



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AND CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT
AND RETENTION

A REVIEW FOR KAZAKHSTAN

Ineke Litjens and Miho Taguma

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Executive summary

Significant staff shortages are a key challenge in the ECEC teaching workforce, for a number of reasons. These include an ageing workforce, a low number of entrants into the sector, and high staff turnover rates and attrition.

This presents numerous challenges. Recruiting, selecting and employing ECEC educators can be difficult, since ECEC teaching is not always an attractive career choice, initial preparation can be insufficient, and working in underserved or disadvantaged areas may not be appealing. All these factors make it difficult to ensure a balanced workforce that could provide a better mix of positive role models for children.

When recruiting new staff, ECEC systems face hurdles in recruiting high-quality graduates, particularly in areas where they are in short supply. A range of strategies have been employed in different countries to help to recruit, select and employ staff. Competitive compensation, strong support and preparation, and recognition in society of the crucial role of the profession can all help to validate its importance. Active recruitment campaigns can throw a spotlight on the fulfilling nature of teaching as a profession. Such campaigns can seek to draw in those who might not otherwise have considered teaching, and recruit candidates in underserved areas or those who are in the minority in the ECEC sector. All this requires initial education to prepare new teachers well, and flexible recruitment procedures to attract staff from diverse backgrounds. Kazakhstan has set a very ambitious goal of full ECEC enrolment of all 3- to 6-year-olds by 2020. To achieve this objective, it will need an influx of new ECEC teachers, and the lessons learned and the examples of strategies from other countries can be instructive in helping to recruit and attract teachers.

Retention of new ECEC staff has also been identified as a problem in recent studies. The working conditions in ECEC are often relatively unfavourable, in terms of pay and workload. Supplementary training and updating of skills may not be adequate, and educators often need to shoulder increasing responsibilities and a greater variety of tasks, without any corresponding rewards in pay and career progression. Working conditions play a key role in job satisfaction, and any improvements are likely to reduce staff turnover and increase retention. Finally, increasing emphasis is being placed on staff performance, since staff quality is a fundamental aspect of providing quality ECEC services. Settings are increasingly monitoring the performance of their staff, and as greater emphasis is placed on accountability, educators may have difficulty keeping up with the pressure of complying with an increasing variety of monitoring practices and tools, and the need to comply with all the necessary paperwork.

Increasing the appeal of jobs in the ECEC sector, by providing professional development opportunities as well as interesting career development paths, will help promote staff retention. For instance, a system of staff evaluation may help Kazakhstan to analyse its training needs and other measures to improve its ECEC workforce policies.

Well-designed policies could help address the outstanding issues in the ECEC profession and work environment in Kazakhstan. Some potential options for Kazakhstan are suggested in this report, based on its findings and the background report prepared by Kazakhstan and supplemented by a survey of policy options and country experiences.

These will help identify the key aspects for attracting and retaining ECEC staff, such as expanding the supply pool of potential ECEC teachers, and improving remuneration, as well as working conditions, over time. Many of the factors that make the ECEC sector an attractive career choice for new entrants are also important in encouraging people to stay in the profession, strengthening professional development and viewing it as a lifelong learning continuum.

Chapter 1

Challenges in the early childhood education and care teaching workforce

Significant staff shortages are a key challenge in the ECEC teaching workforce, caused by a number of contributing factors. These include an ageing workforce, a low number of entrants into the sector and high staff turnover rates and attrition.

This presents a number of challenges. Recruiting, selecting and employing ECEC educators can be difficult, since ECEC teaching is not always an attractive career choice. Initial preparation may be insufficient, and working in underserved or disadvantaged areas may not be appealing. Ensuring a balanced workforce is also important, since it provides a better mix of positive role models for children, but given the aforementioned issues, it is not easily achievable.

