Evaluating ECEC Systems

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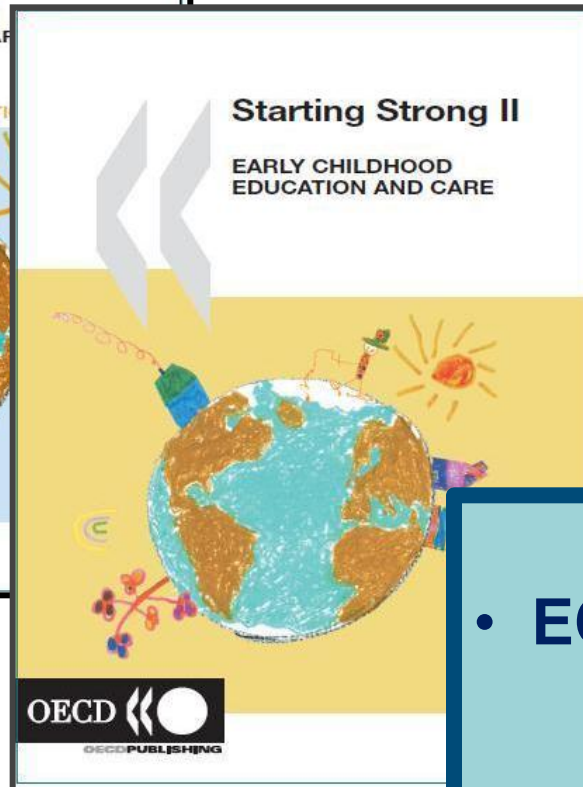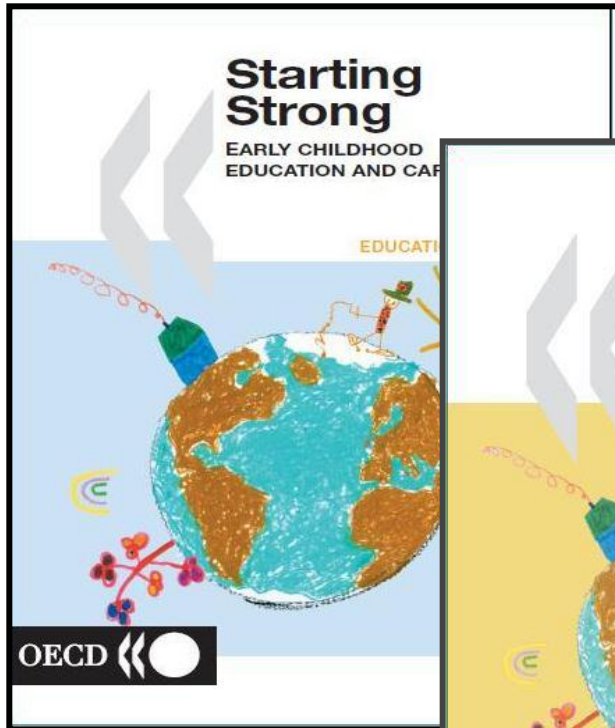Directorate for Education and Skills
OECD

Today's Focus

- **OECD's evaluation of ECEC systems**

- **OECD's analysis on policy levers to enhance "Quality"**

- **OECD' current and future work on "Quality"**

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OECD Policy Reviews: system evaluations

- **ECEC issues in general**
  - **Access**
  - **Equity**
 - **Quality**
- **Policy suggestions**

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International comparative analysis has shown that participation in ECEC is associated with better student outcomes at age 15.

