing a national minimum requirement for subsidy schemes for low-income families. The present government seeks to further differentiate parental fees to increase kindergarten participation among children from low-income families and reduce child poverty. Thus parental fees for a full-time place are to be capped at 6% of household income while maintaining a discount for siblings. The new regulation has been adopted by the government and is set to enter into force in May 2015. The government has emphasised that the municipalities may set even lower caps and offer places for free (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Those new measures promise to increase affordability for low-income families, but it is too early to provide an assessment as they are being implemented after the review team's visit to Norway.

A study might be made of the extent to which other costs, primarily transportation and meals, might limit participation. This challenge is also present elsewhere. In the United States, for instance, Head Start provides transportation for children to increase enrolment and attendance (Head Start, 2015). The cost of meals may also contribute to lower participation rates. Pilot studies or other research might usefully investigate the relative effectiveness of offering transportation or meal subsidies, as opposed to lower fees, as a means to lowering barriers to participation for low-income families.

Improve outreach and tailor services to low-income and minority-language families

Outreach to low-income and minority families could be improved to foster informed parental choice through outreach programmes and one-stop shops. Improving the responsiveness of kindergartens to ethnic minority parents can be expected to improve participation rates. Open kindergartens offering drop-in access, and limited core hours programmes have been found to increase enrolment in Norway but it is not clear what the benefits of such programmes are for the child. They might best be viewed as a means of outreach that will lead to full participation later. In either case, kindergarten might be made more attractive if parents could obtain additional services there.

Models of parent-child programmes which could be adopted by or incorporate open kindergartens have been studied in other countries. One example that may be particularly useful because of its effectiveness is the Turkish Home Enrichment Programme which combines parenting education with outreach regarding childcare (Kagitcibasi, Sunar and Bekman, 2001). In Austria some states provide programmes to involve parents with kindergarten and schools, including language courses for mothers at the school (Nusche, Shewbridge and Lemhauge Rasmussen, 2010). One example is

the free courses "Mama lernt Deutsch – Kurse mit Kinderbetreuung" (Mum Learns German, Courses Including Childcare) offered by the Federal Ministry for Education and the City of Vienna. Twice a week from October to June, mothers whose children attend kindergarten or school can learn German in the same kindergarten or school, as well as during field trips to institutions in their district and town. The course aims at familiarising mothers with their child's learning environment and supporting them in making new contacts. Free childcare is provided during the lessons for children who are too young to be in the kindergarten or school, and flyers to reach interested mothers are available in Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Chinese, German, English, Farsi, Hindi, Russian, and Turkish (City of Vienna, n,d.). Other programmes in the city include job-related skills training for immigrant mothers (Nusche, Shewbridge and Lemhauge Rasmussen, 2010). In the United Kingdom, so-called Full Service Extended Schools were established in local areas to provide a comprehensive set of services including childcare, health care, adult learning, community activities and study support. These extended schools seek to address the various concerns of students and their families, while emphasising the importance of education. Indeed, there are indications that the initiative not only had a positive impact on student achievement, but also on engagement with learning, employment, family stability and adult learning (Brind, Harper and Moore, 2008; OECD, 2010). Another example of such one-stop shops is in Germany, where some job centres also offer childcare and counselling service to support vulnerable parents (Heidenreich and Aurich, forthcoming). Programmes that increase the skills mothers bring to the labour market, possibly in conjunction with broader efforts to enhance parent engagement, and demand-side policies that increase parents' opportunities for good jobs would both increase kindergarten participation as they render full-time services more attractive. Analyses of inequalities in ECEC participation find that inequalities in participation by family income are much reduced where ECEC supply is adequate and policies strongly support employment of less advantaged mothers (Van Lancker and Ghysels, 2012).

The national government could assist with the development of outreach programmes to support municipalities experiencing difficulties with participation rates, building on the experience with the free core hours pilot. For example, the development of materials, and even pre-recorded phone messages, in multiple languages is more efficiently done at the national level. All municipalities should be required to report on their outreach efforts to reduce non-participation. If this information was widely publicised it could increase efforts by the municipalities. Examples of the use of state-by-state reporting on participation and policies in federal countries include Bertelsmann's annual survey of early care and education policies in Germany (Boch-Famulla and Lange, 2014) and National Institute for Early Education Research's (NIEER)annual preschool survey in the United States which is supported by the National Center for Education Statistics (Barnett et al., 2013).

Participation might begin earlier if low-income and minority parents were better informed about the importance of kindergarten attendance from the earliest age for language development and child development generally. Parents can be educated about this through health care providers and social welfare personnel, and through public information campaigns targeting those with high levels of non-participation. Partnerships with community organisations have been found to improve the success of outreach efforts (Bråten and Latif Sandbæk, 2014).Community organisations already trusted by families make especially good partners for outreach, and contracts with them to provide outreach and facilitate enrolment might be particularly effective. The national

government could assist them by sharing best practices among the municipalities and supporting the development and testing of the materials and activities for parent education campaigns in multiple languages. Radio, television and the web can be used to educate parents. Multipurpose digital media may be especially effective with groups with low literacy and can be used by health care and social welfare professionals and community organisations as well as through broadcasts and municipal websites.

Box 2.1 Outreach examples from Oklahoma and Maryland (United States)

In Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland), around 63% of the district's students in Head Start or prekindergarten qualify for English Language Learner (ELL) services. The most common languages are Spanish, French, Vietnamese and Chinese, in that order. Children that are eligible for reduced or free meals have to be given a place in preschool without a waiting list, at any time of year. Also, an important outreach campaign advertises prekindergarten in multiple languages, using print, television and radio, community events and groups. The school district's planning office conducts demographic work which makes identifying immigrant populations and lack of services easier. Registration for Head Start and prekindergarten is centralised and family service workers have a variety of backgrounds and languages. Also, in some community locations, evening and Saturday office hours are offered to ease enrolment for working parents. In schools, language access is helped through bilingual specialists, all material is translated into seven different languages and interpreters can be called by phone.

The Tulsa Public Schools district in Oklahoma used established partnerships between the district and Spanish media outlets, Head Start, community organisations, and churches to reach out to immigrant and English Language Learners families to encourage enrolment in prekindergarten. These partners inform parents about pre-enrolment for school and advertise it in collaboration with the district's schools. A common intake service and enrolment are to be combined in one spot, with two Spanish speaking clerks. Important documents exist in Spanish versions and schools can use on-demand phone interpretation for other languages. All staff receive language assistance training in order to foster an understanding of the existing services and of how parents can be notified and access services. Leadership staff benefitted from cultural competency training and all staff, from bus drivers to teachers, are encouraged to be partners of families and to inform them about the importance of children's education.

Source: Gelatt, J., G. Adams and S. Huerta (2014), *Supporting Immigrant Families' Access to Prekindergarten*, Urban Institute, Washington, DC, www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413026-Supporting-Immigrant-Families-Access-to-Prekindergarten.pdf.

Part of outreach is making enrolment easier for minority-language parents and others who find the process difficult. It is relatively simple to offer an enrolment portal in multiple languages and guided by video instructions. Professionals and community organisations can assist parents who find the technology or paperwork involved in enrolling their children daunting. Schools and community centres could have enrolment days when parents can come in to enrol with assistance, including minority-language speakers. Providers could be invited to send representatives (including parents) who can provide information about their specific kindergartens and this could increase trust between parents and providers. Two examples of outreach measures in the United States can be found in Box 2.1.

Quality is addressed in Chapter 3 of this report, but it should be remembered that participation is not independent of quality. Quality, governance and participation are interrelated and ensuring equal quality for all children can help to maximise participation. Ethnic minority children will have lower participation rates if the

kindergartens available to them are of lower quality. In Norway, private programmes have some discretion over outreach and enrolment, and there could be bias in admissions. According to the 2012 statistics, less than one-third of minority-language children in kindergartens were in private settings (Statistics Norway, 2014). Available data indicate that there is substantial variation in quality even in the most easily observed aspects such as staff-to-child ratios. During the review visit, the team noticed that the settings with the fewest minority-language children also tended to offer a better physical environment and higher quality interactions. It can even be argued that quality should be higher in programmes with the most disadvantaged children because the needs and potential benefits are greater (Barnett and Lamy, 2013; Garcia and Frede, 2010)

Limit the unintended consequences of the national cash-for-care scheme

Reducing the cash-for-care benefit would make kindergarten relatively more attractive (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007; OECD, 2012). Cash-for-care is valued because it increases effective parental choice regarding the care and education of young children. This may be particularly important for rural communities with few jobs where parents must travel long distances to work. The review team heard from some officials that parents might move to be closer to work (further depopulating the community) if cash-for-care was not available to support one parent remaining at home longer when a child was very young. However, the cash-for-care benefit does reduce kindergarten participation at age one for children, especially among children who would most benefit developmentally from participation at this age. Delayed entry undermines Norwegian language acquisition, social integration and labour-force participation among ethnic minorities. The risk is that some families choose this option for purely financial reasons. In Germany, for instance, cash-for-care was introduced in 2013 and an early analysis has shown that parents' decision about the use of formal ECEC services is influenced by the availability of cash-for-care. Those with an immigrant background or with lower levels of education were especially likely to cite the new benefit as a reason for opting against formal ECEC (Fuchs-Rehlin et al., 2014).

Address territorial inequity in supply and render admissions more flexible

Ensure equal access nationwide, especially in disadvantaged areas

Some relatively modest and lower-cost policy changes could ease supply constraints, though the extent to which supply constraints contribute to low participation rates for low-income families and minorities is unknown. Private kindergartens have been found to avoid low-income neighbourhoods, at least in some other countries, for example the Netherlands (Noailly and Sabine, 2009). The uniform payment system to private providers does not recognise that some children and communities are more expensive to serve than others. This could lead private providers avoiding some neighbourhoods. It is suggestive that minority children in Norway are less likely to be enrolled in private programmes. The national government could offer a modest extra payment for children in communities with high concentrations of low-income and minority families or it might provide additional consultative support for programmes in high-need areas. Finally, the national government could offer one-off financial support for start-up costs in areas of inadequate supply. These policies could be supported through an additional earmarking of money to boost support in disadvantaged areas and the establishment of coverage targets for communities.

Achieve a more flexible system for admission to kindergarten

Provision of kindergarten for children born after the autumn cut-off date obviously benefits parents. How much it would benefit child development and well-being is less clear (Waldfogel, 2006). Child development benefits depend on the quality of the kindergarten, the quality of the alternative (e.g. whether the child is with parents or in low-quality care outside the home), and on the extent to which participation by low-income and minority-language families would increase (Carneiro, Løken and Salvanes, 2011; Johnson et al., 2014; Van Lancker and Ghysels, 2012). Such children receive greater developmental benefits from participating at the earliest possible time, and society would benefit more from giving them an early start (Garner, 2013; Shonkoff et al., 2014). On the cost side, it would require increased public spending, and exacerbate supply problems, at least temporarily. One option is initially to allow public and private providers to serve such children only in areas where no older children are waiting for a place. Provision is already made for children with special needs and child-welfare considerations to enter kindergarten with priority, which may be even before they turn one, if this is considered to be in the child's best interest. With the issue of flexible admissions being included in the government's political platform and with additional block funding of NOK 333 million being admitted to municipalities for this purpose in 2015, changes can be expected soon – but it is still too early to assess any of them (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

It would be informative to investigate how other countries that allow rolling admissions, such as Sweden or parts of Germany, have met this challenge. In Sweden, as laid out in the Education Act, the municipality has to provide a place for children in preschool within 4 months of their parents' request. If a municipality does not provide a place in this time frame, it may be subject to a fine by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2012). In Germany children have a legal right to a place in either family day care or child day care centres from their first completed year of life (Meysen et al., n.d.). In Berlin, parents are invited to apply for a coupon for care coverage at the Youth Welfare Office, 9 months (at the earliest) or 2 months (at the latest) before they wish to start the care programme. Short-notice applications are possible in cases such as pending employment or for families that have recently moved. This coupon allows the parents to contact a care provider of their choice and the provider is guaranteed the public subsidy of the place and the parents' fees (Senate Administration for Education, Science and Research, n.d.).

References

Adams, G., and M. McDaniel (2012), *Barriers and Opportunities: Helping smaller Immigrant Communities Access the Illinois Preschool for All Program*, Research Report, Urban Institute, Washington, DC.

Ares Abalde, M. (2014), "School size policies: A literature review", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 106, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxt472ddkjl-en.

Barnett, W.S. (2011), "Effectiveness of early educational intervention", *Science*, Vol. 333/6045, pp. 975-978.

Barnett, W.S. and C.E. Lamy (2013), "Achievement gaps start early: Preschool can help", in P.L. Carter and K.G. Welner (eds.), *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 98-110.

Barnett, W.S. et al. (2013), *The State of Preschool 2013: State Preschool Yearbook*, NIEER (National Institute for Early Education Research), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

Boch-Famulla, K., and J. Lange (2014), *State by State: Monitoring Early Childhood Education Systems 2013*, Bertelsmann Stiftung Publishers, Gutersloh, Germany.

Bråten, B. and M. Latif Sandbæk (2014), *Å Være Seg Sitt Ansvar Bevisst: Språktilbud til 3–5-Åringer med Minoritetsspråklig Bakgrunn Som Ikke Går i Barnehage, Fafo-report 2014:23*, Fafo, Stavanger, Norway.

Brind, T., C. Harper and K. Moore (2008), *Education for Migrant, Minority and Marginalised Children in Europe*, report commissioned by the Open Society Institute's Education Support Programme.

Bungum, B. and E. Kvande (2013), "The rise and fall of cash for care in Norway: Changes in the use of child-care policies", *Nordic Journal of Social Research*, Vol. 4.

Burger, K. (2010), "How does early childhood care and education affect cognitive development? An international review of the effects of early interventions for children from different social backgrounds", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 25/2, pp. 140-165.

Carneiro, P., K.V. Løken and K.G. Salvanes (2011), "A flying start? Maternity leave benefits and long run outcomes of children", Discussion Paper Series, *IZA DP* No. 5793, Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arb, Bonn, Germany, http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201106224748.

Chang, H.N., and M. Romero (2008), *Present, Engaged, and Accounted for: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, NCCP (National Center for Children in Poverty), Columbia University, NY.

Daly, M. (2013), *Area-Based Policies in Urban Areas: How to Promote Good Living Conditions for Children and Youth*, Synthesis Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

City of Oslo (2013), *The Oslo Standard for the Cooperation between Kindergartens and the Child Welfare Service*, City of Oslo City Government.

City of Vienna, (n.d.), *German language courses for mothers – 'Mum learns German'*, City of Vienna website, www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/learning-german/mum-lerns-german/.

County Governor of Troms (n.d.), *The Giant Leap – The Convention on the Rights of the Child in Practice*, County Governor of Troms, http://sjumilssteget.no/attachments/article/322/The%20giant%20Leap.pdf.

ECDA (Early Childhood Development Agency) (2014), "Open selection process: Criteria for selection of service provider for child care centre", ECDA, www.childcarelink.gov.sg/ccls/uploads/OSP_criteria.pdf (accessed 2 December 2014).

ECDA (2013), "Revised tender evaluation process for commercial child care centres in HDB premises", ECDA website, www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/revised-tender-evaluation-process-.aspx (accessed 2 December 2014).

Ellingsæter, A.L. (2014), "Towards universal quality early childhood education and care: The Norwegian model", in L. Gambaro, K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel (eds.) *An Equal Start? Providing Quality Early Education and Care for Disadvantaged Children*, Policy Press, University of Bristol, pp. 53-76.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat (2014), *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: 2014 Edition*, Eurydice and Eurostat Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurostat (2015), "Autres modes de garde d'enfants par tranche d'âge et durée - % par rapport à la population de chaque tranche d'âge", Eurostat website, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_caindother&lang=fr.

Field, S., M. Kuczera and B. Pont (2007), *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, Education and Training Policy, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264032606-en.

Fuchs-Rechlin, K., G. Kaufhold, M. Thuilot and T. Webs (2014), *Der U3-Ausbau im Endspurt Analysen zu kommunalen Betreuundsbedarfen und Betreundswüschen von Eltern*, Forschungsverbund DJI/TU Dortmund, Dortmund.

Gambaro, L., K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel (2014), "Introduction", in L. Gambaro, K. Stewart, and J. Waldfogel (eds.) *An Equal Start? Providing Quality Early Education and Care for Disadvantaged Children*, Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 1-28.

Garcia, E. and E. Frede (eds.) (2010), *Young English Language Learners: Current Research and Emerging Directions for Practice and Policy*, Teachers' College Press, New York, NY.

Garner, A.S. (2013), "Home visiting and the biology of toxic stress: Opportunities to address early childhood adversity", *Pediatrics*, Vol. 132 (Supplement 2), pp. S65-S73.

Gelatt, J., G. Adams and S. Huerta (2014), *Supporting Immigrant Families' Access to Prekindergarten, Urban Institute*, Washington, DC, www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413026-Supporting-Immigrant-Families-Access-to-Prekindergarten.pdf.

Haug, K.H. and J. Storø (2013), "Kindergarten - A universal right for children in Norway", *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, Vol. 7/2, pp. 1-13.

Hardoy, I. and P. Schøne (2009b), *Incentives to Work: How Sensitive is the Labour Supply of Non-Western Immigrant Mothers to Changes in Economic Incentives?*, Mimeo, Institute for Social Research, Oslo.

Havnes, T. and M. Mogstad (2014), "Is universal child care leveling the playing field?", *Journal of Public Economics*, Article in Press, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.04.007 (accessed 25 August 2014).

Havnes, T. and M. Mogstad (2011), "Money for nothing? Universal child care and maternal employment", *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 95/11, pp.1455-1465.

Head Start (2105), "Transportation requirements: General", *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*, §1310.10, Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspps/1310/1310.10%20General..htm.

Heidenreich, M. and P. Aurich (forthcoming), "European worlds of employment and social services: The local dimension of activation policies", *International Journal of Social Welfare*.

Irish Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2000), *General Guidelines for Funding under the National Development Plan: Childcare Measure of the Social Inclusion Sub-Programme of the Regional Operational Programme*, Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006, Irish Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Dublin.

Johnson, A.D., W.J. Han, C.J. Ruhm and J. Waldfogel (2014), "Child care subsidies and the school readiness of children of immigrants", *Child Development*, Vol. 85/6, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12285/pdf

Kagitcibasi, C., D. Sunar, and S. Bekman (2001), "Long-term effects of early intervention: Turkish low-income mothers and children", *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 22/4, pp. 333-361.

Korpi, B.M. (2007), *The Politics of Pre-school: Intentions and Decisions Underlying the Growth of the Swedish Pre-school*, Ministry of Education and Research, Stockholm.

Korsvold, T. (2005), *For Alle Barne! Barnehagens Framvekst i Velferdsstaten*, Abstrakt AS, Oslo.

Kunnskapsdepartementet (2014), *Background Report from Norway: OECD – Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy*, Kunnskapsdepartementet, Ministry of Education and Research, Olso.

Meysen, T. et al. (n.d.), *Rechtsanspruch U3: Voraussetzungen und Umfang des Rechtsanspruchs auf Förderung in Tageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege für Kinder unter drei Jahren, DIJuF* (Deutsches Institut für Jugendhilfe und Familienrecht) eV, Rechtsgutachten, Heidelberg, www.dijuf.de/tl_files/downloads/2011/2012/DIJuF-Thesen_Rechtsanspruch%20U3_11-01-2013.pdf (accessed 9 April 2015).

Ministry of Education and Research Norway (2015), *Country Background Report for the OECD ECEC Review*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Education and Research (2007), *Equal Education in Practice! Strategy for better teaching and greater participation of linguistic minorities in kindergartens, schools and education 2007-2009*, Revised Edition February 2007, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Norway (2014), *Local Government in Norway*, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Oslo.

Moafi, H. and E.S. Bjørkli (2011), "Barnefamiliers tilsynsordningerhøsten, høsten 2010", *Rapporter*, 34/2011, Statistics Norway, Oslo, www.udir.no/Upload/barnehage/Forskning_og_statistikk/Rapporter/Barnefamiliers_tilsynsordninger.pdf.

Noailly, J. and V. Sabine (2009), "The impact of market forces on child care provision: Insights from the 2005 Child Care Act in the Netherlands", *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 38/3, pp. 477-498.

Nusche, D., C. Shewbridge and C. Lamhauge Rasmussen (2010), *OECD Reviews of Migrant Education: Austria 2010*, OECD Reviews of Migrant Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264086180-en.

OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2015), *OECD Family Database (database)*, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm.

OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en.

OECD (2010), *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance*, Paris, OECD Reviews of Migrant Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264075788-en.

OECD (2007), *Benefits and Wages*, www.oecd.org/els/benefitsandwagespublications.htm.

Ruhm, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2012), "Long-term effects of early childhood care and education", *Nordic Economic Policy Review*, Vol 1/1, pp. 23-51.

Seeberg, M.L. (2010), "Siste skanse: En undersøkelse av 3-5-åringer som ikke går i barnehage", *NOVA Rapport*, No. 7/10, NOVA (Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring), Oslo.

Scheistrøen, J. (2014), "Undersøking om foreldrebetaling i barnehagar, januar 2014", *Reports*, No. 2014/4, Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Senate Administration for Education, Science and Research, (n.d.), "Anmeldung zur Kindertagesbetreuung", Senate Administration for Education, Science and Research website, www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kindertagesbetreuung/anmeldung/ (accessed 9 April 2015).

Shonkoff, J.P. et al. (2012), "The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress", *Pediatrics*, Vol. 129/1, pp. e232-e246.

Skolinspektionen (2012), Erbjudande om Förskola Inom Fyra Månader, Skolinspektionen, www.skolinspektionen.se/Documents/vagledning/informationsblad-forskola-inom-fyra-manader.pdf.

Skolverket (2007), *Five Years with the Maximum Fee*, Skolverket, Stockholm.

Statistics Norway (2014), *Kindergartens, 2013*, Statistics Norway, Oslo.

Stewart, K., L. Gambaro, J. Waldfogel, and J. Rutter (2014), "Common challenges, lessons for policy", in L. Gambaro, K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel (eds.) *An Equal Start? Providing Quality Early Education and Care for Disadvantaged Children*, Policy Press, University of Bristol, pp. 219-244.

Telemarksforskning (2011), *Gold digging in the sandbox? Profit opportunities in the kindergarten sector and distribution of profits to owners of private kindergartens*.

Thoresen, I.T. (2007), "Changes and challenges in recent ECEC policy in Norway", in S. O'Brien, P. Cassidy and H. Schonfeld (eds), *Vision into Practice: Proceedings of a Conference on Making Quality a Reality in the Lives of Young Children*, Dublin Castle, 8-10 February, 2007, pp. 328-334.

Van Lancker, W. (2013), "Putting the child-centred investment strategy to the test: Evidence for the EU27", *European Journal of Social Security*, Vol. 15/1, pp. 4-27.

Van Lancker, W. and J. Ghysels (2012), "Who benefits? The social distribution of subsidized childcare in Sweden and Flanders", *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 55/2, pp. 125-142.

Waldfogel, J. (2006), "What do children need?", *Public Policy Research*, Vol. 13/1, pp. 26-34.