Once educators are employed, retention becomes the next challenge. Working conditions in ECEC can be relatively unfavourable, in terms of pay and workload. Further training and updating of skills is often insufficient, as educators face increasing responsibilities and a greater variety of tasks, without corresponding pay and career progression. Finally, greater attention is being paid to the effectiveness of staff. Settings are increasingly monitoring their staff performance, since staff quality is a fundamental aspect of providing quality ECEC services, and accountability has become increasingly important. Monitoring practices may be ubiquitous, but they may not, however, always be coherently administered. Educators may face undue pressure from the variety of monitoring practices and tools in place, and their efforts to comply with all the required paperwork.

Key messages

- There are significant staff shortages in ECEC. These involve not just the total number of educators, but to the number of both under-qualified and unqualified staff working in jobs that require qualifications that they do not have. Other factors include an ageing workforce, the low number of entrants into the sector, high staff turnover rates and attrition.

A number of factors make it difficult to recruit, select and employ staff:

- A career in ECEC is not always attractive, since its salaries and professional standing and status are lower by comparison with, for example, primary or secondary education. In addition, intrinsic factors play a key role in the decision for people to become teachers. Recruiting educators should also address their motivation to work in the sector, since the best motivated people are also found to be the most committed.
- Educators are not always sufficiently prepared. Adequately preparing educators for their tasks and responsibilities is important in making their introduction to teaching a success. It can be difficult to attract staff to work in underserved areas, regions or in settings with special needs.
- Attracting educators to work in rural areas can be more difficult, since rural areas often lack social, cultural and career opportunities, especially for younger, newly qualified educators.
- Working with disadvantaged, migrant and special needs children requires specialised training. Initial education and training does not always sufficiently provide this, which makes working with such children even more daunting.
- Generating a representative and diverse ECEC workforce. The ECEC workforce in most countries remains preponderantly female, and it is also homogenous, that is, lacking in ethnic diversity.

Retaining staff is difficult for several reasons:

- Working conditions are unfavourable. Relative to other areas of education, ECEC educators face relatively low remuneration and career possibilities. Managerial support and leadership play an important role in ECEC, but are not always adequately provided for.
- Training and updating of skills can be insufficient. The scope of educators' responsibilities is widening, but they do not always receive training in the necessary specialised knowledge. Further training and professional development are important for building on initial training and keeping staff up to date with the latest developments. The opportunities and support for this vary widely between countries. In addition, training programmes may not always meet staff needs.
- Lastly, monitoring staff performance can provide relevant insights into professional development needs and improve educational outcomes. However, professional standards are not always clearly laid out, and may not convey a good understanding of what performance should be. Alternatively, specifications may be too detailed, preventing staff from doing their job well.

Introduction

The challenges to the ECEC work force are many, and Kazakhstan is not the only country thinking about ECEC staff policies. An overarching challenge is attracting and recruiting new staff into the ECEC sector, since many countries face, or will be facing, significant staff shortages. The shortages refer not just to the numbers of educators altogether but also under-qualified or unqualified educators working in positions that require particular qualifications they do not have, the so-called “hidden shortages.” Reasons for staff shortages include an ageing workforce, a low number of entrants to the sector, as well as high staff turnover and attrition rates.