Performance difference in PISA between students who attended pre-primary school for more than one year and those who did not
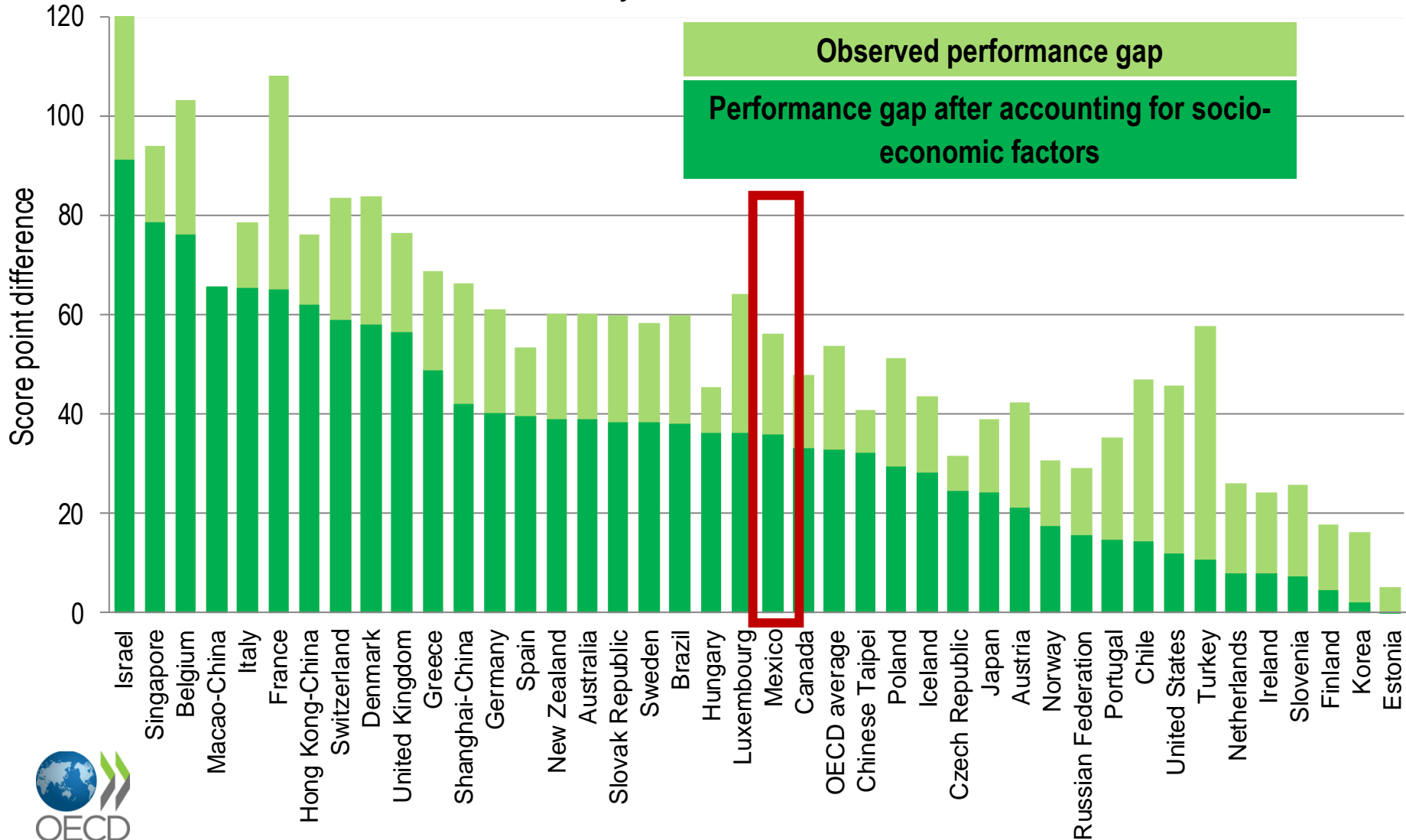
In a majority of OECD countries, ECEC participation at age 4 has increased from 2005 to 2011.