Annex 2.1

Table A2.1 Characteristics of legal access entitlement

Country	Starting age of compulsory school	Age of children	Entitlement to a place in ECEC		Entitlement to free access	
			Legal access entitlement	Hours/week of ECEC provision to which parents/children have a legal right	Free access entitlement	Hours/week the child has free access to ECEC
Australia	4-5	m	m	m	m	m
Belgium-Flemish Community*	6	2.5-5	universal	23.33	unconditional	23.33
Belgium-French Community	6	0-2.5	None	m	conditional	m
		2.5-5	universal	28	unconditional	28
Chile	6	0-5	targeted	55/40	conditional	55/40
		0-2	targeted	55	conditional	55
		4-5	universal	22	unconditional	22
Czech Republic*	6	5	universal	50	unconditional	≥40
Finland*	7	0-6	universal	50	conditional	50
		6	universal	20	unconditional	20
France	6	0-2	none	a	conditional	40
		3-5	universal	24	unconditional	24
Germany*	5-6	1-2	universal	m	differs across Länder	a
		3-5	universal	m	differs across Länder	a
Italy	6	3-5	universal	40	unconditional	40
Ireland	m	m	m	m	m	m
Japan*	6	0-2	none	a	conditional	55
		3-5	none	a	conditional	20/50
Kazakhstan*	6-7	1-6	universal	50-60	unconditional	50-60
Korea	6	0-5	none	a	unconditional	40
		3-5	none	a	unconditional	15-25
Luxembourg*	4	0-3	none	a	conditional	3
		3-5	universal	26	unconditional	≤26
Mexico*	3	0-2	none	a	targeted	m
		3-5	universal	15-20	unconditional	15-20

Table A2.1 Characteristics of legal access entitlement (continued)

Country	Starting age of compulsory school	Age of children	Entitlement to a place in ECEC		Entitlement to free access	
			Legal access entitlement	Hours/week of ECEC provision to which parents/children have a legal right	Free access entitlement	Hours/week the child has free access to ECEC
Netherlands*	5	0-4	none	a	targeted	10
New Zealand	6	3-5	none	a	unconditional	20
Norway	6	1-5	universal	41	none	a
Portugal	6	0-2	none	a	none	a
		3-4	none	a	unconditional	25
		5	universal	40	unconditional	25
Slovak Republic*	6	3-6	universal	m	unconditional	m
Slovenia*	6	11 months-5 years	universal	45	conditional	45
Sweden*	7	1-2	universal	15-50	none	a
		3-6	universal	15-50	unconditional	15
United Kingdom-England*	5	2	none	a	conditional	15
		3-4	none	a	unconditional	15
United Kingdom-Scotland*	5	3-4	universal	16	unconditional	12.5

Notes: A universal legal entitlement refers to a statutory duty for ECEC providers to secure (publicly subsidised) ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require an ECEC place. A targeted legal entitlement refers to statutory duty for ECEC providers to secure (publicly subsidised) ECEC provision for children living in a catchment area who fall under certain categories. These categories can be based on various aspects, including employment, socio-economic or family status of their parents. In this category, "none" means that for the respective age group children or parents do not possess a legal entitlement to a place, this does not necessarily imply that they do not have access to a place, but only that they cannot claim it as a right. Conditional free access refers to the provision of ECEC services to parents free of charge based on certain conditions, such as income, benefit entitlements, etc. Unconditional free access refers to provision free of charge for all children of the concerned age group. Here, "none" means that there is no regulation to ensure free access for some or all children of the concerned age group. This is independent of whether or not they have access to a place.

In Australia, the starting age of compulsory schooling is 4 or 5, depending on the state/territory.

In Belgium, Flemish community children enter the compulsory school on 1 September of the calendar year in which the child is 6.

In Belgium, French community some children have priority access from age 0 to 2.5 years.

In the Czech Republic, the average attendance time depends on the opening hours of the school facility. Free access is provided for 40 hours or more, depending on the opening hours of the facility.

In Finland, the number of hours is according to need and parents' choice, with a maximum of about 10 hours per day, but on a day with long shifts, it could be even more. The hours a week that 0-6 year-olds have free access to ECEC is capped at 10 hours per day in low-income families.

In France, pre-primary schools ensure free access already from age 2 in socially disadvantaged areas.

In Germany, the age for compulsory school entry varies between 5 and 6, depending on the Länder.

In Japan, low-income families have free access to 20 hours a week in kindergartens and 55 hours in nursery centres.

In Kazakhstan, as far as public preschool is concerned, preschool education is free, but parents must pay monthly for food. Sanatorium kindergartens and kindergartens for children with disabilities are totally free. Mini-centres are open 25-60 hours per week; all other ECEC settings 50-60 hours a week.

In Luxembourg, a legal entitlement to 36 weeks per year for children at school is provided (from 3-5 years old).

In Mexico, social security laws guarantee morning and evening shifts for children in early childhood. Reference year: 2013/14.

In the Netherlands, children of working parents of age 0 to 6 have access to childcare, and children of 3 to 4 also have access to playgroups. Target group specific programs for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (of age 3 to 4) are available in both childcare and playgroups. In some municipalities target group specific programmes in playgroups are free. All children (of age 3 to 4) have access to play groups or childcare, but not for free and not by legal entitlement. For childcare, parents can receive an income-related tax allowance.

In the Slovak Republic, legal entitlement according to need and parents' choice.

In Slovenia, in kindergarten (as an integrated ECEC setting for 1-5 year-olds), the hours of legal entitlement vary depending on the length of the programme in which the child is participating. This calculation is based on the full day programme (9 hours a day). For child minding of preschool children, parents can enrol a child younger than 11 months (the minimum age for kindergarten), but this is uncommon, since parental leave lasts until a child is 11 months old.

In Sweden, the legal entitlement is unconditional from the autumn term in the year the child turns 3.

In the United Kingdom-England, local authorities have a legal duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment. This includes after-school/wrap-around care and holiday clubs. They must also assess that there is childcare adequate to meet the needs of parents with children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children in their area. Conditions of entitlement for targeted free access to ECEC were changed in 2013 and 2014.

In the United Kingdom-Scotland, 3-4 year-olds, and 2-year-olds from disadvantaged families, are entitled to 16 hours a week (600 hours/year), as of August 2014. Hours of free provision vary, but tend to be 12.5 hours per week.

Sources: OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en; OECD Network on ECEC's "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November, 2013; OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care's "Survey for the Quality Toolbox and ECEC Portal", June 2011.

Chapter 3

Enhancing quality in early childhood education and care

Norway has particular strengths when it comes to its strategies to increase the number, qualification levels, stability and diversity of pedagogical staff. But the early childhood education and care system still suffers from persistent shortages of qualified staff and the kindergarten sector offers staff insufficient status, pay and career options. There are specialised courses for pedagogical leaders and head teachers, and training programmes for pedagogical staff with lower qualifications that seek to raise their competence and foster diversity, but there are no mandatory staff training programmes in specific educational areas. A national strategy with clear quantitative targets to reduce the number of underqualified staff would be beneficial, alongside mandatory qualifications for all staff working with children.

The Norwegian system stands out with its comprehensive Framework Plan for Kindergartens, and strong regulation of structural quality standards, such as the "pedagogue norm" prescribing the ratios between kindergarten teachers and children for different age groups. However, not all its standards are adequate or precise enough, particularly for staff quality and process quality (e.g. the quality of interaction between staff and children). With regard to monitoring, Norway provides useful national guidelines for inspection and many local monitoring practices are in place to foster quality. However, the scope of the monitoring and the roles of individual stakeholders do not seem to be well defined for all stakeholders. Municipalities face a conflict of interest, having a dual role of both providing and overseeing kindergartens. Furthermore, they suffer from a lack of capacity to ensure objective monitoring for compliance and consulting for quality improvement. Those roles need to be clarified and separated. Further challenges are the lack of objective, reliable and valid instruments to monitor process quality and educational effectiveness. Research funding and activities in the area of ECEC have increased over recent years, but more work needs to be done to link research and practice sufficiently, and more (large-scale) research is needed with regard to the level, determinants and consequences of process quality. The Directorate for Education and Training may play a key role in ensuring more objective monitoring in the long term and in disseminating and co-ordinating research efforts.

Key messages

- Norway requires kindergarten teachers to complete tertiary education and has implemented various programmes to increase the qualifications of kindergarten staff, targeting everyone from assistants to head teachers. As a result, the share of unqualified staff has fallen. The proportion of male staff has also increased and useful revisions have been made to kindergarten teacher education itself.
- Norway has high standards in terms of kindergarten-teacher-to-child ratios and the qualifications kindergarten teachers need. At the same time, the regulation regarding the number and qualifications of other staff members such as assistants remains vague. However, Norway has set out a comprehensive, child-centred framework plan to guide staff practice and smooth transitions to primary school, which is also being translated into individual local standards.
- The monitoring system increasingly explores the area of process quality, and guidelines are in place to help municipalities with their role in monitoring. Research has also advanced with many new and large-scale studies on the way to expand the evidence base for policy making.
- To address persistent staff shortages, Norway needs to render the profession more attractive and set out clear targets to which policy makers can be held accountable. It must phase out the practice of dispensations from staff qualification requirements to ensure equal quality for all children.
- Process quality in kindergarten is the critical factor to support children's development and thus needs to be included in standards and regulations, regularly monitored, and better researched with the use of reliable and valid instruments. For instance through the Directorate for Education and Training Norway should ensure that research feeds back into staff practice and monitoring quality approaches, and be prioritised according to research findings. Strengthening and utilising large-scale studies would create more generalisable results to inform policy and practice.
- Monitoring practices and institutions need to be clearly defined to fulfil the purposes of ensuring regulation compliance as well as providing staff and providers the feedback and support they need to improve. Independent monitoring requires a separation of current municipal roles as both owners and inspectors of kindergartens, either through municipal inspection networks or the establishment of an independent agency. Additional capacities are needed to provide information for quality development.

Introduction

A place in a high-quality kindergarten is a statutory right for all children over the age of one in Norway. Municipalities led by local governments are in charge of providing the adequate number of early childhood education and care (ECEC) places, as well as of approving and monitoring the quality of provision and individual facilities' compliance with national standards.

Since the last OECD review in 1999 Norway's ECEC sector has undergone numerous changes (OECD, 1999). In 2006 the Ministry of Education and Research took over the

responsibility for kindergartens from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. This shift indicated the government's acknowledgement of kindergarten education as a first step of a lifelong learning process (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The changes in legislation that ensued led to a greater coherence between kindergartens and primary schools. A new Kindergarten Act entered into force in January 2006, legislating children's right to participate and providing clearer regulation of the content of kindergartens, and a clearer description of roles and responsibilities in the sector. The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens also entered into force in 2006. It strengthens the holistic approach to kindergarten in Norway. It established a clear link between kindergartens and schools by specifying seven learning areas for kindergartens that largely parallel the subjects and curriculum areas of primary schools (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a). Additional strengthening of this link came through the introduction of a purpose clause to the Kindergarten Act in 2010. The purpose clause expresses the same fundamental values as the purpose clause for schools and vocational training. Education in both kindergartens and schools shall promote children's creativity, sense of wonder and search for knowledge, while being based on shared values of democracy, respect, inclusion and gender equality (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The evaluation of the training for kindergarten teachers has led to a new framework plan and a new structure of kindergarten teacher education, implemented in August 2013. At the same time an expert group was given the task to monitor the implementation of the new kindergarten teacher education system and report back any challenges to the ministry (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

This chapter discusses the development and current challenges for ECEC quality in Norway. It will cover four areas: 1) the workforce; 2) standards and regulations; 3) monitoring; and 4) research. It is organised by these four core themes, all of which are important aspects and requirements for the provision of high-quality ECEC. The professionals working with children play a key role in providing high-quality opportunities for learning and development. It is assumed that preschool and kindergarten teachers need a number of professional competencies and skills to offer high-quality learning opportunities for young children. Current theoretical frameworks about the professional competencies of preschool and kindergarten teachers consider different dimensions to be important, but they generally include: professional knowledge, pedagogical beliefs and orientations, emotional attitudes, and motivational aspects (Anders and Rossbach, forthcoming; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). Competencies are acquired through initial training, on-the-job training and professional development programmes. Thus, the formal qualifications as well as the characteristics of teacher training and professional development of the workforce are crucial factors for the quality of ECEC. The structural characteristics of ECEC quality, such as qualification requirements, staff-child ratios, group sizes and space per child, can be easily regulated by standards and policies. Orientation and process quality may also be regulated by the curriculum, by providing orientation knowledge and by teaching standards which can be transmitted through training and professional development. Independent, valid and relevant instruments to monitor ECEC and its quality, and feed the results back into practice are an important means of maintaining and enhancing quality. In addition, best practice should be based on meaningful research evidence. Meaningful research picks up the needs and questions arising out of practice. Its evidence provides knowledge about children's development and the best ways to promote children's well-being and development.

Concepts of quality in early childhood education and care

Scientists and practitioners nowadays understand the quality of preschool or kindergarten learning as a multidimensional concept, particularly covering structural characteristics and process quality (NICHD ECCRN, 2002a, 2002b; Pianta et al., 2005). Structural quality refers to aspects such as class or group size, teacher-child-ratios, formal staff qualification levels, the materials provided and the size of the setting. Structural quality is regarded as being subject to regulation by policy and funding. Process quality refers to the nature of the pedagogical interactions between preschool teachers and children, the interactions among children and the interaction of children with space and materials. Recent approaches also highlight the quality of interactions between staff and parents (e.g. Lamb-Parker et al., 2001; Reynolds et al., 1996). Conceptualisations of ECEC quality cover global aspects such as warm climate or child-appropriate behaviour (e.g. Harms et al., 1998) as well as domain-specific stimulation in learning areas such as literacy, emerging mathematics and science (Kuger and Kluczniok, 2008; Sylva et al., 2003). It is hypothesised that process quality has a direct effect on children's learning and development, while structural quality has an indirect effect through its influence on process quality (Pianta et al., 2005).

Many researchers also agree that teachers' pedagogical beliefs such as their definition of their professional role, their educational values, epistemological beliefs, attitudes with regard to the importance of different educational areas and learning goals are also central to preschool practice, as beliefs guide the initiation and implementation of pedagogical processes. Thus, some concepts of preschool quality define "orientation quality" as a further dimension influencing process quality, referring to teachers' pedagogical beliefs such as their definition of their professional role, their educational values, epistemological beliefs, attitudes with regard to the importance of different educational areas and learning goals, etc. (e.g. Kuger and Kluczniok, 2008, Pianta et al., 2005). In this chapter, we will emphasise the dimensions of structural and process quality.

The concept of process quality is closely related to the concept of "pedagogy" which defines the set of pedagogical strategies and activities teachers use. Certain strategies can be correlated with higher quality and thus lead to a better promotion of children's learning and development. A further important concept is the concept of the curriculum. The term curriculum in a narrow sense describes the "what" of teaching. It refers to the contents of early childhood education such as learning areas and learning goals. However, due to the specific nature of learning in early childhood, some scientists prefer a broader definition of curriculum such as "the sum of all experiences in childhood settings" (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). This understanding is also reflected in Norway's Framework Plan and kindergarten policies. Curricular frameworks for ECEC in many countries also include recommendations for quality management and development.

International research has been putting efforts into developing reliable and valid instruments to measure preschool and kindergarten quality. Standardised observational instruments for measuring preschool quality can be divided into those focusing on the group level and those focusing on the child level. Widely used examples of group-level focused instruments include Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R; Harms et al., 1998) and its extension, the Four Curricular Subscales Extension to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-E; Sylva et al., 2003) as well as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2008). At the child level, an example of an instrument measuring educational quality is Target Child Observation (ZiKiB; Kuger et al., 2006). ECERS and CLASS have been widely

used in international research. Process quality as conceptualised by these measures has proven to be associated with children's development in cognitive as well as non-cognitive domains (e.g. Anders, 2013). An overview of instruments used in other countries can be found in the Annex (see Table A3.1).

Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations

Table 3.1 summarises the achievements made in the area of quality, as well as the various challenges still to be tackled, and proposals to overcome them. The next sections will discuss all of those in detail. It shall be noted that the review team identified the workforce and monitoring as the most important areas of improvement.

Table 3.1 Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations regarding quality

	Strengths	Challenges	Policy recommendations
Workforce	National and local strategies foster improvements in the workforce.	Persistent shortages of qualified staff.	Raise qualifications of all ECEC staff working with children and across the territory: • Set up a road map and define quantitative goals to increase workforce qualifications and skills.
		Insufficient status, pay and career opportunities to render profession more attractive and increase structural quality.	Align working conditions and pay of kindergarten and primary school teachers and differentiate by skills, experience and education: • Strengthen professional networks as learning communities.
	New kindergarten teacher education framework aligns teacher education with the Framework Plan for Kindergartens and European standards, and strengthens the link between theory and practice.	Kindergarten staff training system does not fully meet the need for specific skills.	Encourage shorter and specialised qualifications for those without high-level qualifications and maintain specific skills training of kindergarten teachers.
Standards & Regulations	The Norwegian ECEC system is highly regulated and provides detailed guidance with regard to structural quality standards.	Not all structural standards are adequate and precise enough.	Revise structural quality standards to ensure high quality staff-child interactions.
	The national Framework Plan for Kindergartens shares a broad understanding of education and development	The regulations regarding monitoring of staff quality and process quality are insufficient.	Set requirements for monitoring and developing process quality.
Monitoring	National guidelines for inspection available.	Dual role of municipalities create a conflict of interest and can hamper independent inspections.	Strengthen and establish institutions to ensure independence and objectivity of external monitoring.
	Many local monitoring practices in place to foster quality.	Lack of common understanding regarding the goals, scope and procedures for monitoring.	Define purpose and scope of monitoring clearly.
	Increased awareness of the importance of monitoring a wide range of quality aspects.	Monitoring practices are insufficient to assess process quality and capture children's development and well-being.	Strengthen procedures to monitor process quality.

Table 3.1 Strengths, challenges and policy recommendations regarding quality (continued)

	Strengths	Challenges	Policy recommendations
Research	Increase in research funding and activities	Research and practice are not sufficiently linked	Strengthen the work of the Directorate in disseminating research among stakeholders and co-operation with research centres
	Increase in longitudinal studies on the effects of ECEC on children's development	Much research has limited generalisability and there are still few findings on process quality from large-scale research using reliable and valid instruments	Strengthen and utilise large-scale research projects on process quality

Workforce quality

The kindergarten workforce in Norway consists of head teachers, pedagogical leaders and assistants. Head teachers are, as managers, responsible for the whole kindergarten, while pedagogical leaders lead a department or a group of children. According to the Kindergarten Act Sections 17 and 18, to qualify for either of these two positions, one has to have a three-year tertiary degree in kindergarten teacher education, or equivalent pedagogical degree at tertiary level, with additional education focusing on working with children (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The assistants should preferably have completed a four-year vocational training programme at upper secondary level, consisting of two years of school-based training and a two-year apprenticeship (as a "productive component"), but no specific requirements are laid out in the legislation. The ratio of kindergarten teachers to kindergarten assistants is usually one to two (Steinnes and Haug, 2013).

The changes to kindergarten teacher education implemented in 2013 emphasised the value of kindergarten as an institution providing education and care for the whole period of early childhood before the beginning of primary schooling. The title of the profession was changed from preschool teacher to kindergarten teacher to emphasise the value of kindergarten in its own right, rather than just as preparation for school. This also points to the holistic understanding of education, giving well-being and socio-emotional development a special place in ECEC. Accordingly, the new framework also reshaped kindergarten teacher education from ten subjects into six learning areas: 1) children's development, play and learning; 2) society, religion, view of life and ethics; 3) language, text and mathematics; 4) arts, culture and creativity; 5) nature, health and movement; and 6) leadership, co-operation and developmental work (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a). This reorganisation reflects more closely the integrated way children learn and provides insights into the holistic learning kindergartens are expected to provide. Student kindergarten teachers are also required to complete a minimum of 100 days of practical training, and to write a bachelor thesis (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Practical training especially helps to acquire tacit knowledge. To promote an international component, students are encouraged to go on educational exchanges during their education.

Many initiatives are in place to foster higher qualifications and address staff shortages. At the same time, even more staff and more continuous professional development and pre-service training will be needed to enable kindergartens across all municipalities to have high levels of staff and process quality.

Strengths

National and local strategies foster improvements in the workforce

Norway has made both national and local efforts to increase the number of qualified teachers with tertiary education. Training programmes take diverse forms including seminars, workshops, onsite mentoring, online training and formal training courses. These are financed by the government and employers, and offered through governmental and non-governmental sources, as well as universities, university colleges, municipalities and the kindergarten owners themselves (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015; OECD, 2012).

To overcome staff shortages, new innovative approaches to recruit teacher students have been developed. Professional development for the ECEC workforce in Norway provides different paths to higher qualification such as part-time courses and the recognition of other relevant education. These national strategies allow candidates with more diverse prior experiences to enter the profession. For example, there is national regulation allowing kindergarten staff with tertiary-level pedagogical education other than kindergarten teacher training to complete a supplement of 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in kindergarten education to become qualified pedagogical leaders(Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Different strategies have been developed and implemented by the Ministry, universities and colleges, and providers to increase stability and prevent staff turnover (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). For example, an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities from 2009 introduced a guided first year for fresh kindergarten teachers. This may have been one of the factors resulting in an increased stability of existing staff within kindergartens. As different studies have shown, stability of staff is an important aspect of pedagogical quality from the perspective of the child. It leads to better child development and prevents potential negative effects on children's socio-emotional development, especially for very young children (Anders, 2013).

Based on the policy strategy document called Competence in Kindergarten 2017 - 2010, and the National Strategy for Recruiting Kindergarten Teachers 2007-2011, a national project called GLØD was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2011. The main goal was to recruit staff with higher competences, as well as to increase competences and raise the status of already employed staff. The GLØD project developed a new coherent long-term national strategy for the period 2014-2020, to raise professional competences in the sector for all staff ("Competence for the kindergartens of the future"). This includes further education available to 450 head teachers per year as of 2014, comprised of 30 ECTS at master's level, as well as further education for pedagogical leaders (30 ECTS) (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Management leadership is key to motivating, developing and encouraging collaboration among staff and thus promote staff quality in ECEC (OECD, 2012). The strategy also provides the opportunity for assistants working in kindergartens to take a diploma for vocational training as a child and youth worker, as well as courses to ensure a basic ECEC knowledge for all staff (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Across the country, assistants are offered a competence raising 15 ETCS course that also seeks to foster diversity, and the strategy created more ways to enter to kindergarten teacher education on a part-time basis. A work-based, part-time bachelor-level programme (*Arbeidsplassbasert barnehagelærerutdanning* or ABF/ABLU) which

considers the workplace as an arena for inclusion and raising competence, where diversity of staff personal and professional backgrounds is seen as an advantage.

As part of the strategy, the ministry launched a national recruitment campaign for 2012-14, *The best job in the world is vacant*, to enhance the application rate for the kindergarten teacher education and to raise the status of working in kindergarten. It established regional GLØD-networks with the main stakeholders in the sector to develop local measures.

To give a local example, in Oslo and Akershus, a GLØD partnership has participated in education fairs and has organised career days for kindergarten education students in their final year. New strategies to increase the diversity of the workforce have been developed. More than 600 assistants have completed the 15 ETCS course named *Kompass* between 2001 and 2013 at Oslo and Akershus University College, including many male assistants, bilingual assistants, and pedagogical leaders without formal qualifications (Tollefsrud and Molin Bruce, 2014). At the same time Oslo and Akershus University College developed a part-time work-based bachelor programme for kindergarten teacher education on methods and principles of the *Kompass* courses. Over 200 students have graduated from the ABF and ABLU studies in Oslo, while further 200 are currently enrolled in the programmes (Tollefsrud and Molin Bruce, 2014). Both the 15 ECTS course and the ABLU education are now available all over the country.

In addition, Oslo and Akershus University College offers a 15 ECTS course in pedagogical supervision for kindergarten owners (Tollefsrud and Molin Bruce, 2014) and another 30 ECTS course has been developed for kindergarten teachers working as kindergarten managers to improve their leadership skills and prevent them from dropping out of the profession. These courses should particularly promote pedagogical leadership. Pedagogical leadership skills are seen as crucial to maintaining and raising the process quality of the settings (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Over 60 students have graduated from this programme and about 110 more were expected to start in 2014 (Tollefsrud and Molin Bruce, 2014).

The review team had a chance to talk to the organisers of one of the programmes for head teachers at the National School of Economics in Bergen. The discussion highlighted an awareness of the fact that leading a kindergarten, just like other educational institutions, requires different skills from those needed for the everyday pedagogical work with the children and that specific training is needed to acquire them. The programme also acknowledges the key role of head teachers in promoting staff development in their profession through mentoring, feedback and professional development, and in leading kindergartens as learning organisations with a stimulating climate. The programme in Bergen contains courses such as change management, power and legitimacy, and organisational perspectives on kindergarten and provides theoretical knowledge about leadership as well as practical leadership skills. Those approaches show that considerations regarding educational and professional leadership that are being internationally discussed for school principals have already found their way into practice in training Norwegian kindergarten heads (OECD, 2014c; OECD, 2009). Research evidence suggests that highly qualified staff may have a positive effect on pedagogical quality (Elliott, 2006; Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson, 2011; Sheridan, 2009; Sheridan et al., 2009; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002).