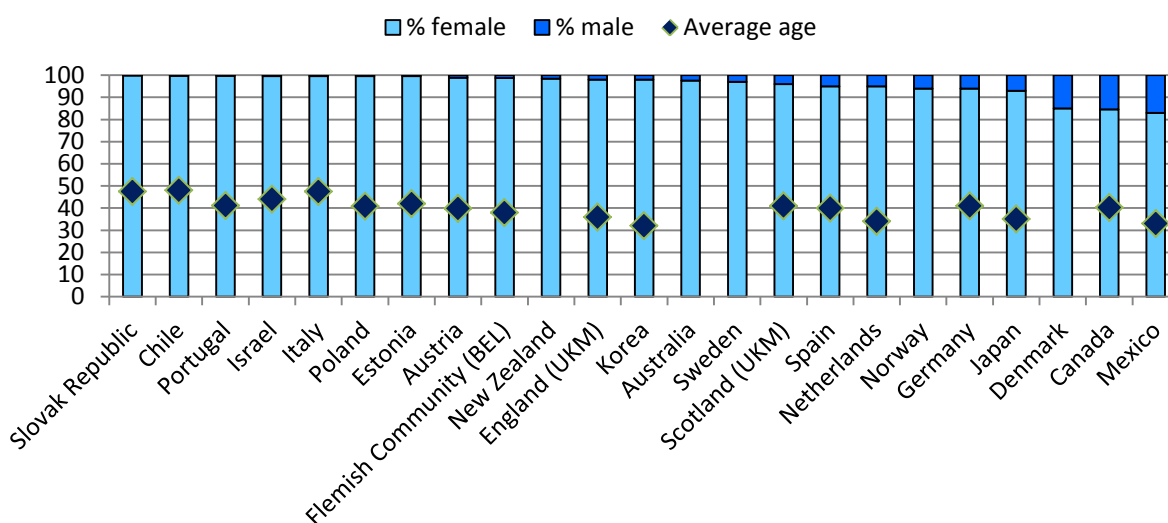
Governments have been putting increasing emphasis on the value of early education, since learning and development during the early years has been found to significantly impact lifelong learning and development. However, the pay, professional standing and status of the ECEC workforce do not match its purported importance. The increased emphasis on the importance of ECEC has resulted in greater concern with staff quality. All jurisdictions now monitor the level of staff quality and staff performance, either at the setting or individual level (OECD, 2015a). Despite the increased attention in research and policy to staff quality, ECEC staff are not necessarily rewarded for good performance. In addition, the range of practices and tools implemented by governments, municipalities and settings are not necessarily administered coherently, and as a result, educators may feel they are constantly battling to meet different criteria, adding undue stress. Additionally, unfavourable working conditions add to the country issues regarding staffing.

This chapter sets out to examine the challenges to the ECEC teaching workforce in more detail. It tackles challenges in recruiting, selecting and employing ECEC staff, and challenges in retaining staff in the ECEC workforce. It will also briefly address challenges in monitoring staff performance, a topic of increasing interest for OECD countries, which can contribute to a better understanding of staffing issues and how to overcome them. This will also provide the foundation for subsequent chapters, which will consider a wide range of policies and practices adopted to overcome these issues, based on country experiences. A concluding chapter offers some policy considerations for Kazakhstan.

Significant staff shortages in early childhood education and care

A staff shortage generally refers to an insufficient supply of teachers, which is usually identified by vacancy rates (OECD, 2005). But staff shortages refer not just to numbers of educators altogether, but to both underqualified and unqualified staff working in jobs that require qualifications that they do not have. Such shortages are termed “hidden shortages”, because a vacancy may be filled, but the educator may not have the qualification necessary for the position, and has been accepted because no better qualified educator was available (ibid). Staff shortages can result in emergency measures such as increasing class sizes and less favourable staff-child ratios, as a means to compensate for a shortage of educators (ibid). The ageing workforce in many countries, a low number of entrants into the sector, and high staff turnover rates directly contribute to staff shortages.