Chart C2.1. Enrolment rates at age 4 in early childhood and primary education (2005 and 2011)
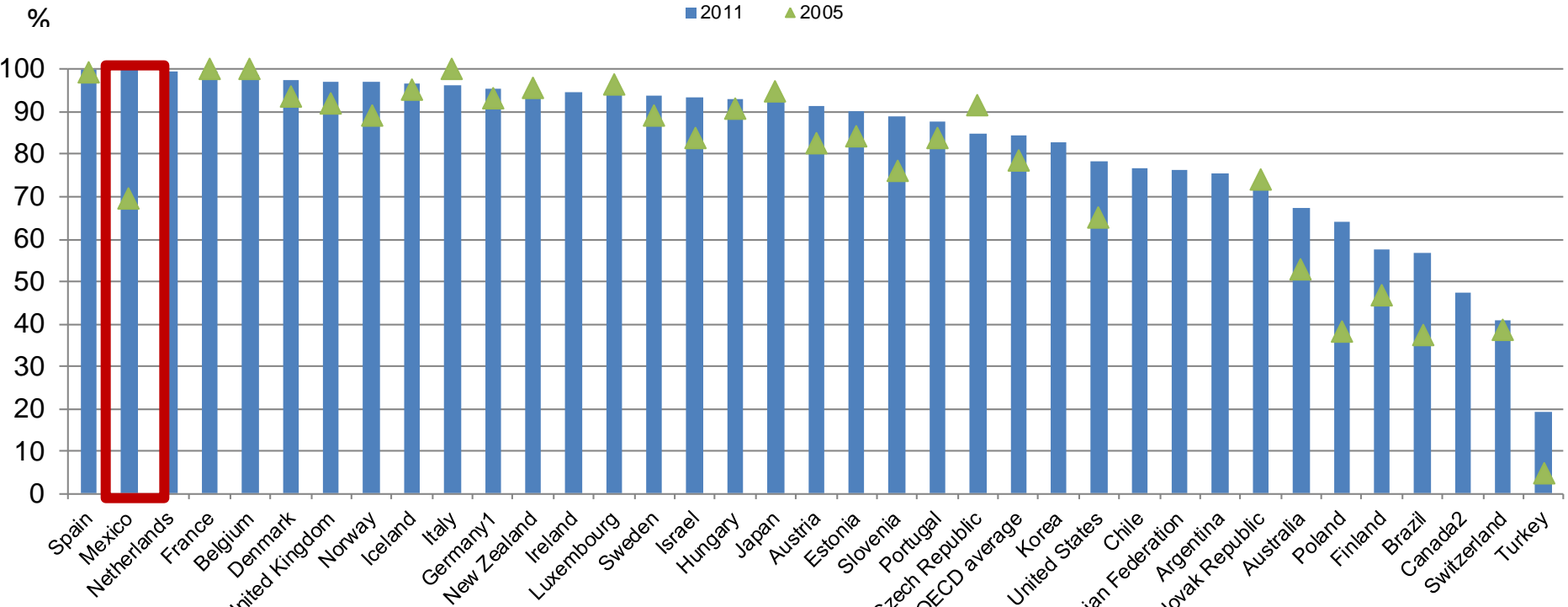
1. Year of reference 2006 instead of 2005.
2. Year of reference 2010 instead of 2011.
Countries are ranked in descending order of the enrolment rates of 4 year-olds in 2011.