The ECEC workforce in Norway, as in all OECD countries, is predominately female. The very high proportion of female teachers in early childhood education worldwide may result in creating environments that are better suited to promote the development of girls

or activities more directed at girls (e.g. Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005). When most of their caregivers are female, young children may make stereotypic assumptions about male and female roles (Johnson, 2008). Societal change also involves a rising number of children growing up in homes without their fathers. Thus, the establishment of male role models is believed to be of increasing importance. There have been efforts to increase the number of male workers in Norwegian kindergartens. As part of a gender equality strategy in 2000, a target was set for males to reach 20% of the kindergarten workforce. Regulations have been introduced to promote recruitment, such as favouring a male candidate if two applicants have same qualifications. The strategies have partially worked, increasing the proportion of men from 5.7% in 2003 to 8.4% in 2013 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The number of kindergartens that met the 20% target has also increased to 15.6% of all kindergartens in 2013. The proportion of male students registering for kindergarten teacher education also increased in the same period, from 8.5% to 14.4%, but the dropout rate is still higher for men than for women (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). However, compared with other countries the proportion of male preschool staff in Norway is high.

New kindergarten teacher education framework aligns teacher education with the Framework Plan for Kindergartens and European standards, and strengthens the link between theory and practice

After the evaluation of the kindergarten teacher education system conducted by the Norwegian Agency for Quality in Education (NOKUT) in 2010, a new framework for kindergarten teacher education was developed. This new framework is closely linked to the Framework Plan for Kindergartens. The plan establishes a broad understanding of early childhood education, considering children's well-being, development and learning, and stressing the value of childhood, children's voices and a child-oriented approach to learning and development. International research evidence shows that a child-oriented conception of ECEC may lead to better outcomes, especially with regard to children's socio-emotional development, interests and (learning) motivation. These factors are crucial for children's later school success and children's ability to become active members of society (Anders, forthcoming). The kindergarten teacher education framework has the aim to promote "in addition to theoretical knowledge … insight into a holistic conception of learning…. The new kindergarten teacher education has thus been more clearly linked to the 'curriculum' for kindergartens [i]n addition to theoretical knowledge, … insight into a holistic conception of learning, […] the new barnehage teacher education has been more clearly linked to the Framework Plan for barnehager." (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The conception of the new teacher education framework is in line with modern theories of professionalisation in ECEC. These approaches underline that a set of domain-general as well as domain-specific professional competencies are needed to offer high-quality learning opportunities (e.g. Anders et al., 2012). Competencies include professional knowledge (content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge) as well as motivational aspects, beliefs and self-regulatory skills.

The tasks and the areas of work for the workforce in ECEC in Norway are now clearly defined in the Framework Plan for Kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a), and the requirements for qualified kindergarten teachers are in accordance with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) (European Commission, 2008). This makes the qualification levels more comparable across Europe and facilitates workers' and learners' mobility between countries as well as their lifelong learning. The

link between theory and practice has been upheld by the introduction of the minimum of 100 days of practical training for kindergarten education students. The universities and colleges providing teacher education collaborate with and host specialised national centres for specific areas of education across different education levels of education, such as kindergartens and schools. This allows them to keep up to date with research and state-of-the-art domain-specific aspects of education, and offer consistent and coherent education for lifelong learning.

Challenges

Persistent shortages of qualified staff

Despite the various strategies to attract more people for working in ECEC, one of the biggest problems seems to be the shortage of qualified staff (equivalent to 4 400 kindergarten teachers in 2015). This creates a number of challenges. The shortage of qualified staff explains why the regulations with regard to the qualifications of leading teachers are often not being met. While the qualifications expected for kindergarten teachers are relatively high, the number of unqualified staff is nevertheless extremely high: in 2013 only 37.5% of the kindergarten workforce were qualified kindergarten teachers (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Much of the direct pedagogical work with children is still therefore being carried out by unqualified staff (see Steinnes and Haug, 2013). This threatens to undermine the measure of process quality which is most critical for children's development and well-being from participating in ECEC. This increases the burden on providers as well as head teachers to maintain the pedagogical quality of the services offered.

Nor are all kindergartens being led by a qualified head teacher. In absolute terms, just 2.1% of head teachers lack teaching qualifications, which might seem to be rather a small figure. However, taking into account the high proportion of unqualified staff and the number of children who are cared for in theses settings, it is not a negligible share. In addition, the qualifications expected of head teachers and pedagogical leaders do not completely reflect the more demanding tasks and areas of work they undertake, compared to other staff. Although efforts have been made to design new programmes, the qualifications of head teachers and pedagogical teachers are still not sufficient to provide them with the necessary skills, which include managerial expertise and the various aspects of pedagogical leadership.

Currently, there seems to be little division in labour between kindergarten teachers and assistants, which is likely to be related to the shortage of qualified staff. This also reflects the guidance from the Framework Plan, emphasising that children should be enabled to learn in both formal and informal environments (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a; Steinnes and Haug, 2013). In a nationwide survey from 2009, Steinnes and Haug (2013) report that assistants estimated they spend 81% of their working time directly working with children, and about 5% doing administrative tasks. Kindergarten teachers reported spending significantly less time working directly with children (66%) and significantly more on administrative tasks (20%). Kindergarten teachers also reported spending more time than assistants working with parents, as well as in specialised pedagogical work, such as teaching 5-year-olds or children with special needs. The authors suggest that the reasons for the apparent lack of division in labour include the ideal of equality and the homelike environment Norwegian kindergartens traditionally strive to achieve, and the long operating hours in combination with a low kindergarten teacher ratio, which force assistants to often work independently. Kindergarten teachers

are expected to ensure that assistants are providing high-quality work by supervising their work performance (Steinnes and Haug, 2013). The review team's visits to several kindergartens fuelled concerns that not all assistants are sufficiently trained or experienced to provide the children with the high-quality interactions and learning opportunities that are needed to achieve beneficial effects for the children. In 2013, 14.6% of assistants were trained at upper secondary level as childcare and youth workers, a share that has doubled since 2003, but remains low. In general, by 2013 43.5% of kindergarten staff still had no pedagogical education at tertiary or secondary level. (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Those issues are also being acknowledged by the strategies described earlier.

The Kindergarten Act gives the municipalities the power to grant dispensations from educational requirements, a measure which is often used to address shortages of qualified staff. In turn, dispensations invite unqualified staff. The municipality grants dispensations when there are no qualified applicants for a publicly advertised position. This problem was even more significant in the past. Between 1997 and 2013, the percentage of head teachers or pedagogical leaders working on dispensation decreased from 19% to 2.1% for head teachers and 13.2% for pedagogical leaders.

Not only is there a high rate of staff without formal qualifications, but the figures vary by municipality and setting, which results in unequal access to well-trained teachers for children across Norway. The percentage of staff with relevant qualifications can vary from 28% to 75% between individual kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The proportion of head teachers without required education varies from none in Sogn og Fjordane county to 5.85% in Sør-Trøndelag county. The variation is even larger in the proportion of pedagogical leaders without the required qualification: from 2.11% in Vestfold county to about a quarter in Akershus (26.33%) and Oslo (23.29%). These disparities are even more worrying considering that Akershus and Oslo have the largest number of pedagogical leaders, both with over 3 000 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Insufficient status, pay and career opportunities to make the profession attractive and increase structural quality

While education has changed, the working conditions of kindergarten staff have not changed much in the last decade. The status and pay of kindergarten teachers in Norway remains lower than primary school teachers (OECD, 2013; Naumann et al., 2013). This probably contributes to the problem of students dropping out of kindergarten teacher education, both during their studies and after graduation.

The current system of rewards is not suitable to attract and maintain qualified staff. The profession suffers generally from a lack of social status. This low status is reflected in the low salary in general and only small differences in salary from increased qualifications. While private kindergarten owners and unions have agreed to provide a raise for kindergarten teachers with 30 ECTS of further education, there is no national legal requirement to adequately reflect training outcomes and experiences in salary rise or other ways of reward. Status and pay of ECEC teachers is lower than of teachers in primary and secondary education. While the starting salary for kindergarten and primary school teachers with minimum training are somewhat on a par (USD[1] 33 816 for kindergarten teachers, USD 34 484 for primary school teachers in 2012), on average, kindergarten teachers earn about USD 41 000, and primary school teachers about USD 46 700 (OECD, 2014a). The disparity is larger when “teaching” time is taken in

consideration. Kindergarten teachers on average spend about 1500 hours per year teaching, while primary school teachers spend about half as much (741 hours/year in 2012) (OECD, 2014a). This is also relevant with regard to process quality, because teachers need adequate time for preparation and reflection to offer well-thought-through and high-quality learning opportunities. The number of leading positions is the profession is relatively low, and so staff suffer from a lack of career progression options, although the new study and qualification programmes may offer career opportunities if they go hand in hand with developing specialist positions for specific tasks or educational areas. All of these aspects feed into the problem of recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Despite recent strategies to foster qualification levels, many of the students currently recruited to kindergarten teacher education have low grades from upper secondary school (Steinnes and Haug, 2013). It can be questioned whether these students have "the personal strength and support to introduce [competences that are relevant for kindergarten work] as the institutions' fundament and to overcome established traditions, ideologies and structures" (Steinnes and Haug, 2013). Furthermore, a large share of students entering kindergarten teacher education never go on to work in the field. For instance, the University of Tromsø informed the review team that they are able to grant all applicants for the kindergarten teacher education a place to study, but only one-third start work in kindergartens directly upon graduation. Another third enter training to become primary school teachers and the remainder commence a master's degree, with some of the last group still going on to work in kindergarten at a later stage.

The changes to Norway's ECEC system and the Kindergarten Framework Plan place high demands on existing and future teachers. Policy documents, including the Framework Plan, focus on kindergartens as learning institutions, emphasising that they should be prepared to constantly meet new demands and challenges (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a; Vannebo and Gotvassli, 2014). The Framework Plan allows practitioners to decide their individual focus and leaves room for interpretation of educational principles. These broad provisions require highly skilled teachers to translate guidelines into practices in the best interest of the child. However, existing kindergarten staff often lack the comprehensive professional support they need. While a number of strategies have been implemented to raise the qualification levels of new staff and assistant teachers, continuous professional development is needed to maintain and update the competence of existing staff, to support the adequate translation of the framework plan into practice, and to continuously develop the process quality of each individual setting. This would ensure the faithful implementation of the framework plan, which is again crucial for high process quality. Currently, there seem to be no national regulations for mandatory and comprehensive professional support to foster and monitor quality improvement and development. Local initiatives fail to fill the gap. Teacher communities and networks who can consult each other are another way to help to maintain and enhance pedagogical quality in ECEC in demanding times. However, kindergarten teacher communities seem to be weak stakeholder groups in Norway's education system and thus kindergarten teachers themselves have struggled to foster the professionalism and claim the professional status that would be crucial for the sector.

Kindergarten staff training system does not fully meet the need for specific skills

The system of ECEC staff training as well as the kindergarten teacher education framework has undergone meaningful developments throughout the last decade in Norway. However, challenges persist. In particular, the training on offer for unqualified assistants, who carry out an important part of the daily pedagogical work, seems to be

insufficient and insufficiently attractive. Currently, they do not have universal access to low-threshold training programmes that could allow them to specialise and develop skills in specific activities such as language support, arts and culture, health or physical education without completing a full vocational education and training programme or requiring prior qualifications. Such skills are key to stimulating children's specific learning and development within the holistic ECEC framework, especially concerning the work with children in need of individual support. This challenge is not only apparent in the statistics on staff qualifications, but was also witnessed by the review team's observations in various kindergartens, where not all assistants were actively engaging with children. Discussions also revealed that policy makers cannot take interest in existing training schemes for assistants for granted.

While there are many evident strengths of the new teacher education framework, as outlined above, new questions also arise. Although it has moved from subjects to learning areas, the "whole child approach" still asks for domain-specific as well general domain competencies of kindergarten teachers. It is a great challenge for any teacher education programme to keep the balance between promoting both of these vital aspects of professional competence. Currently it seems that the teacher education framework prioritises domain-general competencies, so it needs to be considered whether the current students are acquiring all the competencies they need to carry out demanding domain-specific tasks in different educational areas (e.g. leading activities such as drama). Specific skills and competencies are also required to develop "leaders of practice" and role models for qualified and unqualified staff in different educational areas.

Policy recommendations

Raise qualifications of all ECEC staff working with children and across the territory

The number of unqualified staff needs to be further reduced. Unqualified assistants need to be qualified on the job. One possibility may be the introduction of more flexible professional development programmes that specialise for specific functions at upper secondary level or vocational training. Programmes in specific areas such as dealing with diversity have been introduced, but this could be strengthened by further programmes for specific functions arising from the educational areas of ECEC such as language and literacy, science, early mathematics, physical education, health and the arts, or from specific work areas such as parent-preschool partnership or parental support. The specific qualifications could be achieved by initial training programmes as well as continuous professional development programmes, which need to be financially supported by the state and/or providers.

The possibility of "dispensation" for head teachers and pedagogical leaders needs to be phased out. The uptake of continuous training needs to be further increased, especially for head teachers and pedagogical leaders. Not only newly qualified but also existing head teachers and pedagogical leaders need specific training in management, professional development and leadership. For continuous development of preschool quality, head teachers and pedagogical leaders need to develop a vision for the quality of the setting and transmit this vision to lower-qualified colleagues. This involves being an example of good practice. The uptake of continuous training should be rewarded more than currently by diverse incentives (e.g. pay rises, certification and career options). During the review visit, staff in one kindergarten raised the issue that for some staff, particularly head teachers, it may simply not be possible to partake in specialised training as there are no

substitutes available for the duration of the training. Thus, the enabling conditions need to be put in place to enable staff to take part in professional development activities continuously. One possibility may be to reduce teaching obligations to provide the time needed to participate in professional development programmes. At the same time, this approach would call for additional staff, maybe as a prerequisite for higher uptake of professional development.

To achieve these objectives, Norway can build on the various national strategies that have been successfully developed in the past decade to address the problem of underqualified staff. These include new models that combine work and study, and encouraging more staff already employed in the sector to increase their qualifications. Guided first years for new teachers were introduced in 2009, and officially included from 2011, as a strategy to ease the transition between study and work. Kindergarten owners are responsible for offering mentoring to new kindergarten teachers, supported by the Ministry which funds the education of mentors, and supports outreach to encourage participation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The offers and incentives set out by some large kindergarten companies in Norway for their own staff can also provide sources of inspiration. As the discussions during the review visits highlighted, such companies may find it easier than small municipalities to exploit synergies and economies of scales to foster professional development of their staff across the country.

One relevant example from another country could be the Alberta Child Care Accreditation Funding Program in Canada. It offers a Professional Development Grant (PDG) to day-care programme staff that are already certified as Child Development Assistant or Child Development Workers. This is intended to help staff to reach higher certification levels and to enable them to attend approved conferences and workshops. Staff can either use the full amount of the PDG to pay for post-secondary tuition as well as for mandatory textbooks, or up to 50% of the grant for conference and workshop registration fees. Staff who have worked between 28 and 79 hours in day care each month of the two preceding months of the date of the expenditure or the date of the reception of the application may receive up to CAD 250 (Canadian dollars) per fiscal year; staff working 80 hours or more can receive up to CAD 1 000 per fiscal year. Staff can apply to use portions of their Professional Development Grant several times per year, until they reach their calculated grant limit (Alberta Human Services, 2014). Sweden also provides a source of inspiration with the establishment of paid educational leave for preschool teachers seeking to engage in postgraduate research degrees and the creation of the positions of preschool heads and senior preschool teachers (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2011).

Set up a road map and define quantitative goals to increase workforce qualifications and skills

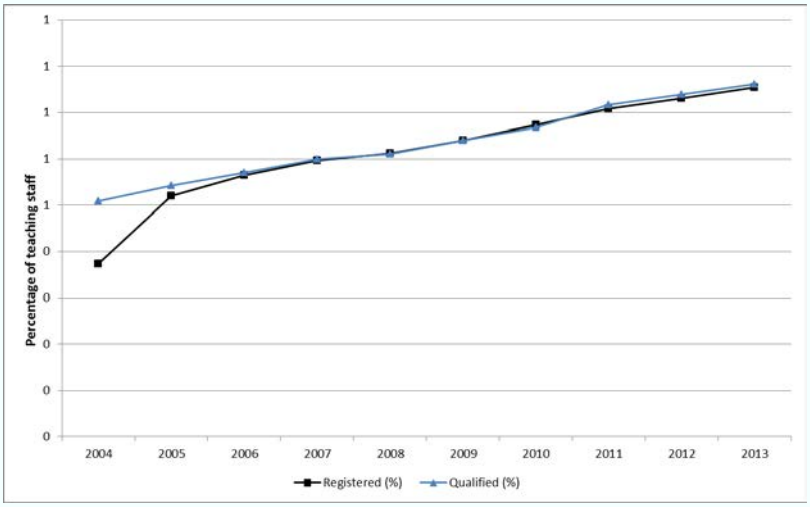
Building on existing initiatives, qualification levels can be boosted by the definition of explicit, quantitative goals and a roadmap supported by a broad set of stakeholders, holding policy makers accountable for progress. This is illustrated by the example of New Zealand in Box 3.1. Specific action plans may be needed to overcome the particularly high shortage of qualified teachers in specific regions. Such action plans should build on existing initiatives and may include specific qualifications and professional development programmes for these regions, but also the use of incentives for qualified teachers to take up work there (e.g. pay allowances or career options) This could lead to equal access to high quality in terms of teacher qualification.

Box 3.1 Setting quantitative targets to foster qualifications of ECEC staff in New Zealand

In 2002, New Zealand introduced Pathways to the Future, a 10-year plan describing strategies for the improvement of early childhood education services. In order to raise the number of qualified registered teachers, the government set out targets that required teacher-led services to have at least 50% or more of regulated staff that are registered teachers in 2007 (which is still today the minimum requirement), with the aim of raising that target to 80% in 2010 and 100% in 2012. The government helped the centres to compensate for higher labour costs by increasing the levels of subsidies paid to the centres and by introducing a funding system that rewards centres with high proportions of qualified and registered teachers. Additionally, teacher education places were augmented and more scholarships granted (until 2011) to encourage teacher supply (Meade et al., 2012; ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010; Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2013). Following the regulation's introduction, registered teachers made up 35% of the early childhood education (ECE) workforce in 2002, 52% in 2005, 60% in 2007 and 64% in 2009 (ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010; also see the figure below). In 2013, 76% of teaching staff in early childhood education services were qualified teachers (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2013).

In 2010, the 100% target was reduced to 80% by the government, based on the consideration that eight out of ten is a sufficient ratio of qualified teachers. The funding for centres that had reached 100% of qualified teachers was aligned with the level of funding for centres with at least 80%. At the same time, the subsidy for these centres was reduced due to budget constraints (Meade et al., 2012). Nonetheless, in 2013, 94% of teacher-led centre-based services had 80% or more qualified and registered teachers (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2013). *The Teacher's Work Study* by the New Zealand Childcare Association compared the teaching and learning in education and care centres which had 50-79% qualified teachers to centres with 100% of qualified staff. It found that children in the latter centres benefitted from the higher qualification of staff as the greater pedagogical experience of these centres' teachers helped children's cognitive development, e.g. by fostering more complex play and sustained shared thinking (Meade et al., 2012).

Percentage of qualified and registered teaching staff in teacher-led ECE services in New Zealand, 2004-13



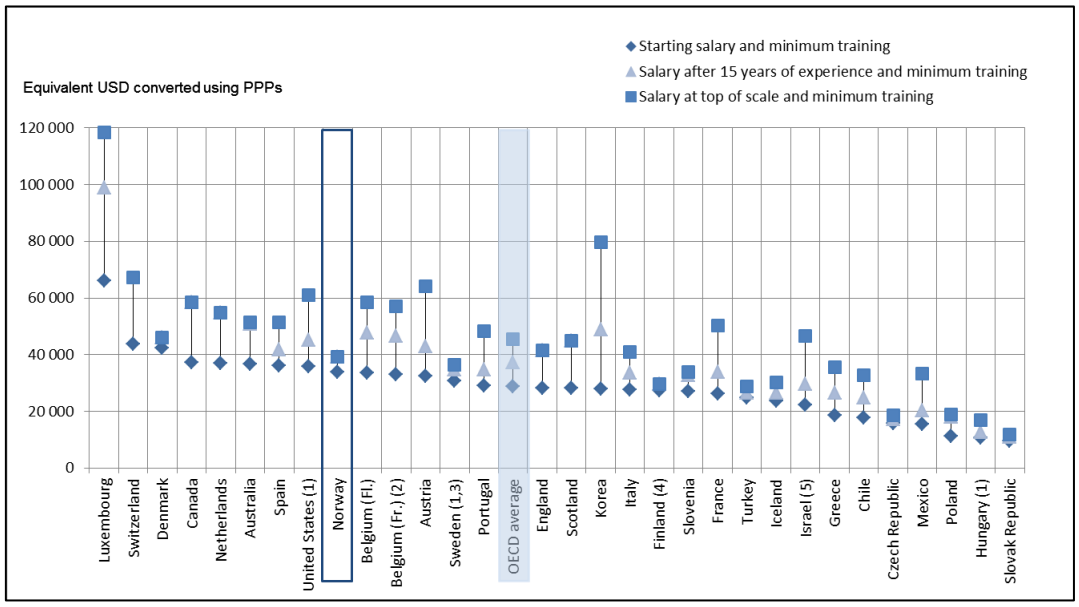
Source: Ministry of Education New Zealand (2013), "Annual ECE Census: Report 2013", Education Counts website, www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education/annual-ece-summary-reports.

Align working conditions and pay of kindergarten and primary school teachers and differentiate by skills, experience and education

The ECEC sector will only be attractive to better qualified staff in the long term if its societal status increases. One important aspect of this is the introduction of higher salaries for qualified staff as well as the availability of career progression. Policy makers should consider aligning kindergarten teachers' salaries with those of primary teachers. This has been achieved in around half of OECD member economies including countries such as England, the Netherlands and Portugal, where pre-primary and primary teachers are paid at the same rate at the beginning of their careers (OECD, 2014a). To reward professional development and ensure retention, salaries should differentiate by skills, experiences and education. In Korea the starting salary for teachers with minimum education is about USD 28 000, which has increased by almost half after 10 years' experience to USD 41 700. Pre-primary teachers in Korea with minimum training earn around USD 80 000 per year at the top of the scale which is quite high compared with the OECD average of about USD 45 000. (Figure 3.1; OECD, 2014a). Local authorities are required to fund a certain level of staff development. This consists, for example, of 80 hours of in-service training for kindergarten teachers every 3 years, while childcare teachers need to take 40 hours of professional development childcare (OECD, 2006). Within the Master Teacher System, high-quality and experienced kindergarten teachers are rewarded with a monthly grant of USD 400. In addition, experienced teachers can become kindergarten directors (OECD, 2012). Salaries in Korea are also nearly the same for teachers in pre-primary through to upper secondary education. (OECD, 2014a).

The equivalence of the demands on teachers between kindergarten and primary education also needs to be reflected in other aspects. Kindergarten teachers need enough time to plan, reflect and document their pedagogical work. Time for planning, documentation and reflection is crucial to the ability to provide high-quality and stimulating learning opportunities and environments. Currently, primary school teachers have more non-teaching time for these tasks and kindergarten teachers need to be given an equivalent amount of non-teaching time as primary school teachers. Several other countries already ensure extensive non-teaching time for staff at this level. Pre-primary teachers in England, for instance, are required to work 1 259 hours in the school year, while their net teaching time of just 680 hours is one of the lowest among OECD countries – leaving much time for other activities to prepare and manage their pedagogical work. Their total required working time at school is 579 hours higher than the required teaching time. Spain has a similarly low net teaching time of 880 hours out of 1 140 total required working hours. For Norwegian kindergarten teachers no such differences are being reported (OECD, 2014a).

Figure 3.1 Pre-primary teachers' annual statutory salary at different points in their careers (2012)



Notes:

1. Actual base salaries.

2. Salaries of teachers with typical qualification instead of minimum. Please refer to Annex 3 in OECD (2014a) for salaries of teachers with minimum qualification.