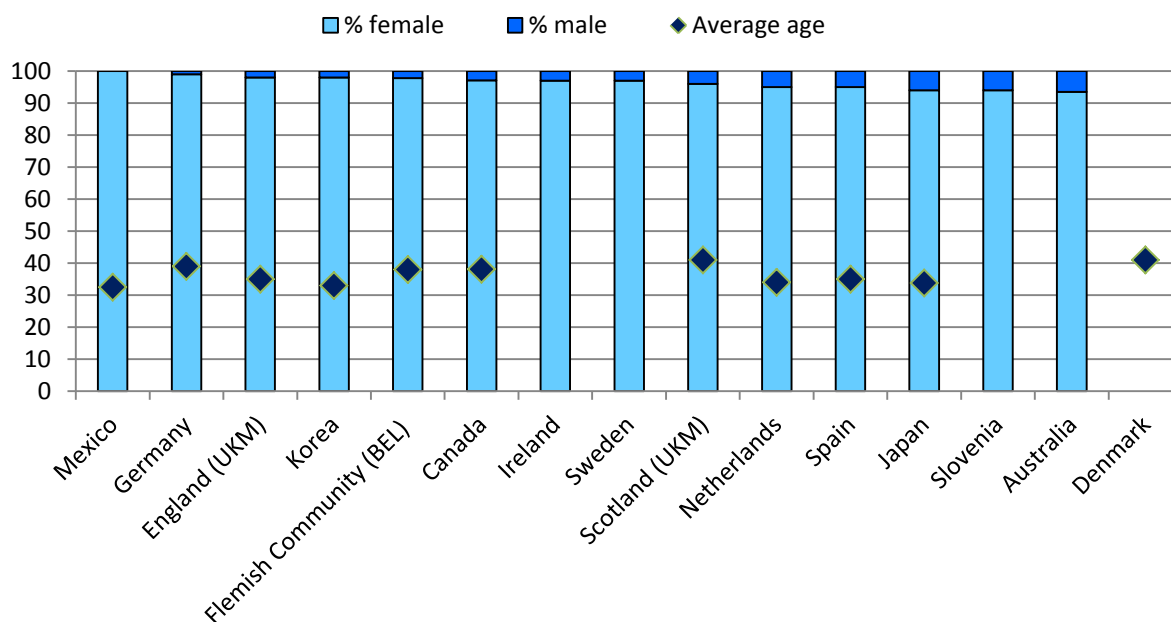
Figure 1.1. Average age and gender distribution of pre-primary school teachers (2011)



Note: Figures for average age for New Zealand, Australia, Sweden and Denmark were not available.

Source: OECD (2012), *Starting Strong III*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123564-en>.

Figure 1.2. Average age and gender distribution of childcare staff (2011)



Note: Figures for average age for Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden and Australia were not available.

Source: OECD (2012), *Starting Strong III*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264123564-en>

Ageing workforce

An ageing workforce affects the supply of teachers in a number of ways. First, it indicates that more teachers are retiring than are being recruited, and the resulting imbalance leads to a shortage. In the primary education sector, around a quarter of teachers are over the age of 50, and just over 1 in 10 teachers is under the age of 30 (OECD, 2015b), signalling that staff shortages will be likely. An ageing workforce results in less experienced practitioners in the ECEC sector (Bradley, Herzenberg and Price, 2005). In ECEC, the average age of pre-primary school teachers is 40 years old, while in childcare, they are a little younger, at 36 years old (see Figure 1.1 and 1.2)

On the other hand, older practitioners are also more costly, since salaries increase depending on experience (OECD, 2015b). Staff costs, such as salaries, often depend on the same budget as attracting and recruiting procedures for new teachers (OECD, 2005), and a high percentage of older staff may discourage certain municipalities or settings from recruiting and attracting new practitioners. The knowledge of older and more experienced staff may not always be up to date (ibid). Continuous training will thus also be discussed. New practitioners bring in new knowledge and potentially innovative ideas for caring and teaching, which can enhance quality.

A low number of entrants in the sector

The number of entrants entering the ECEC workforce is a common challenge in many countries, and so, in particular, is attaining satisfactory numbers of entrants with the required levels of qualifications (OECD, 2006). The number of entrants to the ECEC workforce is closely correlated with the attractiveness of working in ECEC (as discussed below). The attractiveness and status of teaching can influence potential entrants' decision to choose a teaching career (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012; Cumming, Sumsion and Wong, 2015). Other factors that may affect this include the availability of ECEC initial training programmes, career opportunities and salary. These will be addressed in subsequent chapters, based on data collected.