Source: OECD. Argentina : UNESCO Institute for Statistics (World Education Indicators Programme). Table C2.1. See Annex 3 for notes (*www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm*).

However, participation at age three varies considerably across countries
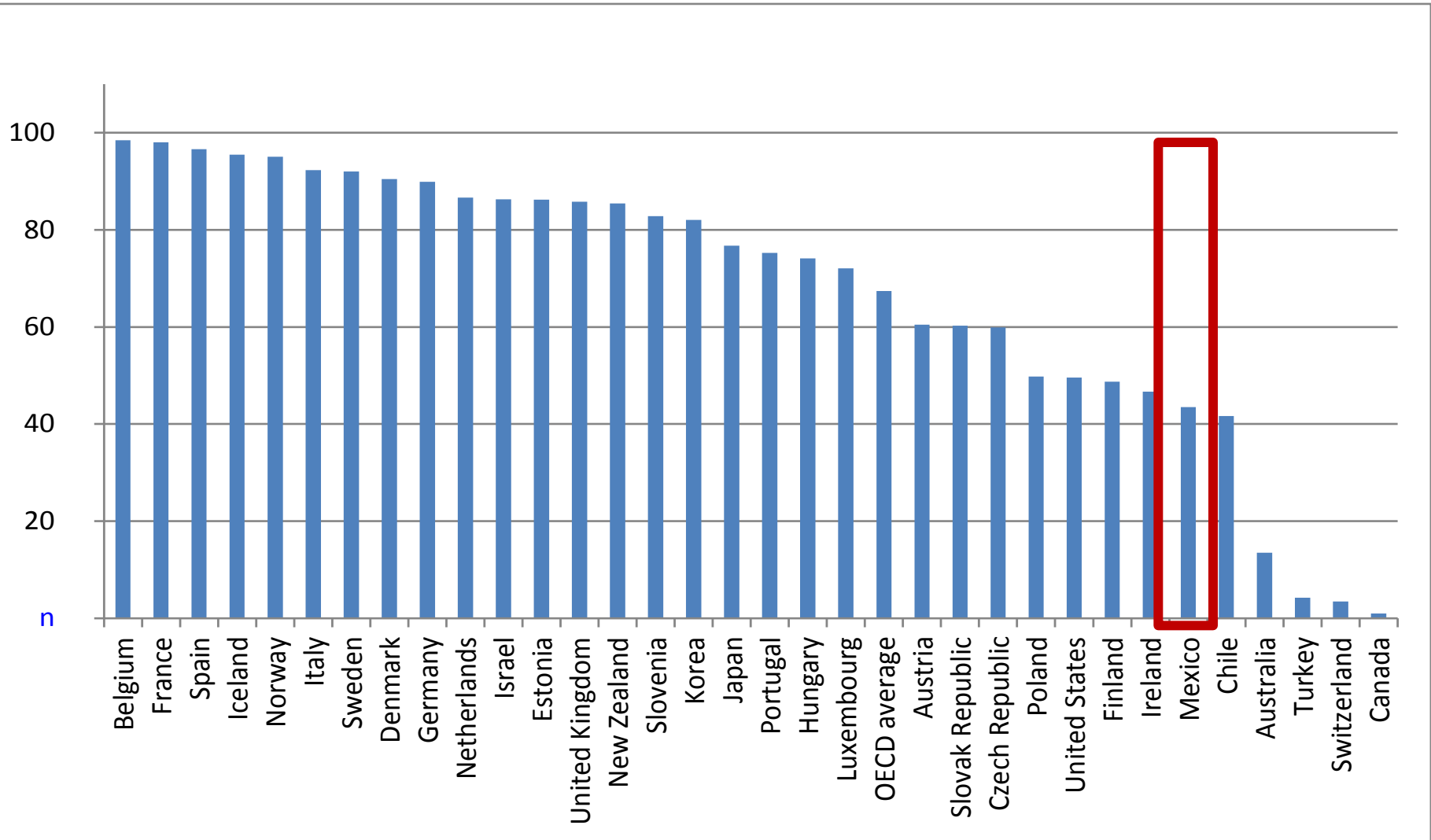
Source: OECD, Education at a Glance 2013 – data mainly from 2011 with Canada 2010