3. Year of reference 2011.

4. Includes kindergarten teachers only for pre-primary education.

5. The 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.

Countries are ranked in descending order of starting salaries for pre-primary teachers with minimum training.

Source: OECD (2014a), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en: Table D3.1. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

Strengthen professional networks as learning communities

Kindergartens are understood as learning organisations. They need continuous consultancy, support and professional exchange and support to maintain and raise the pedagogical quality. External "professional consultants" could help in supporting the development and enhancement of quality. While related approaches are already in place for public kindergartens in some Norwegian municipalities, such as in Oslo, where the review team learnt about co-operation with the University College to advise head teachers, a more systematic approach seems warranted. In Germany these professionals are known as *Fachberatung*. They work as freelancers or are appointed by municipalities and private ECEC providers. They offer professional supervision and consult with regard to the developmental needs of the specific ECEC setting, and offer professional development programmes (e.g. Hense, 2010). The establishment of active professional networks could also support the development of quality in ECEC. In Japan, for instance, the association of private kindergartens provides training and meetings for its teachers, who are obliged to renew their license(s) regularly. The association established a research centre, linking research and practices, as well as many local branches that connect

kindergarten teachers in the cities where they work, facilitating peer-learning and fostering the status of the profession (Youchien, 2015). In Denmark, the union of pedagogues, has established a Development and Research Fund to research innovation in childcare centres, leisure time centres and clubs, informing and strengthening their work on policies and practices (BUPL, 2009).

Single kindergartens could be developed to become consultation centres for other kindergartens with regard to specific areas of work (e.g. specific educational areas, working with parents or working with the community). A limited number of kindergartens could build a regional network of quality working groups. The members of such groups meet on a regular basis and consult each other with regard to developmental challenges. External providers of training, supervision and professional development support the work of the groups. Such learning communities need to be co-ordinated. Incentives, such as additional staff or financial support need to be implemented to motivate kindergartens to become part of such networks. Such models are practised successfully in Germany, for example.

Encourage shorter and specialised qualifications for those without high-level qualifications and maintain specific skills training of kindergarten teachers

The qualification level of assistants needs to be raised. The development of shorter and more specialised programmes could also help to overcome the tension between qualifying for the pedagogical work in a system with an integrated, child-oriented and comprehensive understanding of ECEC, and the need to train and develop specialised skills and competencies for different learning domains. Thus, programmes could allow assistants to specialise in areas of interest (e.g., arts, culture, sports, language support) and allow children to benefit from more intentional and individualised interactions. It is key that such programmes involve a recognition of prior learning and experience to lower the threshold of entry and allow experienced staff to achieve higher levels of qualifications (see OECD, 2012).

The evaluation of the new kindergarten teacher education framework needs to look at to what extent gaps in specific skills persist or are being widened for kindergarten teachers. While the holistic pedagogical approach reflects the tradition as well as research evidence, domain-specific competencies are still needed to offer high-quality learning opportunities in certain domains. This is especially recommended for the introduction and implementation of functional sections and specialised teachers with specific requirements (such as teachers for language education). The possibility of specialising could also render the profession more attractive and thus help address staff shortages and turnover. Kindergarten teacher education should be expected to foster such specific skills within the holistic education framework.

Standards and regulations

In Norway, the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergarten (Framework Plan) was implemented in 2006. The Framework Plan, legislated under the Kindergarten Act, provides guidance about what constitutes content quality in Norwegian kindergarten; however municipalities and kindergarten owners have autonomy to implement these quality indicators in the local context.

The Framework Plan cherishes the socio-pedagogic tradition of ECEC in Nordic countries and places children's well-being and interests, social equality, and democracy at

the core of its pedagogical approach. Parents and children are included in the development of pedagogical concepts, the planning of the pedagogical work and assessment processes. Norwegian legislation provides detailed regulations for several areas of structural quality, such as size of play areas, pedagogic norms and qualifications for kindergarten teachers and head teachers, and guidance for others. Regulations for areas of process quality are somewhat less specific and mostly rely on the implementation of the guidelines from the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a).

Pursuant to the Kindergarten Act, the municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all kindergartens comply with the national regulations and standards outlined above, as well as the regulations on staff qualifications discussed in the previous section on the workforce (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005). In addition to legislation, financing mechanisms are also used to ensure that private providers meet the same quality standards as the public institutions. The goal of the legislations is to ensure equal levels of quality on the national level (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Strengths

The Norwegian early childhood education and care system is highly regulated and provides detailed guidance on structural quality standards

The Norwegian ECEC system implemented a wide range of national regulation of structural quality standards such as teacher-child ratios and teacher qualifications, and indicative norms regarding space per child and other aspects. Compared to other countries these aspects seem to be highly regulated. Structural quality serves as one determinant of process quality, so the comparatively high regulation of the Norwegian ECEC system with regard to structural requirements can be seen as a big advantage.

The mandatory pedagogue norm in public and private kindergartens is 1 pedagogue for every 7 to 9 children under the age of 3, and 1 pedagogue for every 14 to 18 children over the age of 3. Pedagogues should preferably be qualified as kindergarten teachers, but other pedagogical qualifications with further education in kindergarten pedagogy (30 ECTS) are also acceptable. There is no prescribed norm for the number of assistant workers, but the Kindergarten Act states that the number and level of staff should allow for satisfactory implementation of educational activities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005). In family kindergartens 1 assistant can be in charge of up to 5 children, or, when the family home is found to be suitable, 2 assistants can be in charge of up to 10 children. The kindergarten teacher in charge of a family kindergarten can be responsible for no more than 30 children. In family kindergartens which catered for 2% of all children in kindergarten in 2014 there does not have to be a qualified kindergarten teacher, but there must be one to supervise the family kindergarten on a weekly basis (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

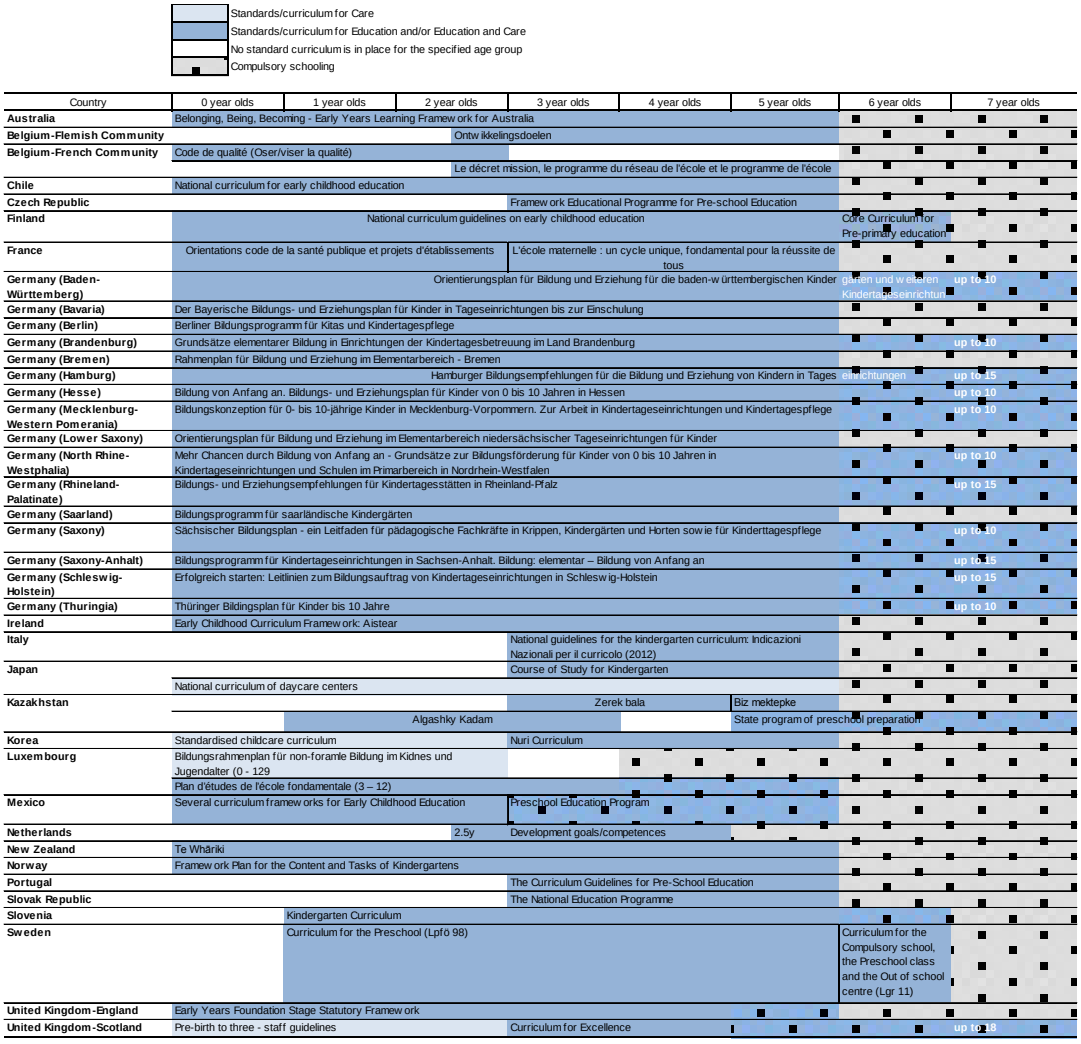
The indicative norm for indoor play area is $4m^2$ per child over 3 years old and approximately $0.33m^2$ for a child under three. The outdoor area should be approximately six times as large as the indoor area. This requirement is strictly for the area dedicated to play and does not refer to parking spaces and access roads, which must comply with a separate set of requirements (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

The national Framework Plan for Kindergartens shares a broad understanding of education and development

Curriculum frameworks can play a key role in ensuring the quality of ECEC services. They may ensure more consistent service provision within countries and jurisdictions and establish common learning priorities and goals for kindergarten teachers and settings (OECD, 2006, 2012). The Norwegian Framework Plan for Kindergartens is comprehensive and was developed with strong stakeholder involvement, as the review team was informed. It is being translated into local standards and guidelines, not only in large municipalities such as Oslo and Bergen, but also in small ones like Hole in Buskerud county which the review team visited. It reflects the Nordic socio-pedagogical tradition of ECEC stressing the holistic nature of learning and development in childhood. As a consequence it also stresses child-oriented pedagogy and the curriculum does not just include the learning areas, knowledge, skills and experiences to be promoted, but also care, a broad understanding of education and especially children's rights to active participation. The plan is further complemented by practical guidance material.

Children's development takes place in social contexts. They need a broad range of competencies in social, cognitive and other domains for further development in their later educational careers. Strategies that aim to foster specific academic skills may give children a short-term academic advantage when children start primary school. But giving children choices and opportunities for autonomy may promote abilities such as self-regulation, self-control and other motivational prerequisites such as interest, leaning attitudes and enthusiasm to learn. These are also abilities that are believed to have great importance for children's motivation and for their further development and success as they move through primary school and become active members of society (Anders, forthcoming; Chambers et al., 2010). Indeed, longitudinal research suggests that interventions to foster non-cognitive skills, such as skills that enable people to achieve goals, collaborate and manage emotions, with conscientiousness, sociability and emotional stability, are particularly relevant for later social outcomes, well-being and health behaviour, as well as benefits realised from tertiary education. Those can be targeted through curricula like the Framework Plan (OECD, 2015). Contrary to many other countries, Norway also includes children under the age of three in its curriculum, which facilitates consistency during transition from kindergarten to school (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Curriculum frameworks in place for ECEC across the OECD



Source: OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris; OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

In terms of pedagogy, kindergartens are responsible for adapting their educational activity to the Framework Plan, which emphasises the Nordic tradition of integrating education and care (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a). The Framework Plan also includes a chapter on Sami culture and tradition. As the review team could see during their visit to the county of Troms and the municipality of Kåfjord, Norway has made extensive and successful efforts to sustain and revive Sami culture and heritage. The original 1996 Framework Plan was focused on the development of basic competencies through play and informal learning. The 2006 revision kept that focus, expanding it so it explicitly included the children's right to active participation. The latest revision in 2011 aligned the plan to the purpose clause in the legislation, stating that purpose of kindergartens is to "safeguard the children's need for care and play, and promote learning and formation as a basis for an all-round development", as well as to promote democracy and equality, and to allow children to exercise their right to participate according to their age and abilities (Ministry of Education and

Research, 2011a). The Framework Plan already sets out that kindergarten and primary school should co-operate to smoothen transitions, a point which local standards, such as in Oslo, may complement with more concrete requirements (City of Oslo, 2013a). A new revision of the Framework Plan is planned for 2016. The goal for the revision is to align the contents with the purpose clause, as well as improve the design so it better meets the needs of younger children as well as the 5-year-olds transitioning to primary education.

The current Framework Plan for Kindergartens identifies seven broad learning areas as key parts of the learning environment in kindergartens, which are also intended to support children's transition to primary school: 1) communication, language and text; 2) body, movement and health; 3) art, culture and creativity; 4) nature, environment and technology; 5) ethics, religion and philosophy; 6) local community and society; and 7) numbers, spaces and shapes (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a). The framework does not impose instructions on the implementation of the learning areas nor does it specify activities to be performed. The ministry has issued guidance booklets written by experts to help the implementation of the learning areas and broader issues for pedagogical work in kindergartens. Each kindergarten is free to adapt the learning areas to the interests of individual children, the group, and the local community. Each kindergarten is required to develop an annual plan outlining the way the learning areas are adapted to educational activities. The annual plan also needs to include objectives for children's participation, how these are to be attained and how work is to be evaluated (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Thus, regulations are in place to facilitate the implementation and use of the Framework Plan.

Challenges

Not all structural standards are adequate and precise enough

Although it is positive that structural quality standards exist, not all the standards seem to be appropriate. Findings from the OECD *Starting Strong III* report suggest that staff-child ratios, requirements for qualified staff and group size matter greatly for the quality of learning environment and interactions. They are thus often a precondition to ensure process quality (OECD, 2012). However, structural standards are often not precise enough, for instance the regulation for the general staffing in kindergartens only specifies that staffing must be sufficient for staff to be able to carry on satisfactory pedagogical activity – without specifying what "satisfactory" means (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In Norway, the recommendations for staff qualification levels are rather loose, and in practice many groups seem to operate without qualified teachers. Qualification levels for specific functions in ECEC settings are not further detailed.

The size of the groups is not regulated and varies with children's age. It used to be a common standard to have 9 children in groups under 3 years of age and 18 in groups over 3, but recently these numbers have shown a tendency to increase. In 2011, one-third of children over 3 years of age were in groups of at least 19 children, and more than three-quarters of children under 3 years were in groups with at least 10 children, while 20% of 1-year-olds and 27% of 2-year-olds were in groups with 15 children or more (Moafi and Bjørkli, 2011, as cited in Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). It is unclear whether this development represents a challenge for children's development or not, but it reinforces the importance of guaranteeing highly qualified staff to lead such groups (OECD, 2012)

Different studies worldwide have provided evidence for the association between staff-child ratios and process quality (CQC-Team, 1995; Blau, 1999). A number of scientists argue that the number of children per qualified pedagogical staff member should not exceed three to four in groups of children younger than 3 years, or seven children in groups aged 3 to 5 years to reduce perceived stress and enable individual meaningful pedagogical interactions with the children (see Viernickel and Schwarz, 2009; or similar recommendations of the British Ofsted set out in Department of Education, 2014). International recommendations vary with regard to the qualifications of the staff being accounted for in staff-child ratios, depending on the country context. However, recommendations usually assume sufficient training for the pedagogical work with children, but not necessarily a teaching qualification. Studies on interactions between caregivers and children under the age of 3 years old have shown that caregivers act more sensitive, friendly and developmentally appropriate towards children if they are responsible for smaller amounts of children. Their behaviour is characterised by more positive affect and warmth, and at the same time they exercise less control and provide more variable and appropriate play materials (Vandell, 1996; NICHD ECCRN, 2000; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Howes et al., 1995). Howes and colleagues report improvements of global process quality and interactions between caregivers and children when the child-staff ratio was reduced from 6:1 to 4:1 for children aged 12 months and younger and from 8:1 to 6:1 for children aged 1 to 3. As discussed previously, in Norway the pedagogue-to-child ratio is 1:7-9 for under-3-year-olds and 1:14-18 children for the older age bracket, with pedagogues being either qualified kindergarten teachers or staff with other pedagogical education. Beyond the general requirement that staffing must suffice to carry on satisfactory pedagogical activity, unqualified assistants are not considered in the regulation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

The regulations regarding monitoring of staff quality and process quality are insufficient

While a number of structural quality standards are very well defined and monitored, staff quality and process quality are not. The individual kindergarten settings and teachers/staff have a great deal of freedom in translating the curriculum and expectations into practice and adapting it to the specific circumstances of the setting and the individual child. In theory this allows individual development and the adaptation of learning opportunities for individual children. However, it needs highly qualified staff and thorough documentation of children's development and learning to create high-quality learning opportunities this way. As the qualifications of a majority of staff are considered to be low, this free approach cannot be expected to lead to good or best practice. Thus, regulations regarding the monitoring of staff and process quality are all the more important to support them.

Policy recommendations

Revise structural quality standards to ensure high-quality staff-child interactions

Structural quality standards should further define ratios for the number of children per qualified staff, i.e. not only staff with kindergarten teacher education, but also those holding other diplomas such as trained childcare and youth workers. Research on the effects of different group sizes and ratios should be carried out to make an informed decision about the benefits of investing in a certain number of staff in general– or possibly a more limited number with higher qualifications from universities as well as

vocational education and training, while keeping expenditure in check. No group should be cared for solely by unqualified staff. We strongly recommend mandating some level of minimum pedagogical training for any staff involved in the direct pedagogical work, which could be phased in for existing staff. Relevant examples include Alberta (Canada) and Ireland which are discussed below. It also seems desirable to consider whether each kindergarten could be staffed with at least one kindergarten teacher who has completed the existing 30 ECTS training for pedagogical leaders and/or head teachers, or with a master's degree relevant for early childhood pedagogy. Several countries such as Sweden, France or Portugal, have already introduced a requirement for preschool teachers to hold a degree equivalent to a master's (Oberhuemer et al, 2010).

The Alberta Child Care Licensing Regulation in Canada, for instance, requires that all primary staff working directly with children in licensed day-care programmes are certified and hold at minimum a Child Development Assistant Certificate. Staff without certification have six months after the start of their employment to obtain it and until then are not allowed to have unsupervised access to children. There are various options to obtain the certificate: the Child Care Orientation Course, sponsored by the Alberta Government; a 45-hour college- or university-level course related to child development; a combination of courses on early learning and childcare which are offered through Alberta high schools; or the Alberta Step Ahead Family Day Home Training or the Canadian Family Child Care Training Program (Alberta Human Services, 2015).

In Ireland, in order to raise staff qualification levels as a measure to improve overall quality of services, a minimum qualification has been introduced for all staff working with children in early years services. Currently being phased in, it will be applied to all existing services by September 2015. To support staff in meeting the required qualifications, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs supplied EUR 0.9 million to support training in 2013, and EUR 1.5 million each in 2014 and 2015. These subsidies are intended exclusively for increasing the skills of unqualified staff currently working with children and cannot be used for training beyond the minimum requirement (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, n.d.).

Professionals with specific functions (e.g. professionals working with children under three, language education experts, professionals working with children with special needs) need specific mandatory qualifications. Norway should therefore further detail and monitor qualification levels for specific functions in ECEC settings. For example, professionals who are working with children under three years of age should need to prove a minimum number of hours of training or participation in professional development programmes for work with that age group. In Germany, for example, a national initiative was recently launched to improve the quality of language education for under-threes in Germany. Additional language experts were appointed in 4 000 preschool centres. Language experts needed to prove that they have taken additional training in language education or in working with under-threes. The pay of these experts was adjusted accordingly (Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, n.d.).

Set requirements for monitoring and developing process quality

To ensure that quality regulations are effective, monitoring of process quality needs to be mandatory (see next section). Such requirements may be internal, external, as in the UK, or a combination of internal and external evaluation, as in Berlin, Germany (see Box 3.2). In the UK the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and

Skills (Ofsted) is in charge of inspecting and regulating services that provide care, education and skills for children and learners all ages (see also Box 3.4). Continuous professional development and training is crucial for raising and maintaining process quality. Requirements for continuous professional development and training are needed. This may be defined in terms of a minimum number of hours of training per person per year. If a system of external consulting is implemented, requirements for the uptake of external consulting resources should also be fixed. This may be defined in terms of the budget the provider needs to invest per year. Finally, requirements for the documentation of pedagogical work and children's development are highly recommended. Any meaningful pedagogical work draws on comprehensive knowledge of the child and its development.

Box 3.2 Mandatory monitoring for quality enhancement in Berlin, Germany

After having created the mandatory Berlin Educational Programme (Berliner Bildungsprogramm) in 2004 (revised in 2014), the state of Berlin also intended to use the curriculum as the basis for a framework to develop ECEC quality and create an inspiring learning environment for the children. To this end, a taskforce consisting of the Berlin Ministry for Education, Youth and Science and ECEC providers' associations drew up an agreement to develop the quality of all publicly funded ECEC centres in Berlin to guarantee their permanent quality development based on the curriculum. For this purpose a system of regular quality monitoring in ECEC centres has been established – the only one in Germany to date. The aim is 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.

Since 2005, Berlin has provided material and a toolbox for internal evaluation which 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 materials; and 8) strengthening participation and democratic values in ECEC practice. However, ECEC providers and their teams are free to also choose other methods and tools if these reflect the relevant quality criteria of the curriculum. Moreover, they ought to involve all pedagogues who work in the setting. The facilitation of the internal evaluation usually lies with the manager of the setting. The internal evaluation process is supported by 200 specially trained external facilitators. However, the main actors of the internal evaluation are the pedagogues of the ECEC setting. They discuss the level of quality that has been achieved, consider perspectives of further quality development and agree on the next steps. ECEC providers bear the costs of the evaluation and they are informed about the results and the measures which have been agreed upon. They are obliged to draw up and implement plans for further education of staff in light of the evaluation results.

Box 3.2 Mandatory monitoring for quality enhancement in Berlin, Germany (continued)

As of 2010, all Berlin ECEC centres undergo an external evaluation every five years. External evaluators provide ECEC settings with professional feedback on their pedagogical work. Feedback is given on each of the eight quality areas. Assessments have to consider the perspectives of the ECEC provider, management, individual staff and parents. To this end, evaluators use interview methods or written questionnaires, and include observations, for example on structural aspects of the building, on material resources and especially on interactions between children and staff. After the analysis of the data, the ECEC provider and staff receive face-to-face feedback and a written evaluation report. The report includes statements on the level of quality achieved, on areas where improvement is needed and it includes concrete recommendations for further quality development in the setting. Results are not made publically available unless the ECEC provider decides to do so. No sanctions and/or rewards are involved. Nor are there rankings of ECEC settings. ECEC centres can choose between nine accredited evaluation agencies and commission them with the evaluation. Agencies apply different evaluation methods and tools.

The whole monitoring system is co-ordinated by the Berlin Institute for Quality Development in Kindergarten (Berliner Kita-Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung, or BeKi) on behalf of the state of Berlin. BeKi is responsible for the training of multipliers and facilitators of internal evaluation, the accreditation and co-ordination of the evaluation agencies, as well as the aggregation of data and results of the evaluation process for steering purposes.

Source: this box was amended from a draft case study submitted by the German Youth Institute, edited by the OECD Secretariat and published in OECD (2015).

Monitoring

In addition to the country policy review on early childhood education and care, Norway also participated in the 2013 Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development of the OECD ECEC Network, whose results are analysed in *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* (OECD, forthcoming). This section includes key findings for Norway from this report. Here, monitoring is understood as "[t]he process of systematically tracking aspects of ECEC services, staff, child development and curriculum implementation, with a view towards data collection, accountability and/or enhancing effectiveness and/or quality" (OECD, forthcoming).