High staff turnover rates and attrition

The ECEC sector has a reputation for high staff turnover and attrition in many OECD countries (OECD, 2006; 2012). Many factors contribute to this, some of the key reasons being insufficient preparation for the teaching job, unfavourable working conditions, and limited career opportunities (ibid). When educators are not sufficiently trained for working in ECEC, especially in terms of practical training, their initial work experiences may be poor, leading to a lack of confidence that can ultimately cause them to leave the workforce (OECD, 2005). Working conditions in ECEC are acknowledged to be relatively weak compared to other sectors, particularly in view of the pay and workload. This can drive educators out of the sector in search of a better deal; alternatively, stress and burnout can also play a role (ibid).

Leadership is a key factor in both successful ECEC settings and a high quality of staff. When leadership is unable to provide direction or purpose, leaving educators feeling unsupported, this can also push them to leave the profession (Stamopoulos, 2012). Finally, career opportunities in terms of professional development and promotion are important in making educators feel that they are making progress in their career. Some educators have reported that the lack of career opportunities has led them to seek employment in other fields (Cumming, Sumsion and Wong, 2015). Low retention in the workforce affects sustainability over time, particularly when combined with recruitment

difficulties. Staff turnover and attrition can result in recurrent change in ECEC services and potential loss of leadership and experience, eroding professional standards and work culture (Stamopoulos, 2012). It can also increase stress, if other staff are obliged to take on more work as a result. Furthermore, if leadership and experience is lost, educators may in compensation be promoted beyond their capabilities, which can lead to greater job dissatisfaction if they do not receive the correct training, or lack the expertise and/or experience for the promotion (ibid).

Staff shortages can be overcome in recruiting new staff and maintaining staff in the ECEC workforce. But countries experience challenges in both domains, as will be discussed below. The task of maintaining a high level of staff quality, will also be addressed briefly.

Challenges in recruiting, selecting and employing early childhood education and care staff

Making a career in ECEC teaching attractive

Early childhood educators are a key element in achieving high-quality ECEC services, but many countries have difficulty making ECEC sector an appealing choice. Attracting staff in remote or underserved areas is a particular challenge, as is attracting a diverse workforce that reflects society. In Kazakhstan too, the ECEC sector does not appear to be well-regarded as a career. Only 1 out of 10 students with an average academic performance in Atyrauskaya oblast indicated an interest in starting a teacher programme in the future. Of these, not one reported having a particular interest in ECEC (IAC, 2015). A number of factors can be attributed to these challenges.

Comparatively low salaries

Staff working conditions are one structural quality indicator that can affect staff satisfaction, and therefore retention (or staff turnover, as discussed below), as well as staff performance. Good working conditions are an important incentive for attracting qualified staff into the profession. Studies (Howes et al., 2003; Hyson et al., 2009; NIEER, 2004; Sommer et al., 2010) have shown that it is not only the staff's education and training that enables them to meet children's needs and provide a good level of quality. Working conditions are also vital – such as salary and the benefits associated with work (OECD, 2012). The degree of staff motivation influences their behaviour and staff performance. Thus, motivation plays an important role in staff quality, and is partly linked to working conditions such as salary (Berntsson, 2006; de Schipper et al., 2007; OECD, 2012).

Governments are increasingly acknowledging that the foundation of human capital depends on equal chances and lifelong learning beginning in early childhood, and that ECEC can therefore play a key role. While the early years are widely recognised as an important phase in a child's development and learning, working conditions and pay for ECEC staff are often low by comparison with teaching careers in higher levels of education or in other sectors, and appear to be insufficient to attract and retain qualified staff. This is reflected in the ECEC staff shortages in almost all countries, including Kazakhstan, and its high turnover rates.