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Starting Strong III
A QUALITY TOOLBOX FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

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- **Focus on Quality**
  - **5 policy levers**
- **Practical FAQs**
  - **what does research say?**
  - **how do we compare with other countries?**
  - **etc…**

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5 policy levers to encourage quality in ECEC:
It is essential to align separate, complementary policy levers.
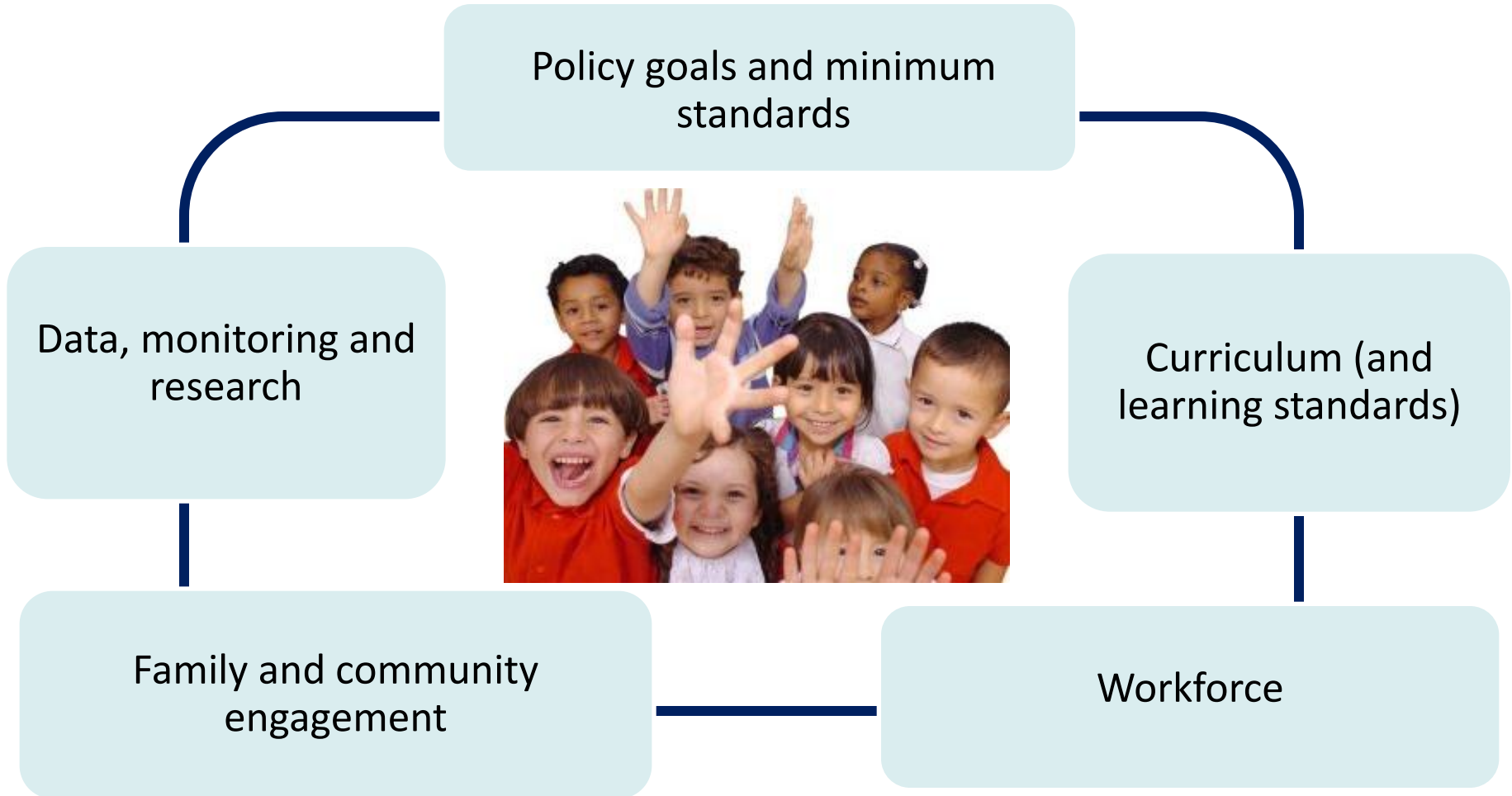
Policy goals and minimum standards