Monitoring and evaluating quality is a key component of enhancing quality in ECEC systems and services. It can identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems and settings, create incentives to improve quality standards and staff practices, and assist staff in furthering children's well-being, development and learning. Research on the effects of monitoring in ECEC indicate some positive effects of monitoring on staff behaviour and practices as well their implementation of curricula and frameworks, which can positively affect child development and outcomes. Monitoring can enable and inform a broader improvement of service quality (Litjens, 2013). While it is difficult to identify causality in this process, continuous and regular monitoring practices have been found to be particularly beneficial to the improvement of staff practices within settings. Reliable and valid assessment instruments are key for comparative and data collection purposes to

inform policies and larger measures, be it to foster staff quality or child development (OECD, forthcoming). In Norway, monitoring the quality of ECEC services is financed through a combination of funding from municipalities and kindergartens' own budget for carrying out self-assessment (OECD, forthcoming).

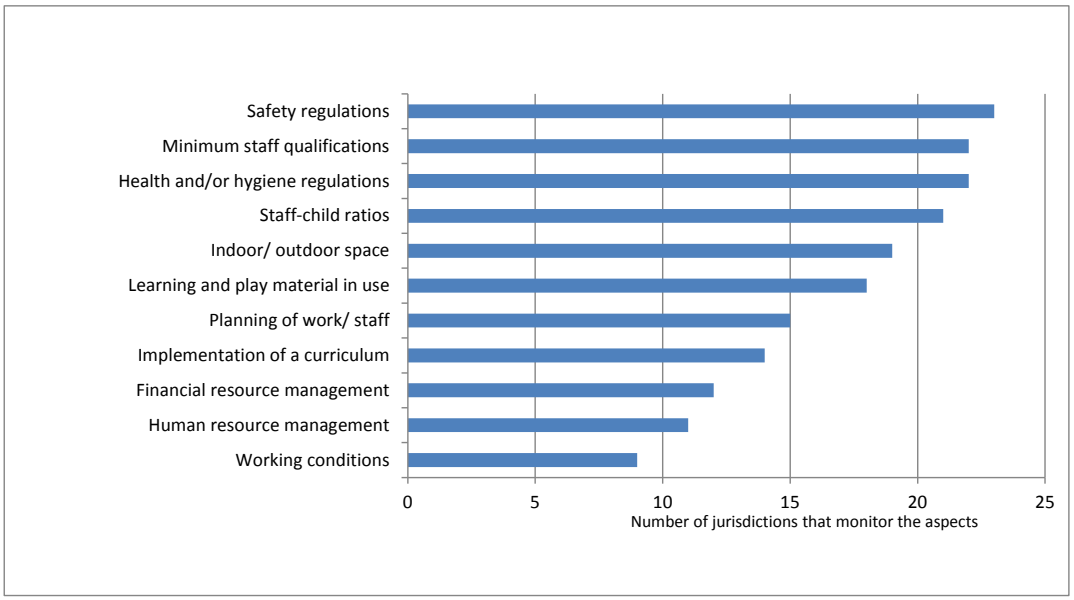
Kindergartens in Norway are monitored internally and externally. Internal monitoring refers to "[a]ny monitoring practices conducted by evaluators/assessors/ actors who are part of the ECEC service that is being monitored. These can include self-evaluations of staff working in ECEC settings (teachers, managers, care givers, etc.) or peer reviews conducted by internal staff (among colleagues in the same setting)" (OECD, forthcoming). External monitoring refers to "[a]ny 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…" (OECD, forthcoming). External monitoring is conducted in all ECEC setting types (ordinary, family and open kindergartens). Since the first Child Day Care Act in 1975, external monitoring, which includes inspections and supervisory activities, has been a shared responsibility of municipalities and county governors. The responsibilities of municipalities, as defined in the Kindergarten Act of 2005, are to oversee and monitor the kindergartens, while county governors oversee the municipalities as kindergarten authorities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005; 2015). According to Section 16 of the Kindergarten Act, the municipality has the power to order rectification, i.e. require kindergartens to address their shortcomings, as well as temporary or permanent closure of settings in case of inadequate or unlawful conditions. Decisions regarding potential closure must be sent to the county governor and can be appealed. The county governors also provide guidance regarding monitoring and inspections to municipalities and owners of kindergartens. County governors may in their oversight of municipalities also inspect individual kindergartens to monitor that municipalities are fulfilling their legal role. The review team was informed that a law proposal maintaining the municipalities' responsibility for monitoring and inspections, while giving further rights for inspection to the county governors is under way (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Three main areas of monitoring can be distinguished: monitoring service quality, monitoring staff quality and monitoring child development and outcomes (OECD, forthcoming).

Monitoring service quality

Norway monitors service quality in kindergartens for multiple reasons. In general, for all government levels, monitoring service quality is conducted for accountability purposes, to ensure compliance with minimum quality standards, inform policy making and inform the general public, for example through collecting and sharing data at the national level. Reasons such as improving the level of service quality and staff performance, and identifying the learning needs of staff are usually more pronounced at municipal level and within kindergartens themselves. In addition, Norway monitors service quality to enhance children's development and identify children's learning needs. This variety of reasons is not common in all countries, as illustrated in Figure 3.2 (OECD, forthcoming).

Figure 3.2 Service quality aspects inspected in childcare and nursery settings (or integrated settings for countries with an integrated system)



Note: Aspects of service quality monitored are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions monitoring these aspects.

Source: Table 3.3 OECD Network on ECEC's "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November, 2013.

Service quality refers to the level of quality at setting/provision level, i.e. kindergartens, and refers to all the features that are regarded by a country/region/local authority to be of importance for children's environments and experiences that are presumed to be beneficial to their well-being. Monitoring service quality can cover a broad range of issues, from regulation compliance to curriculum implementation. Some countries also consider teacher or caregiver behaviour and practices, and the staff-child interactions which form the core of children's ECEC experiences, as part of service quality. In the literature this is referred to as process quality (NCES, 1997; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012). In Norway, as in many other countries, service quality is mostly focused on structural quality, involving structural features of settings such as space, group size and other standards or regulations, e.g. safety standards, the use of a curriculum or staff characteristics.

As in many other OECD countries, inspections are the most common external monitoring practice used in Norway. They were used in all 24 jurisdictions covered by the OECD (forthcoming) study. The tools evaluators use during inspections or other monitoring practices are not prescribed but can be chosen by the agency responsible for monitoring (which is at municipal level in Norway). Hence, the tools vary between municipalities. Commonly used tools for inspections are surveys taken by inspectors, checklists, interviews with kindergarten staff and managers, results of parent surveys, and analysis of kindergartens' internal documentation (OECD, forthcoming). Parent surveys are a widespread practice of monitoring service quality externally, in Norway, but also internationally (OECD, forthcoming). The annual plans for each kindergarten form the basis of the external monitoring of the setting by the municipality.

The results from inspections are written into reports that, in case of unsatisfactory results, include deadlines for rectification as well as requests for reports about compliance (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Poor results on service quality can potentially lead to closure. However, this is rare, as the legal documents do not include too many specific requirements. The results of monitoring service quality are available upon request to municipalities, but a municipality can also decide to make them public.

In Norway, the head teacher and pedagogical leaders are in charge of the internal assessment in individual kindergartens, while the kindergarten's parents' council and co-ordinating committee, consisting of parents and staff, can exercise influence over the assessment process (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). Internal monitoring of service quality, staff quality and child development and well-being are usually done on a regular basis through continuous observations and assessments, albeit not in a nationally prescribed manner. Norwegian kindergartens are expected to develop an annual plan for their setting, which supports staff in organising the pedagogical activities in a conscious and specified manner. Often, municipalities set out a common template for preparing such plans. Kindergartens themselves have free choice in defining the scope and actual monitoring practices for internal assessments, which are usually based on local circumstances and needs, but are required to take children's views into account according to the Framework Plan (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015; OECD, forthcoming).

Monitoring staff quality

Staff quality concerns not only their qualifications, but also their collaboration with each other and with parents, actual pedagogical practices and interactions with children – so-called process quality – that matter greatly for children's development and well-being (OECD, forthcoming). In most countries, monitoring staff quality and performance is aligned with the monitoring procedures of service quality (OECD, forthcoming). Accordingly, the purpose of monitoring staff quality are almost the same as for monitoring service quality in Norway. In addition to the purposes mentioned above for service quality, monitoring of staff quality also seeks to identify learning needs for staff. Another difference is that sanctions may be attached to poor monitoring results. In many countries, monitoring of staff quality is usually carried out through inspections, parental surveys, self-evaluation practices such as surveys, questionnaires and rating scales as well as peer reviews by other professionals. In Norway, only external inspections and internal self-assessments are common (OECD, forthcoming).

Monitoring child development and well-being

The purposes of monitoring child development are identical with those for monitoring staff quality (OECD, forthcoming). Monitoring of child development and well-being is usually done on a regular basis through continuous observations and assessments, albeit not in a nationally prescribed manner. It is usually only conducted internally and there are no specific tools required nationally for this purpose. Rather, the Framework Plan sets out that the well-being and development of the group and individual children should be observed and assessed on an ongoing basis. Municipalities and individual kindergartens can choose what practices and tools to use. The individual kindergartens are free to choose the tools and methods used for ongoing assessment (OECD, forthcoming). As a result, the tools or instruments that are used for child development assessments vary across municipalities, and are often designed with a focus on language development as part of a holistic assessment of the child's learning. According to a national survey, 95% of kindergartens use observation as their method for assessment and 56% use a tool called

ALLE MED (Everybody In). Other widespread methods are "tales of practice" and "pedagogical documentation", with example tools called TRAS (Early Record of Language Development), reported to be used in 90% of kindergartens. TRAS is, for instance, prescribed for municipal kindergartens in Oslo. In addition, more than one-third of kindergartens report using interviews with children as a method for assessing child development (OECD, 2013).

Strengths

National guidelines for inspection available

The Directorate for Education and Training has national responsibility for monitoring quality and has issued national guidelines on inspection for municipalities and county governor's offices (the latter being published in 2013) to help them fulfil their monitoring roles (see also Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The guidelines set out how the municipalities are required to plan and conduct the inspections. County governors may also provide networking opportunities for municipalities to improve and inform their monitoring (OECD, forthcoming). This reflects that monitoring quality is increasingly being seen as important and being strengthened in Norway's ECEC sector. Insights from the visits of the review team suggested that these guidelines are being used and appreciated on the ground.

The internal assessment in all kindergartens is legally regulated through the Framework Plan for Kindergartens. The Framework Plan states that each kindergarten must develop an annual plan which has the purpose to guide the internal self-assessment of curriculum implementation, staff quality, service quality and child development. The annual plan should also contain information about the curriculum, as well as how the assessment will be implemented. According to the Framework Plan it is a responsibility of each kindergarten to conduct an ongoing assessment of children's well-being and development. The head teacher is in charge of developing this annual plan, while consulting with the parents' council and the co-ordinating committee, and taking in consideration the children's views (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011a). Research underlines the importance of family engagement in monitoring service quality practices (Edwards et al., 2008; Hidalgo, Siu and Epstein, 2002; Weiss et al., 2008). The involvement of families is also found to be important for children's educational success (Hidalgo, Siu and Epstein., 2002).

There are no specific rules governing the use of specific monitoring tools in settings. As a means to help guide kindergartens in developing the pedagogical work, 11 booklets with different themes were developed and distributed to all Norwegian kindergartens as part of the implementation of the Framework Plan. Booklets have been developed on themes such as multicultural pedagogy, language and language environment, gender equality and pedagogy for children under three.

Many local monitoring practices in place for different aspects of quality

All kindergartens are required to monitor staff and service quality in their self-evaluation practice and may adapt their tools to local needs. In contrast with more than half of all countries contributing to *Starting Strong IV* (OECD, forthcoming), in Norway head teachers and pedagogical leaders, who act as internal evaluators, are trained to carry out internal assessments as part of their kindergarten teacher education. In most countries, internal evaluators are not usually specifically trained to undertake internal assessments.

The results from internal assessments on service and staff quality, curriculum implementation, and child development and well-being, are used for development of the following year's annual plan and are usually shared with parents and employees as part of the internal quality improvement process (OECD, forthcoming). Research suggests that the training in monitoring practices as well as the sharing and use of results is key to achieving a positive effect on quality (Litjens, 2013).

Norway, like ten other jurisdictions participating in the recent OECD survey for *Starting Strong IV*, monitors children's views in some or all settings (OECD, forthcoming). According to a national sample survey, 95% of kindergartens use observations, with narrative assessments such as pedagogical documentation and learning stories also being common, to monitor children's views. So-called "child interviews" or "systematic dialogues" have also become more common and are used in more than one-third of Norwegian kindergartens. Children's views can provide valuable insights into the quality of service provision and their experience of ECEC (see Clark, 2005; McNaughton, 2003; OECD, forthcoming; Sorin, 2003). To support the systematic observation done by teachers and staff, a diversity of tools are available and in use based on local decisions and needs (OECD, forthcoming). Many kindergartens in Norway use portfolios as a record of each child's life and growth (e.g. children's photos, drawings and narratives), which may be used to facilitate discussions with parents and help smooth their transition from kindergarten to primary by sharing the information about the child (OECD, forthcoming)

Increased awareness of the importance of monitoring process quality

While structural quality indicators continue to be dominant, there appears to be an increased awareness of the importance of monitoring a wider range of quality aspects in ECEC in Norway, such as staff-child interactions and children's experiences. For instance, the BePro research project is designed to yield a process quality assessment instrument that can be used for Norwegian kindergartens. This new emphasis on a broader understanding of quality is also reflected in Box 3.3, discussing the city of Bergen's efforts to enhance quality and provide mentoring and training to kindergarten staff as part of the monitoring system. Across Norway, observational tools to assess child development have become more widespread, especially to identify children at risk (see also OECD, forthcoming). Thus, there appear to be an increasing number of examples of attempts to use monitoring quality practices at municipal and kindergarten level to inform staff practices and ensure continuous improvement for children and staff.

In addition, Statistics Norway regularly collects structural data on ECEC staff, working conditions and workforce supply which are used for evidence-based policy making. Standardised annual reports from all kindergartens indicate the number of staff and their qualifications. Based on the collected information, policy areas in need of improvement or challenges in the ECEC sector are identified. The collection of this data indicated a need for more qualified staff and, more specifically, which regions have difficulties with workforce supply. This data collection feeds back into policy: for instance, a general action plan for the recruitment of kindergarten teachers in targeted regions was launched by the Ministry of Education and Research for 2007-11 (OECD, forthcoming).

Box 3.3 Monitoring quality in the city of Bergen

In Bergen, four main types of monitoring are employed to ensure service quality in kindergartens: 1) systematic revision; 2) thematic revision; 3) inspection monitoring; and 4) area assessment. Systematic revision is based on web-collected internal controls and assessments of a setting, with the assessment announced in advance. Thematic revision refers to the monitoring of specific topics covered in the Kindergarten Act and Framework Plan. Recent topics for thematic review of kindergartens in Bergen include children's and parents' participation and involvement. Thematic reviews are typically announced in advance. Inspection monitoring may be unannounced and is usually based on specific incidents, violations of legal requirements, or indications thereof. Area assessment refers to a data-driven assessment of the ECEC sector at large and this includes assessing data on funding, costs, participation etc. against the legal requirements for the operation of kindergartens. The review team learnt that inspections for structural quality take place three times a year, but that monitoring process quality still poses a problem, with a coverage of around 40 kindergartens per year. Parents are being involved in a preparatory meeting ahead of such inspections. Currently the system regarding language assessments of children is risk-based, this means observational measures are being applied if there are concerns about a child's development.

With the aim of being able to more effectively apply monitoring as a tool for improving service quality in kindergartens, the Bergen municipality has stipulated standards for good practice. These standards have been defined through a project by Storbynettverket (Network of Large Cities), which is partly funded by national authorities. The defined standards distinguish four different levels of quality through description of practice. The standards are based on topics covered in the Framework Plan for Kindergartens. When monitoring and reviewing kindergartens, Bergen municipality applies these standards. Municipal staff informed the review team that the key challenge for carrying out those responsibilities were the limited resources available for monitoring

To address the challenges arising from fulfilling the dual role of monitoring authority and kindergarten owner, there are two separate teams: one in charge of monitoring all kindergartens and one working on general quality development of municipal kindergartens in Bergen. The Together for Quality initiative (*Sammen for kvalitet*) guides work on quality enhancement in Bergen municipality. For the period 2013 to 2016 the initiative is focusing on kindergartens' work on 1) language as a key competency, 2) mathematical competence; and 3) pedagogical relation-competencies. Measures employed under the initiative include the provision of guidance documents, mentoring, training, and mapping staff competences in order to identify professional development needs. Staff in municipal kindergartens engage in self-evaluations on their competence levels through a formal mapping document, for each staff member and for the staff of a kindergarten as a whole.

Note: parts of this box were amended from a case study prepared by the Directorate for Education in Norway, to be published in OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Challenges

Dual role of municipalities create a conflict of interest and can hamper independent inspections

Municipalities are the local kindergarten authorities. They supervise kindergartens and order that inadequate or unlawful conditions are corrected. In case of non-compliance they may close settings temporarily or permanently. At the same time, municipalities themselves own about half of Norway's kindergartens. This means that for the

kindergartens they own, they play a dual role, of both supervisory authorities and owners. In 2012, in 47% of municipal authorities a single unit had both responsibilities (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

The current organisation of responsibilities cannot ensure objective inspections of kindergarten quality and places the municipalities in challenging and sometimes difficult positions. Since half of all municipalities have fewer than 5 000 inhabitants, many local authorities also lack qualified staff to supervise kindergartens. As a result, inspections to ensure compliance with regulations may take place with double standards, with municipal and private kindergartens inspected in different ways. Meanwhile monitoring practices geared to continuous improvement may lack the capacity and expertise needed to provide kindergartens and their staff with the advice and support needed to foster quality. *White Paper* No. 24 (2012-2013) addressed the question of transferring the supervisory responsibility for individual settings to the counties to tackle this potential conflict of interest. A proposed law that would maintain the municipalities' responsibility for monitoring and inspections, but at the same time permit county governors to inspect kindergartens directly, has been on a public hearing from November 2014 to January 2015 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). It is still too early to assess the implications of this law.

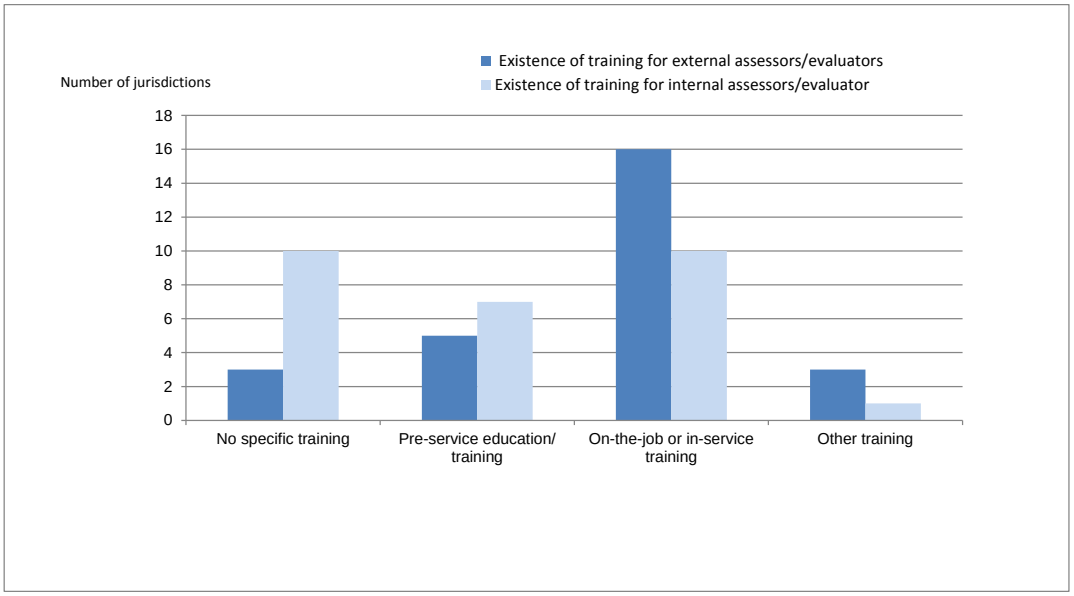
Lack of common understanding regarding the goals, scope and procedures for monitoring

The visits and background documents reveal a lack of common understanding regarding various aspects of monitoring at the local level, such as the goals of monitoring (e.g. compliance versus continuous quality improvement), the scope and contents of monitoring (e.g. service quality, staff quality, child development), the procedures (e.g. peer reviews versus inspections) and the frequency of monitoring (e.g. continuous procedure for all settings or risk-based, sampled inspections). Discussions during the visits revealed that monitoring practices to foster quality are often only able to ensure minimal regulation compliance. The objectivity and independence as well as the capacity and expertise of those in charge of ensuring accountability at the municipal level may often not suffice for the task. In Oslo, for instance, districts do a risk analysis and carry out their supervisory activity on that basis, which suggests a focus on ensuring minimum standards rather than on quality development. Discussions with the authors of a study on municipalities' role as kindergarten authorities (Rambøll, 2012) suggested that many municipalities do not perceive their dual role as an issue.

This is particularly problematic since Norway's municipal external inspectors are not required by law to receive a minimum training in monitoring. This is in contrast to most countries where specific on-the-job training is provided for external assessors and evaluators (see Figure 3.3). Inspectors typically work in teams of two. Kindergarten teachers and other municipal employees with administration and management training are most commonly in charge of conducting evaluations. Research suggests that evaluators need to be trained and monitored to apply monitoring practices and tools and ensure they have properly understood them, and to ensure that their practices result in consistent and objective judgements (Waterman et al., 2012). Thus, especially in municipalities with small administrations, inspectors may neither have the objectivity to inspect for accountability, nor the expertise to provide detailed feedback for quality improvement. While Norway does not require any pre-service training for its external evaluators, pre-service education and training is a legal obligation for internal assessors and evaluators, which are the head teachers and pedagogical leaders in ECEC settings. Kindergarten

teachers are trained to carry out internal assessments as part of their kindergarten teacher education (OECD, forthcoming).

Figure 3.3 Training provision for early childhood education and care assessors and evaluators



Note: Information on the existence of training for external assessors/evaluators is based on 23 countries and jurisdictions; information on the existence of training for internal assessors/evaluator is based on 22 countries and jurisdictions.

Source: OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris: Table 2.5.

Monitoring practices are insufficient to assess process quality and capture children's development and well-being

In Norway, the frequency of external monitoring of service quality is not regulated by law, so it also varies between municipalities (OECD, forthcoming). In 2013 68% of public, 58% of private kindergartens and 69% of family kindergartens were inspected (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). There are large differences between municipalities, with some smaller ones that rarely or never conduct inspections. In one municipality, for instance, the review team was informed that individual kindergartens are only being inspected every four years. External assessors who carry out inspections in Norway are free to choose their instruments and these vary widely between regions. As discussed above, kindergartens' internal documentation, interviews, checklists, staff surveys and the results of parental satisfactions surveys are typically taken into account (OECD, forthcoming). Thus, while the Directorate collects a breadth of national data the information used and collected for municipal inspections do not provide a regular assessment of process quality and can hardly be aggregated to map and compare quality across the country and identify good practices.

While peer reviews of staff quality are common, the instruments to observe process quality within kindergartens do not seem to be suitable to assess process quality in a valid and reliable way and ensure that the intentions of the Framework Plan are implemented in practice. With respect to monitoring educational effectiveness, i.e. the outcomes of

kindergarten provision, the Norwegian system relies primarily on parental satisfaction surveys These are sometimes carried out for a representative national sample and often conducted locally by municipalities or kindergartens themselves (OECD, forthcoming). Such surveys can, for instance be found in Oslo municipality, where they indicate high levels of satisfaction as the review team learnt during the visit. Parental surveys provide important information on parent satisfaction as users of ECEC. However, the reliability and validity of these surveys as quality indicators do not appear to have been investigated in Norway. There are various perspectives on quality of ECEC (Katz, 1993) and while the parent's perspective is certainly an important one, it does not necessarily represent the child's perspective or what is beneficial for child's well-being and development. For example, parents may be especially satisfied with long and flexible opening hours of centres, but research has provided evidence that long hours in ECEC settings may be harmful for children when they are very young. Parents have only very limited ability to observe important aspects of process quality, especially the nature of interactions between children and preschool teachers and may rely on better observable but less relevant aspects (Mahony and Hayes, 2006). Furthermore, parent satisfaction surveys have a tendency to yield high ratings (parents say they are very satisfied), for instance due to social desirability. Validated tools for monitoring process quality exist, but appear to be limited to the use in research rather than monitoring.