The low professional standing and status of the ECEC workforce

ECEC workers receive lower remuneration than educators working in primary, secondary or tertiary education, and ECEC jobs often also require fewer qualifications. In addition, opportunities for ECEC career development appear to be lacking in many countries. Salaries may increase based on experience (and thus years of service), but few opportunities for “growing” into a higher position or possibilities for transferring into different types of positions are typically part of the ECEC career path. Clear opportunities for career development are important for recruitment and retention, since they suggest that there is a future for ECEC teachers and care workers, which can also increase status (OECD, 2005). The Global Teacher Index of 2013 also shows the low status that teaching jobs often have: the study found that teachers are considered comparable to social workers among respondents in the majority of the countries surveyed (e.g. New Zealand, Spain and the Netherlands) (Dolton and Marcenaro Gutierrez, 2013). The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) results also indicate that only a third of teachers feel valued in their job.

The issue of status in the ECEC sector is also, at least partly, associated with the type of settings an educator works in, the age group he or she works with, and his or her related tasks and responsibilities (Ireland Department for Education and Science, 2009). This holds true particularly in countries with a split ECEC system, where responsibilities for ECEC are split between different authorities and where settings for young and older children are usually not integrated, resulting in care or play settings for children under the age of 3 or 4 and preschools dedicated to children starting at the age of 3 or 4. Professionals working with children of under 3 years old are often perceived as “care workers”, work in settings defined as “care settings”, and their responsibilities are often related more to caring for rather than teaching children (Moss, 2006; Manning-Morton, 2006). By contrast, ECEC professionals working with older children are more frequently seen to have educational responsibilities and tasks, and more often work in settings that are referred to as kindergartens or preschools (OECD, 2012; 2015). Since educators working in education-focused settings tend to be more qualified than those working in care settings, they can be perceived as having a higher professional standing, even though those in childcare or working with younger children have an equal role in facilitating learning and development (Moss, 2006; Manning-Morton, 2006). Parents' understanding of professionalism, and whether and how much they view ECEC educators as being professional, affects ECEC educators' perception of their own professionalism. This shows that external views on status affect staff's own perceptions and views of their job (Brooker, 2010).

Such factors influence the lower professional standing and status of ECEC educators compared to teachers in other levels of education (OECD, 2006). This increases the challenge many countries face in attracting and recruiting ECEC teachers and care workers, especially potentially stronger candidates with better qualifications, since they may prefer working in sectors with better status and working conditions (Cumming, Sumsion and Wong, 2015). But achieving professionalism, and in consequence, improving the status of ECEC educators, is a complex task. So-called “facilitators” of professionalism, i.e. solutions that improve the professional status of the ECEC workforce, such as higher qualifications, better training or creating professional standards, can also “inflect” professionalism (Cumming, Sumsion and Wong, 2015). Introducing higher qualifications in the sector, for instance, can cause tensions between staff members with different levels of education. Research in Korea (Kim, 2004) showed that ECEC educators with an academic qualification believed themselves to have higher

status and a higher professional standing than colleagues with a vocational degree (ibid). Moreover, higher qualifications are not always regarded as desirable by ECEC workers. A study by Osgood (2010) concluded that educators found it difficult to convince other ECEC workers of the professional value of a higher academic qualification, especially within ECEC settings where the hierarchy was flat. Different levels of responsibilities and thus career perspectives are unfortunately also needed to improve status and professional standing. Another option for improving the professionalism of ECEC staff is to develop specialist skills and knowledge, which can improve their status (Cumming, Sumsion and Wong, 2015).

Motivations for teaching

Intrinsic factors play a key role in the decision to join the ECEC sector and become a teacher. Two reasons for working in ECEC frequently cited by staff in France, Australia, the French Community of Belgium, Quebec (Canada) and the United Kingdom include: “enjoying working with children” and “a desire to teach” (OECD, 2006). Studies note that: “*Evidence does not provide a simple blueprint of an applicant type; instead it shows us that it is intrinsic motivation and training and support at initial and continuing stages which is key to teachers feeling and being effective in their professional roles. Entrants into teaching, who go on to feel passionate about and committed to education, and confident in their practice, are those who are motivated by aspects of the job itself*” (ATL, 2011). In other words: ECEC workers are self-motivated, and have great interest in working in early education and care.