Data, monitoring and research

Curriculum (and learning standards)

Family and community engagement

Workforce

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Research says…..

Setting out clear quality goals can…
- Consolidate political will
- Strategically align resources with priority areas
- Build shared vision and consensus

Minimum standards can…
- For providers - can level the playing field
- For parents - can help them to make informed choices
- For children - can guarantee the health, safety, learning and well-being of children in high-quality environments
- Support transparent regulation of the private sector

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International overview: Staff-child ratio

Regulated staff:child ratio in kindergarten
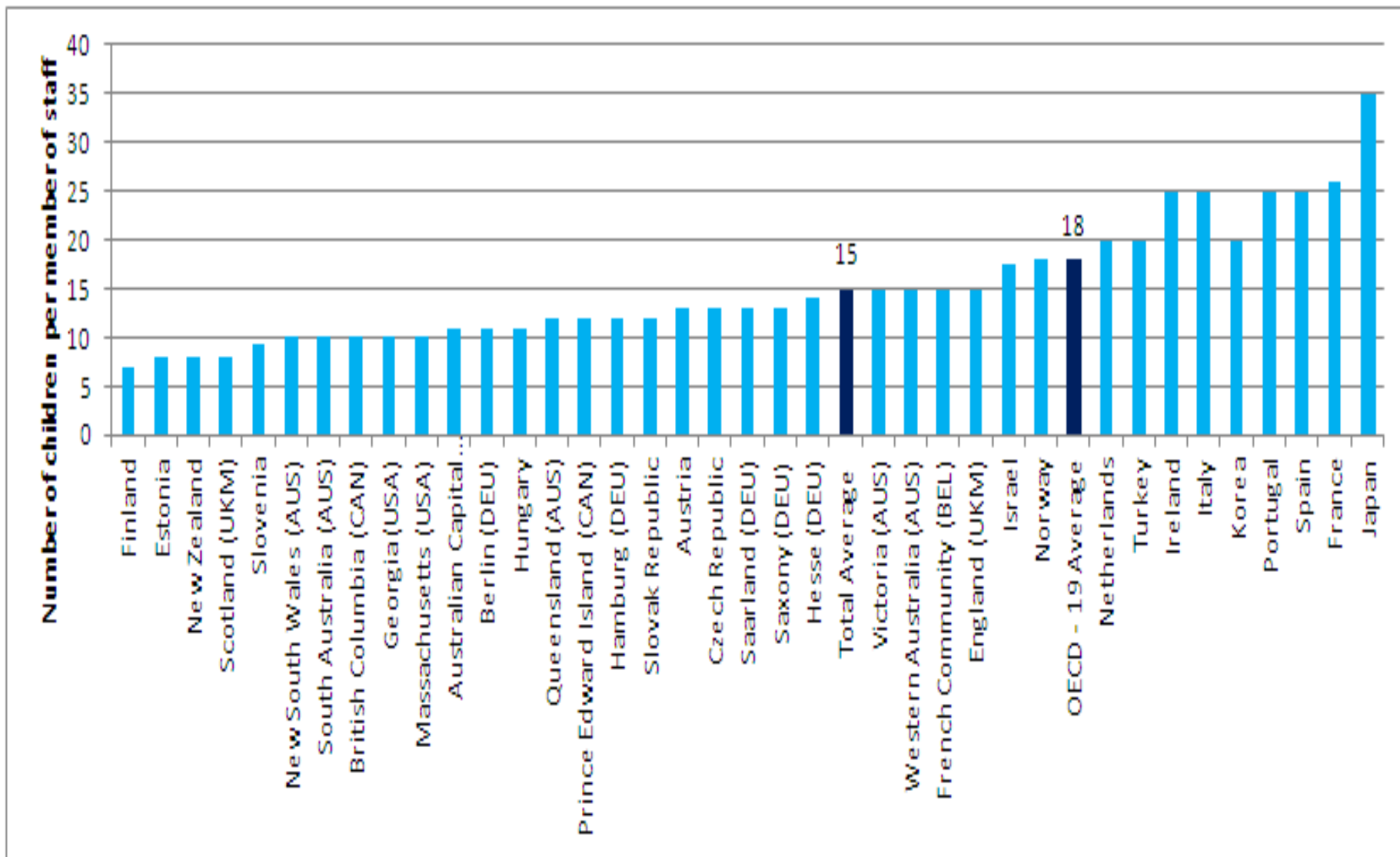
Curriculum and learning/well-being standards can…