Norwegian kindergartens monitor child development and well-being, which can be of crucial importance to inform staff practices and target support to children. Tools can be locally developed or designed by experts, but not all of them are validated. In 2011, an expert panel looked into eight of the most commonly used tools for language mapping and observation and warned against the use of any single tool for use across different settings and contexts. The usefulness of the TRAS assessment remains unclear, even though it has been updated since then. The level of detail it achieves may be insufficient to provide staff with an accurate picture of how children are doing and whether targeted interventions are needed. The panel also raised concerns about the appropriate use and adequate understanding of the different tools and their shortcomings, which seems plausible given the shortages of qualified staff in kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011b).

Policy recommendations

Strengthen and establish institutions to ensure independence and objectivity of external monitoring

In the short term, forming networks of municipalities for joint, independent inspections and to exchange experience can help to support accountability. Small municipalities should receive incentives to co-operate and establish shared supervisory bodies with other local authorities. This approach promises to create synergies both for supervision and for provision, e.g. by creating an institutional template that can be locally adopted. Discussions in Troms county suggested that there are already some networks for local municipalities in place for inspection purposes. The sharing of good practices across municipalities and providing additional professional development opportunities for supervisory staff in local authorities would allow them to at least partly compensate for the lack of kindergarten-related qualifications. At the same time reward and incentive systems (such as support staff, certificates or monetary incentives) for municipalities and providers should be introduced to increase monitoring activities. Here, Norway can build

on the existing resource groups of some municipalities that were mentioned during the review visit.

In the longer term, Norway should establish an independent monitoring and oversight system (which could be through the Directorate for Education and Training, universities and university colleges, county governors or specialised institutions) and make the results available for different groups of stakeholders. Since the Directorate is already responsible for data collection regarding the sector and currently delivers it through online portals, and develops the structural quality indicators covered, it may be best positioned for such a role. The organisation and activities of Ofsted in England may be a good example (see Box 3.4).·Pursuing the plans to move supervisory authority to the county governors' offices in the medium term, as discussed in *White Paper* No. 24 (2012–2013), would also address the conflict of interest arising from municipalities' dual role as supervisors and owners.

Box 3.4 External monitoring in England: The example of Ofsted

In England, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) monitors the service quality in early years settings. Its scope of monitoring service quality is extensive. It includes monitoring staff-child ratios to ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Based on the findings, Ofsted may determine that providers must observe a better staff-child ratio than the minimum requirement, to ensure the safety and welfare of children. Ofsted also monitors the available space for children to play and rest to ensure compliance to legal requirements, and the staff qualifications to ensure staff are trained to an appropriate level. In addition, inspections focus on safety and welfare requirements which are designed to help providers create high-quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. Ofsted also monitors curriculum implementation to ensure the learning and development requirement for children is delivered timely and appropriately

An evaluation report (Matthews and Sammons, 2004) on the impact of inspections carried out over the course of 10 years since Ofsted's inception in 1992 with the aim of improving education and care services, revealed that Ofsted has little direct control over this aim, except regarding statutory provisions for identifying and monitoring schools and regulatory control of childcare. Findings indicate that well-managed providers and those that cause concern are the most likely to benefit from inspections. A more recent study (Ofsted, 2013) presented evidence from inspection and regulatory visits undertaken from 2012-13. This study provides a more detailed look at the quality of early years settings in England. Early years settings are inspected by Ofsted against the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the statutory framework that sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The latest report of inspection results found that quality in this sector has been rising, and 78% of providers on the Early Years Register are now good or outstanding, which is the highest proportion since the register was established. The report mentions that Ofsted has contributed to the rising quality of providers on the Early Years Register by being more rigorous, and indicates that inspection against the EYFS requirements has contributed to an overall increase in-service quality.

Sources: Litjens, I. (2013), *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* (ECEC), Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris; OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris; OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Enhance understanding among stakeholders of the different purposes of monitoring and the different methods, procedures and consequences of those different monitoring purposes

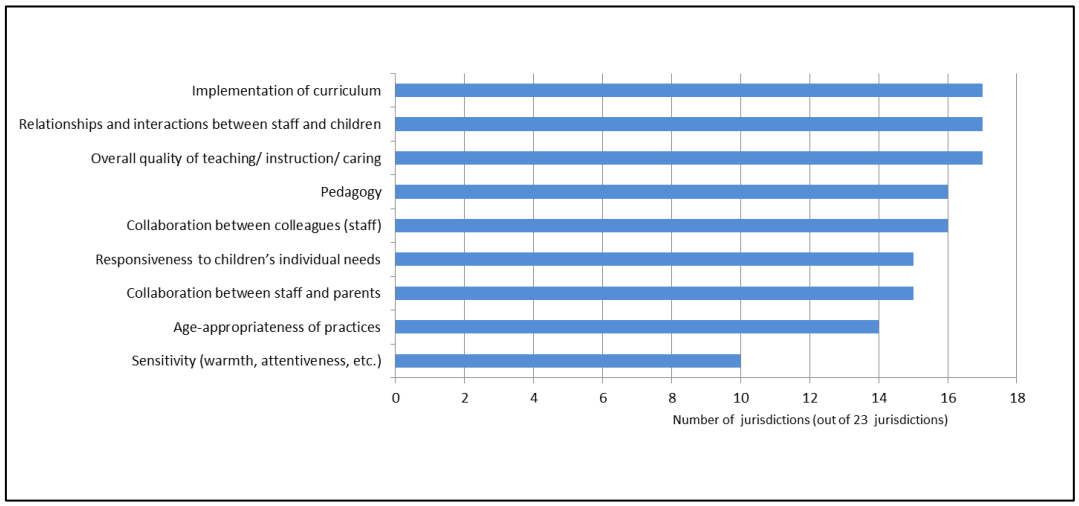
The goals of monitoring (e.g. compliance versus continuous quality improvement) as well as the scope and contents (service quality, process quality, staff quality, child development) need to be defined clearly and made available through guidelines and regulations to all involved partners. Various means may help to create a common understanding of the scope and contents of monitoring. Representatives of all relevant partners need to be involved in the process of defining and creating the describing materials. The organisation of the monitoring system needs to be reformed so that municipalities are released from their dual role of provider and monitoring organisations. This may be achieved by implementing an independent supervision system (see Box 3.4).

If monitoring is to give providers incentives to improve quality, policy makers may consider publishing results to inform parents' choice. Certificates and accreditation procedures to honour high quality may also be an effective way to inform parents and other interested groups. These procedures may have a quality-enhancing effect in themselves. An OECD (forthcoming) study found that in at least 16 out of 22 jurisdictions, monitoring service quality results have to be made public, including in countries such as Sweden, New Zealand and Scotland (UK). This allows parents to be better informed about the quality of ECEC settings and hold providers accountable (OECD, forthcoming).

Strengthen procedures to monitor process quality

The monitoring procedures need to be adjusted and further developed in a way that monitoring serves to enhance pedagogical quality, especially process quality. This can be done in various ways. Following examples of countries such as Germany (see Berlin example in Box 3.3), Australia (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, 2012) and Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2013), process quality indicators and self-assessment methods using these indicators can be used. Figure 3.4 shows that many countries already monitor process quality as part of monitoring staff quality. Research has produced evidence on several indicators that are associated with observed process quality, for example the amount of team development procedures and professional development (e.g. Anders et al., 2012). In addition, instruments based on observation and peer reviews have been developed, for example in the area of language education. When preschool settings are asked to develop/adjust monitoring and quality management procedures, this process needs to be professionally supported by quality experts. At the same time holistic child assessments aligned with the framework plan to inform teachers' practice could be implemented.

Figure 3.4 Process quality aspects monitored in pre-primary education (or integrated settings)



Note: Areas/aspects monitored are ranked in descending order of the number of jurisdictions that cited these areas/aspects.

Source: Table 4.6 OECD Network on ECEC's "Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development", November, 2013.

Norway should consider measures to facilitate the use of reliable and valid instruments for the monitoring of process quality through municipalities, allowing useful feedback to kindergartens and staff as well as comparison across settings and municipalities. For instance, instruments such as ECERS-R, ECERS-E, CLASS (Box 3.5) and the sustained shared thinking and emotional well-being (SSTEW) which are knowledge- and evidence-based and have been show to relate to children's development could be valuable (Harms et al., 1998; Sylva et al., 2003; Kluczniok and Roßbach, 2014; Pianta et al., 2008; Siraj, Kingston and Melhuish, 2015). These instruments need to be used by well-trained, external observers to ensure the reliability, objectivity and validity of the assessments. For this Norway can use information from a project funded by the National Research Council that will study the effect of kindergartens on children's well-being and learning ongoing from 2012-17. It is intended to be used 1) to provide information on process quality in Norwegian kindergartens and 2) to develop a tool for quality assessment for kindergartens (OECD, forthcoming).

Box 3.5 The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in the US Head Start programme

As required by the Head Start Act, the Office of Head Start (OHS) in the United States needs to use a reliable and valid observational instrument which is research based and assesses classroom quality together with teacher-child interaction in its monitoring review process, as well as in the system for designation renewal. OHS assesses teacher-child interactions with the help of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) as they consider the research and developmental theory that CLASS's dimensions are based on as the most important factors in fostering children's learning and development and because CLASS is validated through more than 10 years of research in educational settings. CLASS is used to monitoring programmes and can also be used to promote professional development.

CLASS is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in centre-based preschool classrooms. Evidence suggests that improving children's academic achievement and social skill development requires attention to the nature and quality of teacher-student interactions; and enhancing the effectiveness of teacher-student interactions requires knowing how to assess them. The CLASS observation tool can help teachers and schools improve the quality of their interactions with students. CLASS includes three domains or categories of teacher-child interactions that support children's learning and development: 1) emotional support (whether teachers foster a positive classroom climate); 2) classroom organisation (whether consistent schedules and routines exist as well as useful guidance strategies); and 3) instructional support (how language and cognitive development is promoted by teachers during the implementation of the curriculum). Within each domain are dimensions which capture more specific details about teachers' interactions with children. Following observations, observers rate each dimension on a 7-point scale, from low (score of 1-2) to high (score of 6-7).The quality level of grantees is identified through OHS CLASS reviews carried out through certified observers.

For professional development, the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) develops staff development tools that aim at improving preschool classroom teaching practices through promoting environments and staff-child interactions that are supporting early learning. Aligned with CLASS dimensions, NCQTL resources are intended to assist Head Start Programs in organising and managing classrooms, to give them emotional and social support and to serve as examples for instructional interactions and materials that can be useful for promoting the development of children's skills. Early childhood education specialists are supporting Head Start Programs locally. They are certified CLASS trainers and can train local Head Start Program staff to become a CLASS observer. The ECE Specialists can, in addition, inform about CLASS and conduct observations together with Mentor Coaches and Education Managers, followed by tailored training and technical assistance to the Head Start Program.

Sources: Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (2011); Litjens, I. (2013), *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris; Head Start (n.d), Head Start website, http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc, accessed 1 April 2015; University of Virginia/Curry School of Education (n.d.), "National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)", Curry School of Education website, http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/project/NCQTL, accessed 1 April 2015.

Research

At the end of 1990s, reports into research on ECEC in Norway emphasised issues such as modest funding and lack of longitudinal studies (OECD, 1999). Both of these have been successfully addressed since.

In terms of research focus, a strategy adopted by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2008 emphasised the need to address questions relating to quality, in contrast to previously emphasised topics of accessibility and distribution. In addition, in 2010 the Norwegian Agency for Quality in Education (NOKUT) called in its evaluation of the preschool teacher education for increasing resources dedicated to research in ECEC sector with the purpose of strengthening the link between theory and practice. A new strategy adopted by the ministry in 2014 pushed these ideas forward, by outlining the research goals of strengthening the expert communities, raising quality and relevance of research, stimulating innovation and closer co-operation with research communities of Scandinavia and Europe, and facilitating the use of research results in governance, administration and practice. There has already been significant progress towards fulfilling these goals, as witnessed by the increased numbers of longitudinal studies, as well as large-scale dissemination projects (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Internally the Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for all national statistics concerning kindergartens, which since 2012 is published as a chapter in the *Utdanningsspeilet* (*The Education Mirror*) that covers all levels of educations. The Directorate also issues a publication for kindergartens called VETUVA ("Do you know?"), which is based on Scandinavian research, and aims at inspiring research-based dialogue on quality on local level. In addition to large longitudinal studies, following the policy changes, a number of qualitative studies have been published which consider the effects of the changes and assess their impact on the quality of kindergarten education (e.g. Pettersvold and Aagre, 2008; Jansen and Tholin, 2006).

Strengths

Increase in research funding and activities

Public expenditure on ECEC increased from 0.8% of GDP in 1998 to 1.2% in 2009 (OECD, 2014b). Part of this increase is a strong growth in public financing of research, which only between 2007 and 2009 increased from 36 million to NOK 107 million. The transfer of responsibility for ECEC from Ministry of Children and Family Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research in 2006 meant that ECEC field was included into PraksisFoU, a programme for practice-based research and development operating between 2005 and 2009, and promoting co-operation between teacher education institutions and owners of kindergartens and schools (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). This programme was replaced in 2010 by a new programme for practice-oriented educational research, PRAKUT. Funding of educational research in Norway is largely channelled through universities and partly by the National Research Council of Norway, which in 2009 established another long-term educational research programme, Utdannig 2020 (Education 2020), aiming to strengthen educational research of high scientific merit and enhance knowledge base for policy makers, public administration, and professional education and practice. In 2014 Utdanning 2020 and PRAKUT were merged into one large programme called FINNUT ("Find Out"), which provides the current framework for funding of educational research (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The Directorate and the Ministry also fund educational research directly.

The high increase of research funding and activities provides a better framework for the development of knowledge-based practice than before. It can be expected that the research activities will produce relevant findings on the quality and effectiveness of ECEC very soon. This new knowledge will support the development of means to raise the

quality of ECEC. The expansion of research and research infrastructure will hopefully further lead to the dissemination of evidence-based knowledge to the ECEC sector.

Increase in longitudinal studies on the effects of ECEC on children's development

The background report of 1998 mentioned the challenge of inspiring Norwegian researchers to do longitudinal studies on kindergartens' effect on children's development in order to improve programmes and quality. Since then, this challenge has been addressed and the number of longitudinal studies has increased in the past decade.

There are several ongoing longitudinal studies in Norway. Better Provisions for Norway's Children in ECEC (BePro, 2012-2017) focuses on effects of quality in kindergartens on children's development and well-being. It is inspired by the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project in the United Kingdom and also draws on the Dutch Consortium for Child Care (NCKO) that studies the effects and levels of childcare quality in the Netherlands (Moser, 2014). Both are excellent references. One of the goals of BePro is developing a tool for national evaluation of process quality. This study is a good example, making use of established instruments such as the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, revised edition (ECERS-R) and four curricular subscales extension to the ECERS (ECERS-E) and care giver interaction profiles, to assess process quality of ECEC. Assessing children's social development is the focus of the Behavioural Outlook Norwegian Developmental Study (BONDS; 2006-ongoing). BONDS involves 130 kindergartens and over 1150 children. The Stavanger project is following 1000 children from age 2 to 10. The Language and Learning Study, a part of the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study, a large-scale project started in 1999 and following 100 000 mothers and children, follows about 4 000 children currently aged 5, and will continue following them into school, with a next survey planned to be carried out when they are 8 years old. Norway is also participating in European Union's project on Curriculum Quality Analysis and Impact Review of European ECEC (CARE), which involves 11 countries and aims at developing an evidence-based and culturally sensitive framework for ECEC (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The researcher representing Norway in the CARE consortium is leading on the work on developing the framework of ECEC quality for the study, aiming at integrating the different perspectives on ECEC quality within the EU.

This increase in number of longitudinal studies is paralleled with an increase in publications. Since 2007 the Scandinavian countries have been co-operating on a dissemination project which resulted in creation of Nordic Base of ECEC (NB-ECEC), a database collecting peer-reviewed ECEC related publications from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The number of publications from Norway in NB-ECEC increased from 13 studies included in 2006, to 47 in 2012, making up 57% of all studies included in the database that year (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). There is also an increase in the number of studies published in English, from 2% in 2006 to 29% in 2012. The database includes data from all publications, extracted and coded in English, according to the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) tool for education studies (Moser, 2014).

Challenges

Research and practice are not sufficiently linked

Innovative approaches need to be developed to strengthen the link between research and practice. The challenge consists of aligning research programmes to the needs of the practitioners and to ensure good information about research results as a basis for development of practice, quality enhancement and policy development. Otherwise, there is a danger of researchers and societies losing interest in investing in research areas if research does not produce needed and wanted results.

The review team was informed that the National Knowledge Centre for Education has so far focused mainly on schooling, but is set to become more involved in kindergarten research. Through institutions such as the national centres and initiatives to increase staff qualifications there is already a link between teacher education, staff training and research. However, so far this is not sufficient to ensure that, for instance staff internal monitoring practices take state-of-the-art research into account and use reliable instruments. Furthermore, small municipalities with limited kindergarten-related administrative staff and no local universities may lack the capacity to use research to inform their important role in ensuring quality in the sector, until findings become more easily accessible.

Much research has limited generalisability and there are still few findings on process quality from large-scale research using reliable and valid instruments

The ECEC system itself generates data primarily on structural quality rather than process quality. There is still little research on process quality and research has not even provided basic descriptive data for Norway as a whole on process quality. Even though more major research projects are under way, much research has been conducted only with qualitative methods or relatively small samples of children, staff and centres. This limits the generalisability of the research. There is a lack of research evidence on quality using reliable and valid instruments to observe and assess process quality. The BePro project described above promises to fill this gap, but so far no results have been published.

Policy recommendations

Strengthen the work of the Directorate in disseminating research among stakeholders and co-operation with research centres

It might be useful to convene a committee to advise the national government on research priorities and designs. Such a committee could consist of researchers from higher education, municipal officials responsible for kindergartens and other stakeholders. As an example, in the United States a national committee was assembled in 1993 to advise the federal government on Head Start quality and expansion as well as to recommend possibilities for expansion and further improvement (Paulsell et al., 2000; Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion, 1993). Another committee was assembled in the late 1990s to advise on research and evaluation of Head Start (Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation, 2012). A technical workgroup was created to advise the US Department of Education on the National Household Education Survey, which obtained information from families on educational experiences, including ECEC experiences.

Policy makers should further strengthen the role of the Directorate for Education and Training or the National Knowledge Centre for Education to collect, translate, and publicise international and Norwegian research on ECEC quality with particular attention to replicated findings and their implications for policy and practice. The goal would be to transfer this information on early childhood education and care into useful formats for policy makers, practitioners and the public in order to strengthen the link between theory and practice.

Strengthen and utilise larger-scale research projects on process quality

Funding for research on kindergarten should be sustained or even increased and existing research initiatives should be used as a stepping stone. Direct national funding should continue to be provided to encourage research, especially on process quality and on children's experiences in kindergarten, resulting in broadly representative information on kindergartens in Norway. It would be beneficial to fund a competitive grants programme to conduct research on kindergarten quality. BePro is a good example to follow. Studies from other countries focusing on different aspects of quality and children's development may also inspire the development of further research projects. As well as the UK EPPE study and the work of the Dutch NCKO studieschildcare, which served as a model for the BePro study, a number of additional models from other studies are available including the Netherlands and Germany (e.g. BiKS, NUBBEK, NEPS, evaluation of the governmental initiative Early Chances). The Dutch examples can provide lessons on how to make the most of studies such as BePro and link them back to practice.

The Dutch NCKO conducts large-scale studies on the process and structural quality of day-care centres and playgroups. To assess process quality, elements and scales from the ITERS-R and the ECERS-R have been used and adapted to the Dutch context. This is complemented with observational rating scales developed by the NCKO to assess the quality of interactions. Data on structural quality is collected through a survey and complemented with observations. This study is repeated every few years and the aggregated results are published in reports. In addition, NCKO has developed a "quality monitor", an instrument which childcare centres can use to assess their own quality. The results provide an overview of the weaker and stronger points of a provision, with the goal of enhancing the level of quality. The quality monitor assesses the interactions of all pedagogical staff and the quality of the care environment, as well as structural aspects of the provision, and makes use of checklists and rating scores. Special training modules have been developed to train staff and managers of childcare centres in using the monitor. There is also training available on analysing and improving staff-child interactions which are found to be important for early child development (Gevers Deynoot-Schaub et al., 2014; NCKO, 2015). For Norway, it will be key to ensure that BePro will not only produce relevant research findings, but also feed back into practice and help staff to improve their everyday practices.

For Norway, it will be important to require that grant proposals set out a rigorous sampling methodology that provides both a representative sample and an adequate sample size to address policy makers' questions regarding the distribution of quality (how does it compare between urban and rural communities, between immigrant and non-immigrant children) and the sources of variation in quality. This is currently done for BePro. Examples of questions that might be considered priorities for studies could be the following:

- What are the contributions of kindergarten to children's well-being, learning and development at each age, and how do these contributions vary in association with different (observation of process; ratio and other features; parent, child, and teacher ratings) measures of quality?
- How do staff allocate their time and in what ways does this vary by staff and programme features and location?
- What practices are most effective in improving the linguistic development of minority-language children?

Process quality can be studied from multiple perspectives including those provided by standardised instruments such as the ITERS, ECERS-R, ECERS-E, and CLASS, teachers' perspectives, and children's perspectives (which may require mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, such as interviews, observations and surveys). It is recommended that standardised instruments are used for more studies as that would allow for easier comparison across studies, as well as internationally. The use of identical instruments for monitoring quality and for national research offers the advantage of direct comparability of monitoring outcomes with national standards once established.

Discussion and conclusion

The ECEC system of Norway has undergone meaningful changes over the last few years, and efforts have been made to achieve better conditions for high-quality kindergarten provision with regard to workforce, standards and regulation, monitoring, and research. A number of strengths can be identified, which can be summarised as follows. First of all, Norway has put great efforts and introduced national strategies to increase the number and qualification level of kindergarten teachers and assistants. Second, the Norwegian system is – compared to other countries – highly regulated with regard to structural quality standards. Furthermore national guidelines for quality inspections exist. Finally, it can be underlined that Norway has invested in increasing research funds and activities. Well-defined research is the basis for any development of best practice.

However, a number of meaningful challenges can also be identified. One of the most striking aspects is the problem of the shortage of qualified staff. The high share of unqualified staff risks undermining process quality. Professional competencies which are acquired through training and professional development are a necessary prerequisite for pedagogical staff to plan and implement meaningful, high-quality pedagogical interactions. Thus, overcoming this problem needs to be a priority policy area. A number of means may be effective to raise the number of qualified kindergarten teachers. The pay level of qualified kindergarten teachers needs to be raised, and working conditions of kindergarten teachers need to be aligned with the working conditions of primary school teachers, with regards to pay but also to other framing conditions, such as time for preparation and documentation. At the same time, strategies need to be developed and implemented to raise the qualification levels of un- or underqualified staff in practice. This may be done through individualised professional development programmes.

With regard to standards, regulation and monitoring, the main aspect that needs to be approached is the focus on structural quality, with standards, regulation and monitoring not well suited to control, maintain and raise process quality. Standards and regulations need to cover important prerequisites of high process quality such as regular participation in further training and professional development programmes. The monitoring system

needs to be set up in a way that reliable, objective and valid instruments to assess process quality are used. Monitoring procedures need to be made more objective by redefining the roles of the different stakeholders and partners – especially the role of the municipalities. It would be valuable to establish independent organisations to plan and carry out inspections, as well as procedures to inform parents and practice about the outcomes of inspections.

The lack of focus on process quality has been reflected in Norwegian ECEC research for a long time. Large-scale research projects using international study models have been funded and started. But more research programmes on the nature and effects of ECEC quality in Norway are needed to develop evidence-based ways to promote the quality of ECEC.