It is thus argued that recruiting educators should focus not just on levels of qualifications or experience, but address their motivation to work in the sector, since the people most motivated to work in education are also found to be the most committed (ATL, 2011). However, while motivation is important in attracting, recruiting and retaining staff, motivation needs to be stimulated, encouraged and supported throughout a person’s career – to ensure that the motivation for teaching and caring continues.

Insufficient preparation for the job of teaching

Adequately preparing educators for their tasks and responsibilities is important in making their initial experience of teaching a success. Teaching preparation includes a number of elements, and if these are not addressed or addressed only partially or ineffectively, educators’ first experiences of teaching, as well as their motivation, can suffer, jeopardising their retention in the longer term.

The initial education and training of staff is an important element in preparing educators for teaching. Research (Elliott, 2006; Johansson and Pramling Samuelsson, 2009; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010) shows that education and training affect the ability of educators to carry out teaching tasks, since better initial education and training raises the quality of interactions between educators and children. Having mastered the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences to work with young children and stimulate their development helps educators “in their ability to organise and execute particular actions to attain the desired result” (OECD, 2012, p. 145).

In OECD countries, the level of education and training required of ECEC educators and care workers diverges widely (see Chapter 2 for further details). Generally speaking, lower levels of training are required for staff working with children of under 3 years old in what are usually care environments, while training requirements rise for those working with older children, where tasks focus more on learning and education (OECD, 2006;

2012). In certain countries, such as the Netherlands, initial education is integrated for pre-primary and primary teachers. Graduates can work in both pre-primary schools as well as primary schools and move between them (OECD, 2012). However, working with children in pre-primary education requires a different set of skills and knowledge from teaching in schools (Siraj-Blatchford, I. et al., 2002; Press, Wong and Gibson, 2015). The research suggests that children learn best through play (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010), and notes that learning situations that resemble those in schools, as typical of many primary schools, may not be the best way to stimulate a child's development at an early age. Staff who have been trained to work specifically with young children in ECEC are better able to provide high-quality interactions and opportunities for age-appropriate development (OECD, 2006; 2012; Press, Wong and Gibson, 2015). In Kazakhstan, concerns persist about how well-prepared ECEC staff are, since initial education and training is often focused on pre-primary education of children of 3 and older, or staff are not familiar with the ECEC curricula (IAC, 2015).

Practical experience is another key aspect of preparing practitioners adequately (OECD, 2005). This provides educators with an understanding of the dynamics of teaching in context and helps them avoid the shock of an initial adjustment when they first confront the rigors of the job. It also gives prospective educators an opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt and a chance to learn effective strategies for working with children (ibid). The research has established that students with more field experience have higher retention levels than those who do not. (This evidence concerned primary and secondary school teachers, but conclusions from this study can be used as an example in the pre-primary context as well). However, work-based experience is not always integrated into initial education and training, or makes up only a small part of the training, as discussed below (OECD, 2005).

Lastly, induction programmes, which support beginning practitioners in the initial stages of his or her career, can benefit educators. It has been argued that the initial phase of an educator's career will affect his or her effectiveness later on, and influence the decision whether or not to continue working as an educator (Noble, Goddard and O'Brien, 2003). Teachers' initial experience needs to be positive to support their effectiveness and longevity in the profession (Noble and Macfarlane, 2005). Pre-service and post-service inductions should be well-organised and appropriate for students and new graduates, or they may not have the required effect. In an Australian state (Queensland), induction and support of ECEC educators takes place alongside that of primary school teachers. However, primary classrooms and ECEC settings differ in their operation and philosophical approach, which means that a combined induction programme is unlikely to be useful for ECEC educators (Noble and Macfarlane, 2005). They suggest that this leads to a less differentiated ECEC professional identity that may make it difficult for educators to maintain professional direction in their work.