- Ensure an even level of quality
- Reinforce positive impact on children's learning and development
- Give guidance to staff on how to enhance children's learning and well-being
- Show parents what their children are doing at ECEC centres/how they could interact with their children at home

Most frequently researched question
- Academic approach vs comprehensive approach
- Teacher-directed approach vs child-initiated approach

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Mapping of existing research on the effects of academic vs. comprehensive curriculum

Which "model" is most likely to improve a child's...	Academic	Comprehensive
IQ scores	X	
Motivation to Learn		X
Literacy and Numeracy	X	
Creativity		X
Independence		X
Specific Knowledge	X	
Self-confidence		X
General Knowledge		X
Initiative		X

Source: Barnett *et al.* (2010)*,* "The Effects of Preschool Education: What We Know, How Public Policy Is or Is Not Aligned With the Evidence Base, and What We Need to Know", *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, Vol.10, No. 2, pp. 49-88; Eurydice (2009), *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, Eurydice, Brussels; Laevers, F. (2011), "Experiential Education: Making Care and Education More Effective Through Well-Being and Involvement", *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*, Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, Montreal; Schweinhart, L.J. and D.P. Weikart (1997), "The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparison Study Through Age 23", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 12, pp. 117-143.

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International overview: Content areas

Subject areas or topics included in country's curriculum framework
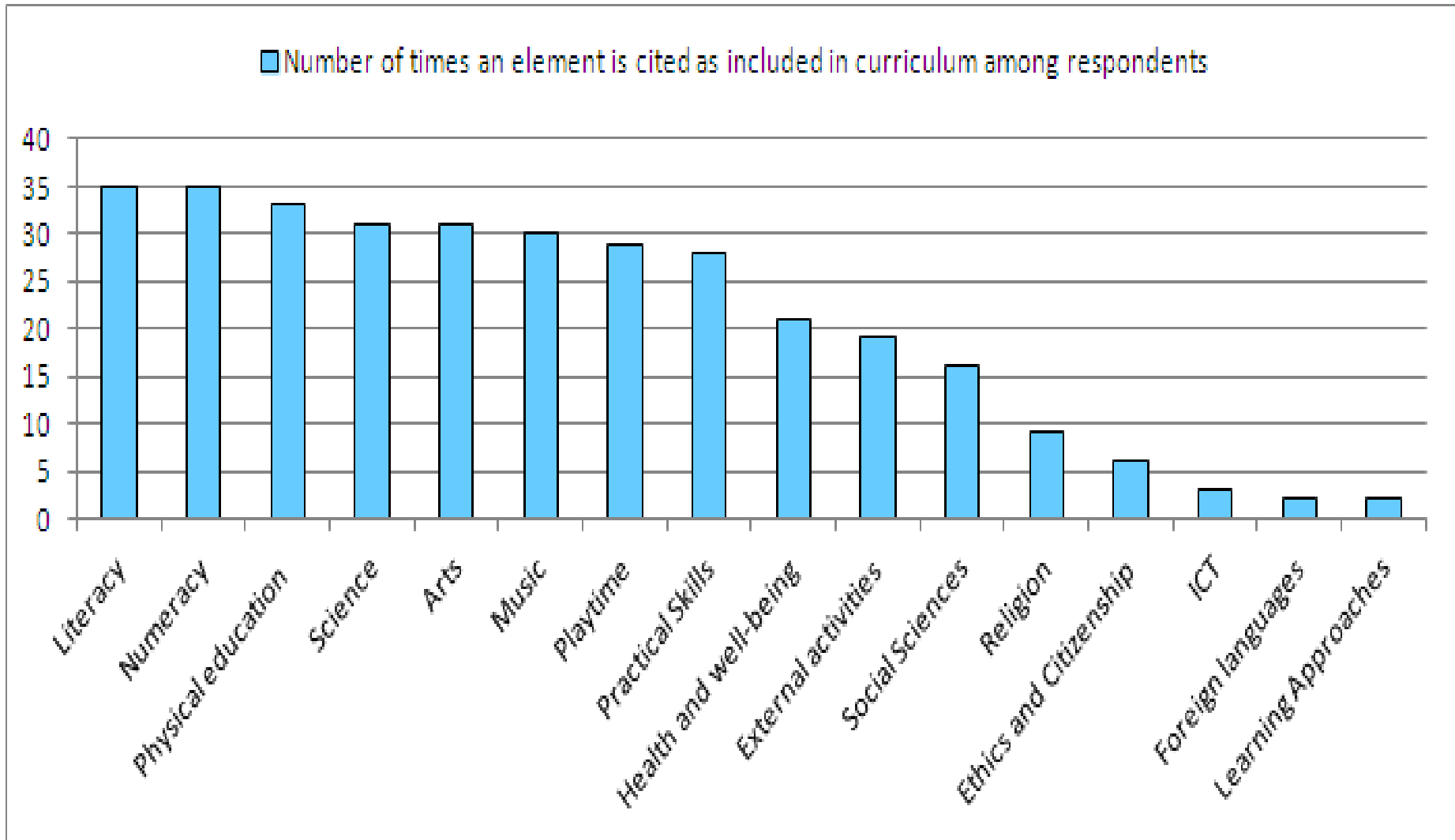
Qualifications, education and training…

• Determine staff's pedagogical quality, which will influence child development through staff's knowledge, skills and interactions

• Research suggests that high staff quality includes:
- Good initial education; continuous professional development
- Good understanding of child development
- Good knowledge of curriculum elements
- Ability to praise, comfort, question, scaffold, be responsive, and stimulate development
- Skills for problem solving and development of lesson plans
- Strong leadership (of ECEC staff and management)

Working conditions can have an impact on…

- Staff job satisfaction

- Staff stability / staff turnover

- Staff behaviour – stable, sensitive, stimulating and meaningful interactions with children positively affect child development

- Quality of ECEC

International overview: Qualification levels

Child care staff (staff in caring positions):

- Majority have qualification of **ISCED level 3** (16 out of 24 jurisdictions)

Kindergarten staff (staff in teaching positions):

- 25 out of 31 jurisdictions indicated kindergarten teachers are educated at **ISCED level 5**

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Policy goals and minimum standards

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Research says….

Family and community engagement can…

- Make ECEC services more responsive to what children need/improve ECEC quality

- Improve the home-learning environment/child development

- Ensure continuity of children's experiences in different environments (comprehensive services)

- Inform parents/communities about child development

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International overview: ways to engage parents

Parental Engagement

Making it a legal obligation	Making it a parental right	Putting it in a policy paper	Involving parents in decision-making	Allowing parents to be providers
Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Japan*, Manitoba (Canada) Netherlands*, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal*, Prince Edward Island (Canada), Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey	Norway, Prince Edward Island (Canada), Poland, Slovenia, Sweden	New Zealand, Norway, Slovak Republic, Sweden	Australia, Belgium, British Columbia (Canada), Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany Ireland, Japan, Manitoba (Canada), Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Prince Edward Island (Canada), Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey	Belgium, Germany, Manitoba (Canada), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovak Republic, Sweden

* Only regarding kindergartens/preschools for Japan and Portugal; only regarding child care for the Netherlands.