Note

[1] Converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) USD for private consumption.

References

Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation, (2012), *Final Report*, Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/eval_final.pdf.

Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion (1993), *Creating a 21st Century Head Start: Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, www.bmcc.edu/headstart/21century/index.html.

Alberta Human Services (2015), *Child Care Staff Certification Guide*, Alberta Government, http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/child-care-staff-certification-guide.pdf.

Alberta Human Services (2014), *Alberta Child Care Accreditation Funding Program: Guide for Licensed Day Care Programs*, NCN 1382, Alberta Government, http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/accreditation-guide-daycare-programs.pdf.

Anders, Y. (forthcoming), *Literature Review on Pedagogy*, OECD, Paris.

Anders, Y. (2013). "Stichwort: Auswirkungen frühkindlicher, institutioneller Bildung und Betreuung" [Keyword: Effects of early childhood institutional education and care], *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, Vol.16(2), pp. 237-275.

Anders, Y. and H.-G. Rossbach (in press), "Preschool teachers' sensitivity to mathematics in children's play: The influence of math-related school experiences, emotional attitudes and pedagogical beliefs", *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*.

Anders, Y. et al. (2012), "Home and preschool learning environments and their relations to the development of early numeracy skills", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 27(2), pp. 231-244.

Aukrust, V.B. and V. Rydland (2011), "Preschool classroom conversations as long-term resources for second language and literacy acquisition", *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 32(4), pp. 198-207.

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (2012), National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Instrument, Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Assessment%20and%20Rating/1-NQS_Assessment%20and%20Rating%20Instrument_120522_%20FINAL-1.pdf.

Blau, D.M. (1999), "The effect of childcare characteristics on child development", *Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 34(4), pp. 786-822.

BUPL (2009), "About BUPL", BUPL website, www.bupl.dk/english?opendocument, accessed 2 April 2015.

Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (2011), *Measuring and Improving Teacher-Student Interactions in PK-12 Settings to Enhance Students' Learning*, Charlottesville, VA.

Chambers, B. et al. (2010), "Effective early childhood education programs: A systematic review", Best Evidence Encyclopedia website, Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, www.bestevidence.org/word/early_child_ed_Apr_15_2010.pdf.

City of Oslo(2013a), *The Oslo Standard for Cooperation and Coherence between Kindergarten and School*, City of Oslo.

City of Oslo (2013b), *The Oslo Standard for Systematic Follow-up of Children's Language Development in Kindergarten*, City of Oslo.

Clark, A. (2005), "Ways of seeing: Using the Mosaic approach to listen to young children's perspectives", in A. Clark, A.T. Kjørholt and P. Moss (eds.), *Beyond Listening: Children's Perspectives on Early Childhood Services*, Policy Press, University of Bristol, UK, pp. 29-49.

CQC-Team (Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team) (1995), *Cost Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers*, Department of Economics, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy, University of Colorado, Denver.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014), "Minister Fitzgerald announces new 'Learner Fund' for childcare staff seeking qualifications", Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, www.dcya.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=3126.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (n.d.), "Minimum childcare qualifications", Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, http://dcya.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fchildcare%2Fqualifications.htm, accessed: 2 April 2015.

Department of Education (2014), *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five*, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014__with_clarification_note.pdf.

Department of Education and Skills (2013), *Final Report on the Development and Implementation of the Síolta Quality Assurance Programme, Early Years Education Policy Unit*, Dublin, http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/S%C3%ADolta-Final-Report.pdf.

ECE Taskforce Secretariat (2010), *1: Overview of the New Zealand Early Childhood Education (ECE) System: Introductory Briefing*, ECE Taskforce, www.taskforce.ece.govt.nz/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/1-Overview-of-the-NZ-Early-Childhood-Education-System.pdf.

Edwards, C.P., S.M. Sheridan and L. Knoche (2008), "Parent engagement and school readiness: Parent-child relationships in early learning", *Faculty Publications*, Paper 60, Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Elliott, A. (2006), "Early childhood education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children", *Australian Education Review*, No. 50, Australian Council for Educational Research.

European Commission (2008), *Explaining the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning*, Office for Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/brochexp_en.pdf.

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (n.d.), "Schwerpunkt-Kitas Sprache & Integration", Frühe Chancen website, www.fruehe-chancen.de/informationen-fuer/schwerpunkt-kitas-sprache-integration/schwerpunkt-kitas/, accessed: 7 May 2015..

Gevers Deynoot-Schaub, M.J.J.M et al. (2014), *Pedagogische Kwaliteit van de Opvang voor 2- tot 4-Jarigen in Nederlandse Peuterspeelzalen in 2013*, NCKO (Nederlands Consortium Kinderopvang Onderzoek), www.kinderopvangonderzoek.nl/drupal/sites/default/files/field/textfile/Kwaliteitspeiling%20peuterspeelzalen%20NCKO%20DEF%2023-9-2014_1.pdf.

Harms, T., R.M. Clifford and D. Cryer (1998), *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, Revised Edition, Teachers College Press, NY.

Head Start (n.d), Head Start website, http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc, accessed 1 April 2015.

Hense, M. (ed.) (2010) *Fachberatung für Kindertageseinrichtungen: Erfolgschancen Erhöhen*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Hidalgo, N.M., S. Siu and J.K. Epstein (2002), "Research on families, schools, and communities. A multicultural perspective", in J.A. Banks and C.A. Banks (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, Macmillan, New York, NY.

Howes, C., E.W. Smith and E. Galinsky (1995), *The Florida Child Care Quality Improvement Study: Interim Report*, Families and Work Institute, New York, NY.

Jansen, T.T. and K.R. Tholin (2006), "Se lyset sammen er bra! Hvordan kan et etter- og videreutdanningsprogram bidra til at førskolelærere bedre ser, hører og forstå børn?", *Rapport*, 13/06 Tønsberg, Høgskolen i Vestfold.

Johansen, B. (2009), "Førskolelærere om barns oppholdstid i barnehagen", *Nordisk Barnehageforskning*, Vol. 2(3), pp. 99-113.

Johnson, S.P. (2008), "*The status of male teachers in public education today*", *Education Policy Brief*, Vol. 6 (4), Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP), Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, http://www.ceep.indiana.edu/projects/PDF/PB_V6N4_Winter_2008_EPB.pdf.

Katz, L. (1993), "Multiple perspectives on the quality of early childhood programmes", *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Vol. 1(2), pp. 5-9.

Kluczniok, K. and H.-G. Roßbach (2014), "Conceptions of educational quality for kindergartens", *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, Vol. 17(6) Supplement, pp. 145-158.

Kuger, S. and K. Kluczniok (2008), "Prozessqualität im Kindergarten: Konzept, Umsetzung und Befunde" [Process quality in kindergarten: Concept, implementation, and results], in H.-G. Roßbach and H.-B. Blossfeld (eds.), *Frühpädagogische Förderung in Institutionen: Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, pp.159-178.

Kuger, S., K. Pflieger and H.-G. Roßbach (2006), *Einschätzskalen der Zielkindbeobachtung (Forschungsversion)*, BiKS-Forschergruppe der Universität, Bamberg.

Lamb-Parker, F. et al. (2001), "Understanding barriers to parent involvement in Head Start: A research-community partnership", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol.16, pp. 35-51.

Litjens, I. (2013), *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris.

MacNaughton, G. (2003), "Eclipsing voice in research with young children", *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, Vol. 11(1), pp. 36-43.

Matthews, P. and P. Sammons (2004), *Improvement Through Inspection: An Evaluation of the Impact of Ofsted's Work*, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education), London.

Meade, A. et al. (2012), *Early Childhood Teachers' Work in Education and Care Centres: Profiles, Patterns and Purposes*, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, Wellington, https://ecnz.ac.nz/assets/RelatedDocuments/Early-Childhood-Teachers-work-in-education-and-carecentres-web-090812.pdf.

Ministry of Education and Research (2015) *Country Background Report for the OECD ECEC Review*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Education and Research (2011a), *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Education and Research (2011b), *Vurdering av Verktøy som Brukes til å Kartlegge Barns Språk i Norske Barnehager* [Assessment of tools used to map children's language in Norwegian kindergartens], Ministry of Education and Research, www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/barnehager/rapporter-og-planer/ekspertgruppe/vurdering_av_verktoy_2011.pdf.

Ministry of Education and Research (2005), *Act No. 64 of June 2005 Relating to Kindergartens (the Kindergarten Act)*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

Ministry of Education New Zealand (2015), "The number of qualified teachers your ECE service needs", Ministry of Education website, www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/running-an-ece-service/employing-ece-staff/the-number-of-qualified-teachers-your-ece-service-needs/.

Ministry of Education New Zealand (2013), "Annual ECE Census: Report 2013", Education Counts website, www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education/annual-ece-summary-reports.

Molin Bruce, B. (2014), "Short presentation of GLØD – partnership in Oslo and Akershus", PowerPoint slides, presented at the roundtable of OECD Country Policy Review for Norway in Oslo.

Moser, T., and M. Martinsen (2012), "De yngste barns barnehage. Kvalitetsaspekter i tilbudet for ett- og toåringer", in Rønning, F. *et al.* (eds.). *FoU i praksis 2011*, Tapir Akademisk Forlag, Trondheim, p. 317-329.

Moser, T. (2014), "Brief research and development presentation", presentation at the roundtable of OECD Country Policy Review for Norway in Oslo, 11 June 2014, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children (2012), 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial & Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs, NAEYC, NY, www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/NAEYC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Standards%2010_2012.pdf.

NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) (1997), "Measuring the quality of program environments in Head Start and other early childhood programs: A review and recommendations for future research", *Working Paper Series*, No. 97-36, NCES, Washington, DC.

Naumann, I. et al. (2013), *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision: International Review of Policy, Delivery and Funding Final Report*, Scottish Government Social Research, www.nls.uk/scotgov/2013/9781782564164.pdf.

NCKO (Nederlands Consortium Kinderopvang Onderzoek) (2015), NCKO website, www.kinderopvangonderzoek.nl/drupal/, accessed 10 April 2015.

NICHD ECCRN (Early Child Care Research Network) (2002a), "Child-care structure → process → outcome: Direct and indirect effects of child care quality on young children's development", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 13(3), pp.199-206.

NICHD ECCRN (2002b), "Early child care and children's development prior to school entry: Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care", *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 39(1), pp. 133-164.

NICHD ECCRN (2000), "Characteristics and quality of child care for toddlers and pre-schoolers", *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 4(3), pp.116-135.

Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer and M.J. Neuman (2010), *Professionals in Early Childhood Education and Care Systems: European Profiles and Perspectives*, Barbara Budrich, Leverkusen.

OECD (forthcoming), *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2015), *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*, OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226159-en.

OECD (2014a), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en.

OECD (2014b), *OECD Family Database* (database), OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm.

OECD (2014c), "School improvement through strong leadership", *Teaching in Focus*, No. 7, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxv7lg2wpr7-en.

OECD (2013), *Online Survey on Monitoring Quality in Early Learning and Development*, Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2009), *Improving School Leadership: The Toolkit*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264083509-en.

OECD (2006), *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264035461-en.

OECD (1999), *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Norway*, OECD Country Note, OECD, Paris www.oecd.org/norway/2534885.pdf.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) (2011), *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11*, Ofsted, London.

Ohnson, S.P. (2008), "The status of male teachers in public education today", *Education Policy Brief*, Vol. 6(4), Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP), http://ceep.indiana.edu/projects/PDF/PB_V6N4_Winter_2008_EPB.pdf.

Paulsell, K. et al. (2000), *Leading the Way: Characteristics and Early Experiences of Selected Early Head Start Programs. Volume III: Program Implementation*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/leading_the_way_vol_3_program_implementation.pdf.

Pettersvold, M. and W. Aagre (2008), "Rett til en barnehageplass – med krav til god kvalitet? En evaluering av Ski kommunes helhetlige strategi for full barnehagedekning", *Rapport*, 2/2008, Tønsberg, Høgskolen i Vestfold, Avdeling for lærerutdanning, http://hdl.handle.net/11250/149113.

Phillipsen, L.C. et al. (1997), "The prediction of process quality from structural features of child care", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 12(3), pp. 281-303.

Pianta, R., K. La Paro and B.K. Hamre (2008), *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*, Paul H. Brookes, Baltimore, MD.

Pianta, R. et al. (2005), "Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions?", *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol/ 9(3), pp. 144-159.

Pramling, N. and I. Pramling Samuelsson (eds.) (2011), *Educational Encounters: Nordic Studies in Early Childhood Didactics*, Springer, Dordrecht.

Pre-COOL (n.d.), Pre-COOL flyer, http://www.pre-cool.nl/pdf-bestanden/Flyer%20Engels.pdf, accessed 10 April 2015.

Rambøll (2012), Undersøkelse om kommuner som barnehagemyndighet. Sluttrapport desember 2012 til Utdanningsdirektoratet.

Reynolds, A.J. et al. (1996), "Cognitive and family-support mediators of preschool intervention: A confirmatory analysis", *Child Development*, Vol. 67(3), pp. 1119-1140.

Sandberg, A. and I. Pramling-Samuelsson (2005), "An interview study of gender difference in preschool teachers' attitudes toward children's play", *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 32(5), pp. 297-305.

Sheridan, S. (2009), "Discerning pedagogical quality in preschool", *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 53(3), pp. 245-261.

Sheridan, S., I. Pramling Samuelsson and E. Johansson (eds.) (2009), "Barns tidiga lärande. En tvärsnittsstudie av förskolan som miljö för barns lärande" [Children's early learning: A cross-sectional study of preschool as an environment for children's learning], *Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences*, No. 284, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg, Sweden.

Siraj, I., D. Kingston, and E. Melhuish (2015), *Assessing Quality in early Childhood Education and Care: Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-Being (SSTEW) for 2-5-Year-Olds Provision*, Trentham Books, London.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2010), "A focus on pedagogy: Case studies of effective practice", in K. Sylva et al. (eds.), *Early Childhood Matters: Evidence from the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Project*, Routledge, London, pp. 149-165.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. et al. (2002), "Researching effective pedagogy in the early years", *Research Brief*, No. 356, Department for Education and Skills, www.ioe.ac.uk/REPEY_research_brief.pdf.

Sorin, R. (2003), "Research with children: A rich glimpse into the world of childhood", *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, Vol. 28(1), pp. 31-35.

Steinnes, G. S. and P. Haug (2013), "Consequences of staff composition in Norwegian kindergarten", *Nordic Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Vol. 6, pp.1-13.

Swedish Ministry of Education and Research (2011), "Status and pedagogical task of preschool to be strengthened", Fact Sheet, U11.009, Government Offices of Sweden, http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/17/21/24/dd5b1a52.pdf.

Sylva, K., I. Siraj-Blatchford and B. Taggart (2003), *Assessing Quality in the Early Years: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS-E): Four Curricular Subscales*, Trentham Books, Stoke-on-Trent.

Tollefsrud, M. and B. Molin Bruce (2014), "Education and Training Raising Competence in the Sector by the Oslo and Akershus Example", presentation at the roundtable of OECD Country Policy Review for Norway in Oslo, 11 June 2014, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

University of Virginia/Curry School of Education (n.d.), "National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL)", Curry School of Education website, http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/project/NCQTL, accessed 1 April 2015.

Vandell, D.L. (1996), "Characteristics of infant child care: Factors contributing to positive caregiving: NICHD early child care research network", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 11, pp. 269-306.

Vangsnes, V., N. T. G. Økland and R. Krumsvik (2012), "Computer games in pre-school settings: Didactical challenges when commercial educational computer games are implemented in kindergartens", *Computers & Education*, Vol. 58(4), pp. 1138-1148.

Vannebo, B. I. and K. Å Gotvassli (2014), "Early childhood educational and care institutions as learning organizations", *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, Vol. 3(1), pp. 27-50.

Veen, A. et al. (2014), "Pedagogische kwaliteit gemeten in peuterspeelzalen", *Report*, No. 920, project number 40592, Kohnstamm Instituut, Amsterdam, www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/rapporten/2014/11/26/pedagogische-kwaliteit-gemeten-in-peuterspeelzalen.html.

Viernickel, S. and S. Schwarz (2009), Expertise: Schlüssel zu guter Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung - Wissenschaftliche Parameter zur Bestimmung der pädagogischen Fachkraft-Kind-Relation, Berlin, GEW, http://www.gew.de/Binaries/Binary47887/expertise_gute_betreuung_web2.pdf.

Waterman, C., P.A. McDermott, J.W. Fantuzzo and J.L. Gadsden (2012), "The matter of assessor variance in early childhood education – Or, whose score is it anyway?", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp 46-54.

Weiss, H., M. Caspe and M.E. Lopez (2008), "Family involvement promotes success for young children: A review of recent research", in M.M. Cornish (ed.), *Promising Practices for Partnering with Families in the Early Years*, Information Age Publishing, Plymouth.

Youchien (2015), 公益財団法人全日本私立幼稚園幼児教育研究機構[Research Institution for Early Childhood Education by All Japanese Private Kindergarten (public incorporated foundation)], https://youchien.com.

Annex 3.1

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programmes (APECP)*	United States	0-12 years	X	X	Early education; school age programs; family childcare homes	Determine strengths of a program; identify possible areas of improvement; accreditation/ licensing	Observational checklist	Categories: scheduling, learning environment, safety and health, curriculum approaches, individualising, interacting Centre-based: programme management, personnel, food service, physical facility, programme development Family childcare practices: interacting, learning environment, health and nutrition, safety, outdoor environment, professional responsibilities	Quality Assist	www.qassist.com/pages/research-and-evaluation

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Context, Input, Process, Output framework (CIPO referentiekader)	Belgium - Flemish Community	3-6 years (and beyond, used for settings provinding education to older children too)	X		Pre-primary education for children 3 to 6 years, primary school	Inspecting the quality of a setting, to analyse whether settings meet the needs of children/students, and provide recommendations and advise on how to improve	Checklist (list of indicators the inspection checks)	Contextual information such as the building and administration	Education Inspectorate of the Flemish Community of Belgium (Onderwijsinspectie)	www.ond.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/opdrachten/doorlichten/extra-info.htm
								Inputs such as staff characteristics and characteristics of children/students		
								Process: general policies; staff policies; logistical policies; and educational policies		
								Outputs such as satisfaction of the child, staff and other partners/stakeholders, and child well-being and development		
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition (ECERS-R)*	United States, Canada, various European, Asian, and South American countries	Usually 2.5-5 years	X		Kindergarten, preschool, childcare classrooms	Observe process quality; information; data collection; make informed choices for programme improvement	Observation using a scale (43 items with 7 subscales)	Space and furnishhings	Harms, Clifford, Cryer /Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI)	www.ersi.info

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
								Personal care routines		
							Scale can be used for: supervision by programme directors and programme improvement, monitoring by agency staff, staff-self-assessment, teacher training	Language-reasoning		
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Third Edition (ECERS-3)*	United States, Canada, various European, Asian, and South American countries	Usually 3-5 years	X		Kindergarten, preschool, childcare classrooms	Observe process quality, with regard to teacher-child interaction and environmental provisions; information; data collection; make informed choices for programme improvement	Observation using a scale (35 items with 6 subscales) Scale can be used for: supervision by programme directors and programme improvement, monitoring by agency staff, staff-self-assessment, teacher training and the Quality Rating and Improvement Systems in the United States	Space and Furnishings Personal Care Routines Language and Literacy Learning Activities Interaction Programme Structure	Harms, Clifford, Cryer / Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI)	www.ersi.info

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)*	Ohio	3-8 years	X		Early childhood classrooms, K-3 classrooms (pre-K; K-3)	Assess teaching practices, quality of classroom environment; improve programmes and professional development	Classroom observation, interview with teacher(s) (done by supervisors, principals, researchers, programme directors, administrators and/or teachers)	Curriculum, books and book reading, languague environment, classroom structure, print and early writing	Brookes Publishing	www.brookespublishing.com/resource-center/screening-and-assessment/ellco/
ECERS-E: The Four Curricular Subscales Extension to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)*	United Kingdom, United States	3-5 years	X		Preschool education and care	Provide additional information on curricular provision in the care settings	Observation using a scale	Literacy, mathematics, science and environment, diversity	Kathy Sylva, Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Brenda Taggart / Teachers' College Press	www.ecersuk.org/4.html

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Effective Early Learning Programme (EEL)*	United Kingdom, Portugal, the Netherlands Australia	0-7 years	X		Early childhood settings (with an educational commitment)	Evaluate and compare quality of early learning; improvement of quality and effectiveness of learning (Four stages: Evaluation, Action Planning, Imrpovement, Reflection)	Self-evaluation including: observation of children and adults, documentary analysis, questionnaires, interviews of parents, children and colleagues (practitioners working with an external EEL adviser, in co-operation with parents and children) Observation techniques: Child Involvement Scale (child-focused observation) and Adult Engagement Scale (adult-child interactions)	Child involvement signals: concentration, creativity, energy, persistence, precision, facial expression and posture, reaction time, language satisfaction Adult involvement: sensitivity, stimulation, autonomy, Others: training, curriculum, staff ratios, teaching styles, interactions, facilities, planning and assessment procedures, daily programs, home/school partnership, equal opportunities, quality control procedures	Prof. Christine Pascal , Prof. Tony Bertram (Centre for Research in Early Childhood); based on work by Prof. F. Laevers (Leuven University, Belgium)	www.crec.co.uk/; http://www.dge.mec.pt/recursos-0

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Evaluación Indicativa de Desempeño (Indicative Performance Evaluation)	Chile	3-18 years	X		Pre-primary education for 3- to 5-year-olds (colegios), Pre-primary education for 4- to 5-year-olds (escuelas), elementary and secondary education	Strengthen institutional and self-evaluation capacities of the education settings Provide guidance for the elaboration of the improvement plans Promote continuous improvement of the offered education	Inspection (by the national quality agency) Information requirements (by the national quality agency) Surveys, focus groups, questionnaires and other if considered suitable by the national quality agency	Leadership, pedagogy, education and training for students, management of human, financial and educational resources	Ministry of Education	http://archivos.agenciaeducacion.cl/documentos-web/Estandares_Indicativos_de_Desempeno.pdf
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition (FCCERS-R)*	United States, Canada, various European, Asian, and South American countries	0-12 years		X	Family childcare programmes	Observe process quality; information; data collection; make informed choices for programme improvement	Observation using a scale (38 items with 7 subscales)	Space and Furnishings Personal Care Routines Listening and Talking Activities Interaction Programme Structure Parents and Provider	Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI)	www.ersi.info

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R)*	United States, Canada, various European, Asian, and South American countries	Until 30 months	X		Centre-based childcare programmes	Observe process quality; information; data collection; make informed choices for programme improvement	Observation using a scale (39 items with 7 subscales) Scale can be used for: supervision by programme directors and programme improvement, monitoring by agency staff, staff-self-assessment, teacher training	Space and Furnishings Personal Care Routines Listening and Talking Activities Interaction Programme Structure Parents and Staff	Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI)	www.ersi.info
Kindergarten-Einschätz-Skala, revidierte Fassung (KES-R) (Kindergarten Evaluation Scale)	Germany	3-5 years	X		Kindergarten	Assess and support pedagogical quality in the area of education, pedagogy and care	Observations using a rating scale with rating indicators linked to physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas; interviews (by a trained observer; can be used for self- and external assessment)	Space and material resources, personal care routines, cognitive and language stimulation, activities, staff-child and child-child interaction, planning and structuring of pedagogical practice, situation of staff and co-operation with parents	German adaption of the ECERS scales by Tietze, Schuster, Grenner, Roßbach / Cornelsen Scriptor	www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/kleinkindpaedagogik/publikationen/index.html
Kita!Plus internal monitoring instrument*	Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany)	0-5 years	X		Child day-care centres	Evaluate quality development; increase quality in early childcare facilities	Internal self-evaluative monitoring (and additional interviews, group discussions, symposia)	Collaboration of ECEC settings with parents and families; social environmental aspects	College of Koblenz/Ministry of Integration, Family, Children, Youth, and Women of Rhineland-Palatinate	https://kita.rlp.de/index.php?id=673