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Data collection, monitoring and research can…

•   Help establish facts, trends and evidence about whether children have equitable access to high quality ECEC and are benefiting from ECEC

•   Increase accountability and improve programme quality

•   Inform policy and practice; contribute to evidence-based policy-making

•   Inform parents so they can make well-informed decisions

International overview: Monitoring

- **Monitoring** is most common in kindergartens/preschools. Fewer countries implement monitoring exercises/assessments in family day care.

- **Subjects being monitored**:
  - child development and outcomes
  - staff performance
  - level of service quality
  - regulation compliance
  - curriculum implementation
  - parent satisfaction
  - Workforce supply and working conditions

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International overview

• **Most common monitoring assessments** are on:
  - child development and outcomes
  - staff performance
  - level of service quality, including physical environments

• **Different monitoring practices/methods** in place depending on what is being monitored: inspections, observations, standardised testing, checklists, portfolios, rating scales, questionnaires, self-assessment

•**Frequency of monitoring** differs greatly among countries and between subjects of monitoring

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Definition of 'quality' may vary among policymakers, service providers, staff, parents and children….

- **Structural quality: System-level (national or regional)**
  - Minimum standards (e.g. staff-child ratio, staff qualification, space per child)
  - Curriculum framework or learning / well-being standards
  - Staff qualification, education and training
  - Staff remuneration and other benefits
  - etc.

- **Process quality: Service-/ Staff -level**
  - Quality of interaction between staff/ child
  - Quality of interaction between staff/ parent

- **Quality in child outcomes: Individual level**
  - Cognitive development
  - Non-cognitive child development

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Many OECD countries are increasingly interested in ensuring '**process quality**' and '**quality in child outcomes**' than 'structural quality'.

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e.g. Monitoring service quality, staff quality

Instruments

External evaluation
- inspections
  - surveys by parents
  - Interviews
  - Tests: staff knowledge/ child test results

Internal evaluation
- self-assessments
- Peer reviews
- surveys by staff/management

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Monitoring service quality

Effects

•Difficult to assess the impact of monitoring per se as it is often accompanied with improvement measures, however:

– USA: Use of QRIS - quality improved over time

– GBR: Inspections – quality of provisions is assured

•Literature points out to the importance of family engagement, in particular, good understanding of what "service quality" means

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Monitoring staff quality

Effects

Mixed results on the effects of monitoring staff quality

No impact or negative impact

- UK: self-assessment - no significant impact on quality improvement
- US: when child test results are used, it is found to be insufficiently valid and not reliable in making any fair conclusions about staff quality: child outcomes is not a direct result of activities of staff

Positive impact

- When linked to professional development, positive effects are observed.
- NJ/USA: when observation and rating scales were used, a positive impact was found on staff practices and significant effects on child language and literacy skills
- FL/BEL: when process-oriented self-evaluation was used, positive impacts were observed on prof development, teamwork, and better understanding of children's needs

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Monitoring child outcomes

Instruments

Direct

- Tests: standardised or not
    - Summative vs. formative assessments
- Screening or identifying special needs for early interventions

Indirect

- Staff observations: through rating scales and checklists
- Narrative assessments: portfolios and storytelling

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Monitoring child outcomes

Effects

• Little research is available on the effects; where available, impacts differ according to practice and purpose

• Single monitoring practice at one point in time is no valid predictor of children's potential

• School readiness tests possibly delay entry to school: This can have negative impacts

• Positive relationships are found between child outcomes and non-formal practices, or on-going observations in natural environments

  – USA(Head Start): portfolios –> improvements on classroom quality

  – AUS(EDI):

    • increased community awareness on the importance of ECEC, therefore, better collaboration between stakeholders

    • informed staff practices and better able to meet children's needs

  – VAN/CAN(EDI): led to the development of support programmes on literacy skills and parental support programmes on how to stimulate child learning

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OECD Planned Programme of Work 2015/16

Data development

•Development and piloting of an international survey of ECEC staff

•Exploration of child outcomes data development

Policy analysis

•Successful transition from ECEC to primary education

The OECD welcomes participation of governments and partnership with other international organisations/ foundations in the new projects on ECEC.