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Krippen Skala (KRIPS-R) (Crèche scale)	Germany, Austria, Switzerland	0-2 years	X		Crèches	Assess and support pedagogical quality in the area of education, pedagogy and care	Observations using a rating scale with rating indicators linked to physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas; interviews (by a trained observer; can be used for self- and external assessment)	Space and material resources, personal care routines, cognitive and language stimulation, activities, staff-child and child-child interaction, planning and structuring of pedagogical practice, situation of staff and co-operation with parents	German adaption of the ITERS-R scales by Tietze, Bolz, Grenner, Schlecht, Wellner / Beltz Verlag	www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/kleinkindpaedagogik/publikationen/index.html
NCKO-*Kwaliteitsmonitor* (Quality Monitor)*	Netherlands	0-4 years	X		Childcare centres (Kinderdagopvang)	Enhance level of quality; overview of weaker and stronger points of a provision	Self-evaluation through rating scales (low, average, high-ranking) to be used by staff and managers of childcare centres to evaluate their own quality. It also includes a checklist of example good practices (and bad practices to avoid).	Pedagogical quality, interactions of all pedagogical staff, sensitivity of staff to children's needs, structural quality (quality of the care environment, structural aspects of the provision)	Nederlands Consortium Kinderopvang Onderzoek (Dutch Consortium of Child Care Research)	www.kinderopvangonderzoek.nl/drupal/content/ncko-kwaliteitsmonitor-0

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Pauta Digital de Fiscalización (Inspection Guideline)	Chile	0-5 years	X		Public and private kindergartens	Provide parents with more transparent information about the level of quality Stimulate settings to enhance their level of quality	Inspections with a rating scale (Results posted online in the form of a ranking.)	Organisation, tools used for pedagogy, good treatment and family, hygiene and nutrition, security and infrastructure, operation and logistics	JUNJI	www.bienestararmada.cl/prontus_bienestar/site/artic/20140422/asocfile/20140422094758/valoracion_de_indicadores_de_fiscalizacion_en_jardines_infantiles_particulares.pdf

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Preschool Programme Quality Assessment, 2nd Edition (PQA)*	United States	0-5 years	X	X	Infant-toddler programmes, preschool programmes, family childcare	Assess learning environment and adult-child interaction; reporting; training; accreditation	Rating scales completed with the use of observations in the settings, interviews (completed through self-assessment by providers or by independent trained raters)	Infant-Toddler PQA: Observation items (schedules and routines, learning environment, curriculum planning and child observation, adult-child interaction); agency items (parent involvement and family services, programme management, staff qualifications and development) Preschool PQA: Classroom items; agency items (daily routine, learning environment, curriculum planning and assessment, adult-child interaction, parent involvement and family services, programme management, staff qualifications and development) Family Child Care PQA: Daily schedule, safe and healthy environment, provider-child interaction, learning environment	HighScope Educational Research Foundation	www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=79

Table A3.1 Instruments for monitoring service quality (continued)

Name of Instrument	Countries used in*	Age group	Type of setting			Purpose of assessment	Type of instrument	Assessed domains	Developer/marketer	Website
			Centre-/ School-based	Home-based	Example					
Self-evaluation Instrument for Care Settings (SiCs/ZiKo)*	Flemish Community of Belgium	0-12 years	X	X	Day-care centres for children aged 0-3; Family day-care providers for children aged 0-3; Out of school care for children up to the age of 12	Ensure/improve well-being and involvement of the child and assess its experience in the care environment; enhance practitioner's professional development	Internal process-oriented self-assessment; observation of children with scales (by setting's supervisor, external advisor, or co-ordinator) ; self-assessment of pedagogical approach by practitioners with a scale during group work	Well-being and involvement of the child; pedagogical approach (infrastructure and offer of activities, group climate, child initiative, adult style and organisation, type of guidance by practitioners)	*Kind & Gezin*/ Research Centre for Experiential Education (Leuven University-Belgium)	www.kindengezin.be/img/sics-ziko-manual.pdf
Tagespflege-Skala (TAS) (Family Day Care Scale)	Germany	0-5 years		X	Family day care	Assess and support pedagogical quality in the area of education, pedagogy and care	Observations using a rating scale with rating indicators linked to physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas; interviews (by a trained observer; can be used for self- and external assessment)	Space and material resources, personal care routines, cognitive and language stimulation, activities, social development, situation of family day carer and co-operation with parents	German adaption of FDCRS (predecessor of the FCCERS-R) by Tietze, Knobeloch, *Gerszonowicz* / Beltz Verlag	www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/kleinkindpaedagogik/publikationen/index.html

Notes:

a = not available m = missing

The indication of countries does not mean that the instrument necessarily is used in nation-wide settings. The instruments listed in this table might be implemented in additional countries than those listed in the table above.

Please note that the NCKO Quality Monitor, ECERS-3, ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, ECERS-E, APECP, ELLCO, PQA, SiCs, TAS, KES-R, KRIPS-R and EEL are also listed as instruments for assessing staff quality, and the SiCs in addition for assessing outcomes.

The ECERS-E has been developed to add greater depth in observation of curriculum provision to the ECERS-R. It is intended for use as a complement to the ECERS-R.

The Effective Early Learning Programme (EEL) exists also as Baby Effective Early Learning Programme (BEEL) with slightly adapted forms for this age group.

The Kita!Plus project's monitoring instrument is currently being developed and is planned to be completed by the end of 2015.

Source: OECD (forthcoming).

Annex A
Programmes of OECD missions

Programme for OECD Fact-finding mission, 10-13 June 2014

Tuesday, 10 June

Oslo

Ministry of Education and Research	Espen Aasen, Dag Thomas Gisholt, Christian Kolstad, Kristina Kvåle, Tove Mogstad Slinde, Aase Birgitte Gimnes
Directorate for Education and Training	Kjersti Flåten, Annette Qvam, Katrine Teigen, Maria Bakke Orvik, Kjetil Digre, Christian Monsbakken, Nicolai Stensig, Victoria Elise Olsen, Pia E. Paulsrud
Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion:	Eli Ferrari de Carli (Department of Child Welfare Services), Line Opjordsmoen (Department of Integration), Gerd Vollset (Department of Childhood, Youth and Family Affairs)
Ministry of Health and Care services	Monica Skjøld Johansen (Department of Municipal Health Care Services), Ragnhild Spigseth (Department of Public Health).
Statistics Norway	Nina Drange, Kjetil Telle
County Governor of Nordland	Guri Adelsten Iversen
Rambøll Consulting	Ida Gram, Hege Hellvik

Wednesday, 11 June

Oslo

Meeting with kindergarten researchers	
Directorate for Education and Training	Annette Qvam
Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	Erik Eliassen, Ellen Os
Buskerud and Vestfold University College	Thomas Moser
Norwegian Center for Child Behavioral Development	Henrik Zachrisson

Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education	Monica Seland
University of Oslo, Department of Economics	Tarjei Havenes
Meeting with representatives of parents' and children	
National Parents' Committee for ECEC (FUB)	Åse-Berit Hoffart, Lou Cathrin Norreen
Ombudsman for Children	Knut Haanes
Meeting with stakeholders representing the kindergarten owners and staff	
KS (the Norwegian association of local and regional authorities)	Lars Møllerud
PBL - Private barnehagers landsforbund (The Organisation of privately owned kindergartens)	Espen Rokkan
Utdanningsforbundet (Union of Education - The teachers' union)	Turi Pålerud, Morten Solheim
Fagforbundet (union organising a high percentage of assistants in kindergartens)	Svein Arne Lie
KANVAS (one of the large private ECEC owners)	Robert Ullmann

Thursday, 12 June

Drammen

Buskerud County Governor	Anne Hermansen, Vibeke Norheim Holm
Drammen Municipality	Bjørg Fladeby, Tore Oppdal Hansen
Visit to Fjell barnehage (kindergarten)	Aina Midtskogen
Visit to Klokkergaarden (culture and nature kindergarten)	Grete Nordli

Hole

Hole Municipality	Ingvild Oppenhagen, Marit Lorentsen
Trollstua familiebarnehage (family kindergarten)	Elin Tønderum Holm
Sundvollen oppvekstsenter (kindergarten and school)	Trude Bakken

Friday, 13 June

Oslo

Meetings on staff competence – recruiting and qualifying at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	
University College of Nord-Trøndelag	Kjell Åge Gotvassli
Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	Bruna Bruce, Lars Gulbrandsen, Marit Granholt, Anne Furu, Tone Milde
Directorate for Education and Training	Gunn Heidi Saltnes
Bærum municipality	Torunn Stornes
Oslo municipality	Margot Ekren

KANVAS (large private kindergarten provider)	Kriss Myre
Review team's presentation of preliminary analysis and questions at the Ministry of Education and Research	
Ministry of Education and Research	Christian Kolstad and other participants from the Department of ECEC

Programme for OECD Review visit, 9-15 September 2014

Tuesday, 9 September

Oslo

Discussion on governance, access and monitoring at the Ministry of Education and Research	
Ministry of Education and Research	Various participants from the Ministry
Directorate for Education and Training	Various participants from the Directorate
Telemarksforsking	Trond Erik Lunder
Discussion at Espira head office	
Espira (large private kindergarten provider)	Marit Lambrechts, Andre Kidess, Geir Egil Risanger, Pia Paulsrud

Wednesday, 10 September

Oslo

Oslo municipality	Bente Fagerli, Ragnhild Walberg, Ole Christian Melhus, Jon Stranger, Eli Aspelund, Øyvind Bjerkestrand, Laila Haugen, Sigrun Skretting, Margot Ekren
Alna City District	Representatives of the kindergarten authorities, health care services and child protection
Tveten Gård open kindergarten	Various staff members
Barneslottet kindergarten	Various staff members

Thursday, 11 September

Bergen

Discussion on framework plan for kindergarten and kindergarten teacher education at Bergen University College	
Bergen University College, Center for Educational Research	Elin Eriksen Ødegaard, Bjørg Kristin Selvik
Slettebakken school/ expert group following the implementation of revised kindergarten teacher education	Mimi Bjerkestrand
Site visits with a focus on transition from kindergarten to primary school	
Slettebakken school	Mimi Bjerkestrand and other staff members

Øvrebø barnehage (kindergarten)	Anne Grethe Andersen , various staff members
Discussion on quality and access at Bergen municipality offices	
Bergen municipality	Marianne Boge, Ingeborg Veim
Discussion on head teacher training at the Norwegian School of Economics	
NHH (Norwegian School of Economics)	Tore Hillestad, Arne Kjøde

Friday, 12 September

Tromsø

Discussion on monitoring and workforce with regional network of county governors in the north at Troms county governor's office	
County Governor of Finmark	Kari Dale, Liv Hanne Huru
County Governor of Troms	Solveig Bjørn, Eivind Bratsberg, Hege Havnes, Vibeke Gjendemsjø
County Governor of Nordland	Wiveca Wilhelmsen, Grete Gansmoe
Kindergarten visits	
Guovssahas Mànàidgàrdi (Sami kindergarten)	Wenche A. Nergård , Hilde Dahl Djupnes and other staff members
Hundre barnehagen (kindergarten)	Various staff members
Discussion on monitoring, funding and quality at Tromsø Municipality	
Tromsø Municipality	Kari Henriksen, Berit Vassmyr, Hilde Dahl Djupnes , Bente Wilhelmsen
Discussions on teachers and pedagogy at Tromsø University	
Tromsø University	Helge Habbestad, Renate Walberg, Tina Øwre, Ingrid Frenning, Karin Danielsen, Torbjørn Isaksen, Odd Arne Thunberg

Saturday, 13 September

Kåfjord

Visit to a small rural (Sami) community to discuss social development and governance	
Kåfjord municipality	Anita Lervoll, Svein Oddvar Leiros, Ellen Lindvall and employees from Fossen barnehage

Monday, 15 September

Oslo

Presentation of preliminary findings at the Ministry of Education and Research	
To the Minister of Education and Research	Minister Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, State Secretary Birgitte Jordahl and other representatives from the Ministry
To the Ministry of Education and Research and Directorate for Education and Training	Various participants from the Ministry and Directorate

Annex B
Glossary of Terms used in the review report for Norway

Accountability (in ECEC settings): ECEC providers and staff being held responsible for monitoring and measuring the effectiveness and quality of their service provision, teaching/caring and children's learning and well-being (adapted from Kilderry, 2012).

Accreditation (in ECEC settings): A process in which ECEC service providers, training providers, or staff undergo an evaluation, by an external institution (such as an accrediting body), of their service, programme provision, or teaching/caring practices to confirm if they meet a certain set of regulations or standards.

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 in themselves and have confidence in their own ability.

Assessment: Judgments on individual progress and achievement of goals. It covers classroom/playroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external assessments and examinations. It 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 gathers information through feedback, e.g. in surveys, or interviews (adapted from Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2007).

Assessor (or: evaluator): A person or organisation/company who 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.

Assistants: Auxiliary staff in Norwegian kindergartens who work directly with children. In Norway, vocational training is available for assistants, but they are not required to, complete such programmes.

Block grant: A transfer of funds usually used by the central or national government to provide state, regional or local authorities a specified amount of funding to assist them in addressing broad purposes, such as community development, social services, public health, or law enforcement. The authority receiving the fund is free to decide how it wants to distribute the money among its projects and institutions. This means that sub-national policymakers have some discretion

about the extent to which they spend the transfer from the central or national level on the ECEC sector (adopted from Dilger and Boyd, 2014).

Centre-based/school-based provision or settings: Publically regulated ECEC settings provided outside the home. The services provided can be full-time or part-time and can include e.g. nurseries, day-care centres, *crèches*, and kindergartens (adapted from Eurydice, 2014a; OECD, 2012).

Checklist: A list of items, tasks or steps to be taken in a specific order to be checked or consulted. In ECEC, it can be used to assess or evaluate the developmental status of children, staff performance and the quality of ECEC services by observing the regulation compliance. 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).

County councils: A democratically elected representative body at county level in Norway, which is part of the public sector, together with the national government and the municipalities. Norway's 19 county councils have responsibilities for the county's public welfare in fields such as, e.g., upper secondary education, public transport and part of the public health service (adapted from Sør-Trøndelag County Authority 2015; Østfold county 2013).

County governor: The regional representative of central Norwegian government. The county governor is an intermediate for the information-flow between the municipal, county-municipal and central government, responsible for relaying parliament's and government's policies to the municipalities and for ensuring the implementation of national policies and compliance with regulations (adapted from Regjeringen, 1998).

Curriculum: Refers to the contents of early childhood education such as learning areas and learning goals. In Norwa,y this is the Framework Plan for Kindergartens. In a narrow sense, it describes the "what" of teaching. In a broader sense, it is often defined as "the sum of all experiences in childhood settings". Even though often simultaneously used, it is not the same as pedagogy (see also **Framework Plan for Kindergarten**).

Curriculum implementation: The actual use in practice (practical application) of the curriculum by ECEC staff, managers and children. It refers to how 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.

Earmarked grants: Public financial resources that can be exclusively used for financing the purposes attributed to them by the provider of the grant. One example might be an earmarked governmental grant that is to be used exclusively for the payment of running costs related to ECEC staff or for capital investments in ECEC facilities (adopted from OECD, 2004; Eurydice, 2014b).

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).

ECEC quality: A multidimensional concept covering especially structural characteristics and process quality. Conceptualizations cover global aspects (such as warm climate or child-appropriate behaviour) and domain-specific stimulation in learning areas such as literacy, emerging mathematics and science. Some researchers include orientation quality as an additional dimension of ECEC quality (see **Structural quality**, **Process quality** and **Orientationquality**).

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: See definition of 'Monitoring practice'.

Family kindergarten/family day care: A type of ECEC in Norway, with an assistant working in a private home with up to five children below school age. The assistant is supervised and mentored by a qualified kindergarten teacher (adapted from Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Framework Plan: The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens regulates the content of kindergartens and it is subject of regulation to the Kindergarten Act**.**

Free access (to ECEC services): Use of the concerned ECEC service is free of charge for the demand side, i.e. there are no fees for children and their parents. The resulting costs for free access are typically covered by (government) subsidies.

Government: The entirety of the executive at all levels of governance, at national, state-level, regional and local level.

Head teacher: The person, typically a qualified kindergarten teacher, responsible for the day-to-day management of a kindergarten facility in Norway.

Home-based provision: Publically regulated ECEC provision that is delivered in the provider's home. Regulations usually require providers to meet minimum health, safety, and nutrition standards. Home-based provision excludes live-in and live-out nannies and baby-sitters (as defined by Eurydice, 2014a).

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. It is a material that is used to conduct the monitoring process. Examples of instruments or tools for monitoring include checklist, 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'.

Kindergarten Act: Regulatory act of the ECEC sector in Norway originally published in 1975. The current Act was published by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2005 and entered into force in January 2006. It regulates the availability of kindergarten places, monitoring obligations, staffing, children's and

parents' participation and kindergartens for Sami Children. The Framework Plan is also subject to regulation to the Kindergarten Act.

Kindergarten teacher: Teachers with a qualification in tertiary education (university/university college bachelor's degree), working at the pre-primary level in Norway (adapted from Ministry of Education, 2015).

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.

Legal entitlement to ECEC: Two types of legal entitlement to ECEC are distinguished (as defined in Eurydice, 2013):

Universal legal entitlement: Statutory duty for ECEC providers to secure (publically subsidized) ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require an ECEC place.

Targeted legal entitlement: Statutory duty for ECEC providers to secure (publically subsidized) ECEC provision for children living in a catchment area who fall under certain categories. These categories can be based on various aspects, including employment, socio-economic or family status of their parents.

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 such as Norway, the municipalities take the main responsibilities relating to 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 easy (e.g. staff-child ratio, space, group size and qualifications of ECEC staff).

Monitoring: The process of systematically tracking aspects of ECEC services, staff, child development and curriculum implementation, with a view to data collection, accountability and/or enhancing the 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 e.g. 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 e.g. 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*.

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 with an outsider's view. It can be used for a specific purpose (e.g. inspection, peer review) or open-ended (e.g. to document a child's progress for parents).

Open Kindergarten: A kindergarten type in Norway where parents/care givers accompany the child and participate in the kindergarten's activities with the child. It is offered part-time in drop-in centres and led by a qualified kindergarten teacher (adapted from Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Orientation quality: Aspect of ECEC quality that refers to teachers' pedagogical beliefs such as their definition of their professional role, their educational values, epistemological beliefs, attitudes with regard to the importance of different educational areas and learning goals etc. It also includes aspects comprising the setting, such as the pedagogical approach of the setting and shared educational values and beliefs.

Oversight: The regulatory supervision of a certain sector or policy area. This role may be assigned to different levels of governance and/or different agencies. An oversight role is often closely linked to responsibilities for monitoring at the respective level of governance (see **Monitoring**).

Pedagogical leader: A qualified kindergarten teacher with responsibility for a group of children in a kindergarten in Norway. The pedagogical leader works in a team together with auxiliary staff (assistants) and in some cases additional pedagogical leaders with a group of children.

Pedagogy: A set of instructional settings and strategies to support children's learning, development and the acquisition of skills, competencies, values and attitudes. It does not only apply to the work with children, but also to the work with other target groups (e.g. 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.

Private setting: A setting which is administered/owned directly or indirectly by a non-governmental organisation or private person/organisation (church, trade union, business or other concern). Private settings may be publicly subsidised or not:

Private non publically-subsidised setting: A private setting which receives no funding from the public authorities. It is independent in its finances and governance; it is not dependent upon national or local government for financing its operations and is funded by private sources which can be tuition charges/enrolment fees, gifts, sponsoring etc.

Private publically-subsidised private setting: A private setting which receives some or all funding from public authorities. It is a setting that operates completely privately but receives public funding. In Norway, private kindergartens are funded according to the budgeted cost of public kindergartens in the respective municipality (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

Process quality: What children actually experience in their programme – that which 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.

Public setting: A setting administered and governed directly or indirectly by a public education authority and financed from public sources, such as municipal kindergartens in Norway (as defined in Eurydice, 2013).

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 which 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.

Review: The process of examining, considering, and judging a situation or process carefully in order to see e.g. if changes are necessary, analyse strengths and weaknesses, and look for improvement.

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, goal attainment 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: staff member) to respond and interact age-appropriately 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 staff-child interactions which form the core of children's ECEC experiences, in literature referred to 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, 2012a).

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. Childcare and early education is provided as two different services and for different age groups. For instance, 'childcare' for younger children - most often of under age 3 - and 'early education' for (most often) children of 3 years of age and 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 one full-time member of staff is allowed to be responsible for, or an average: the average number of children a full-time staff member can be responsible for. Ratios can be either for qualified pedagogical staff only (such as kindergarten teachers), but also include auxiliary staff such as assistants.

Standardised assessment: An assessment designed in such a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner (OECD, 2012; Zucker, 2004). This means e.g. 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).

Structural quality: Quality aspects that consist of "inputs to process-characteristics which create the framework for the processes that children experience". These characteristics are not only part of the ECEC location in which children participate, but they are part of the environment that surrounds the ECEC setting, e.g., the community. They are often aspects of ECEC that can be regulated, such as class size, staff-child-ratio, formal staff qualification levels, provided materials and size of the setting, though they may contain variables which cannot be regulated

Tool: See definition of 'Instrument'.

References

Dilger, R.J., E. Boyd (2014), *Block Grants: Perspectives and Controversies*, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC.

Eurydice (2013), "Reference Document 2 - Key Data ECEC 2014 – Questionnaire for Eurydice Figures", internal working document, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, Brussels.

Eurydice/European Commission/EACEA/Eurostat (2014a), *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: 2014 Edition*, Eurydice and Eurostat Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014b), *Financing Schools in Europe: Mechanisms, Methods and Criteria in Public Funding*, Eurydice Report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Kilderry, A. D. (2012), "Teacher Decision Making in Early Childhood Education", PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

Litjens, I. (2013), *Literature Review on Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, OECD, Paris.

Macmillan (2014), *Macmillan Dictionary*, London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, http://www.macmillandictionary.com.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2007), *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources*, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Philadelphia, PA.

Ministry of Education and Research (2015), *Country Background Report for the OECD ECEC Review*, Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1997), *Measuring the Quality of Program Environments in Head Start and Other Early Childhood Programs: A Review and Recommendations for Future Research*, Working Paper No. 97-36, Washington, DC.

OECD (2013). *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en.

OECD (2012), *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123564-en.

OECD (2006), *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264035461-en.

OECD (2005), *Formative Assessment: Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264007413-en.

OECD (2004), *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications*, OECD, Paris.

Østfold county (2013), "The county council's tasks and responsibilities", www.ostfold-f.kommune.no/modules/module_123/proxy.asp?D=2&C=377&I=17131&m=1389.

Regjeringen (1998), "The County Governors in Norway – the Regional Representatives of the Central Government", www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/The-County-Governors-in-Norway--the-Regional-Representatives-of-the-Central-Government/id424482/.

Rosenkvist, M. A. (2010), "Using Student Test Results for Accountability and Improvement: A Literature Review", *OECD Education Working Paper*, No. 54, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Sør-Trøndelag County Authority (2015), "Sør-Trøndelag County Authority", http://www.stfk.no/no/Om_fylkeskommunen/Kort_om_fylkeskommunen/Sor-Trondelag_County_Council.

Zucker, S. (2004), *Administration Practices for Standardized Assessments*, Pearson Assessment Report, Pearson Education, San Antonio, TX.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

OECD Publishing disseminates widely the results of the Organisation's statistics gathering and research on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as the conventions, guidelines and standards agreed by its members.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE POLICY REVIEW

NORWAY

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) programmes can offer a wide array of benefits to children, parents and society at large – provided they are of high quality. Since the 1999 OECD Thematic Review of ECEC in Norway, the country has undertaken major policy reforms to expand access to, and improve the quality of, the country's kindergartens. This new review delivers an independent analysis of major issues in the areas of governance, funding, access and quality of Norway's kindergartens, looking at past and present policy initiatives, and potential approaches for the future. Prepared by a review team of international researchers and OECD experts, this report draws on international evidence and insights from two review visits to the country to identify the strengths and challenges of Norway's ECEC system. The review also suggests measures to improve the system, including ensuring an adequate supply of qualified staff, further developing monitoring practices and systems to assure quality, and increasing the attractiveness of kindergarten to disadvantaged groups even more.

For further information please visit our website:
www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood

or contact us at:
ecec@oecd.org