Research supports the importance of induction programmes, and a number of studies show that they not only reduce attrition rates but increase teaching capabilities (Weiss and Weiss, 1999). A study by Billingsley, Carlson and Klein (2004) notes that even when initial education is of good quality, beginning educators need support for their pedagogical learning and development. Induction support can take many different forms, including mentoring, orientation meetings, observations and professional development, but Billingsley, Carlson and Klein (2004) emphasise that it should be adapted to educators and the context in which they are working.

Attracting staff in underserved areas, regions or in settings with special needs

Attracting educators to ECEC settings in particular contexts, such as rural areas or settings with concentrations of children with special needs or a high rate of disadvantaged children, can be even more challenging than attracting staff in regular settings, for a combination of reasons. Firstly, teaching in rural areas can be isolating, since rural regions do not offer the same social and cultural opportunities as urban areas (OECD, 2005). Educators may not only feel detached from these opportunities, but may have the idea that they may miss out on professional opportunities. Possibilities for professional development such as training courses or seminars are often not as readily available or accessible in rural areas (ibid). Furthermore, given a lower concentration of education settings, the opportunities for career progression may be fewer, and staff may be more reliable in the setting they are recruited in for opportunities for promotion. In addition, remuneration in rural areas is typically lower (OECD, 2005; Hudson and Hudson, 2008). Structural factors can also deter educators from teaching in rural areas. Funding for ECEC can be significantly lower in rural, less populated areas, affecting not only resources but career possibilities and opportunities for salary increases. Educators in rural areas may have less access to support services (such as support staff) and resources (such as information and communication technology), which, in addition to the other limitations, can make teaching more challenging.

Settings with a high concentration of disadvantaged or special needs children face similar challenges. This is more typical of urban than rural areas, since cities are more likely to have a larger number of such children, given the higher population (OECD, 2005). Such children can be more challenging to work with, as they have a more complex set of needs (Bennett, 2012). Children of ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds may, for example, struggle with language development, and requiring educators to know how best to address this and invest more time in this area of learning. In addition, parents from disadvantaged backgrounds or ethnic minorities may be less equipped to participate in their child's early learning and development, since they often have low levels of education or are struggling with language issues. This places more responsibility on the teacher to stimulate the development of such children (ibid).

The difficulty in attracting ECEC educators to work with children with special needs may stem, in part, from a lack of training in addressing special needs, both in initial education and continuous professional training. Teachers and care workers rarely receive training on working with special needs children (OECD, 2012) and are thus often ill-equipped to work with such children. While teachers need a specific degree to work with special needs children, in many OECD countries, children with limited special needs are increasingly encouraged to participate in regular settings (ibid). Policies often suggest that educators working with special needs must implement inclusive practice, providing equitable opportunities for every child (Janus et al., 2007). Moreover, special needs is a broad term and includes children with a range of cognitive, physical and social interaction abilities (ibid). Working with special needs children is thus demanding and may be daunting to educators with no or only limited specialised training, or if only limited financial and human resources are available to support the teacher.

A representative and diverse ECEC workforce

Many countries are struggling to build a representative and diverse workforce representative both of children in the ECEC system, and the variety of backgrounds and ethnicities in society. A balanced workforce is particularly important in ECEC, since it

provides a better mix of positive role models for children. A balanced workforce is more likely to include a greater range of skills and experiences capable of responding to the individual needs of each child (Lazzari, Vandenbroek and Peters, 2013; Bennett, 2012). In most countries, the ECEC workforce is homogenous; ECEC professionals tend to be mostly female, and not drawn from ethnic minorities (OECD, 2012; 2015b).

The ECEC workforce is principally female

Most ECEC professionals are women (see Figure 1.1 and 1.2). A key reason for this lies in the historic and cultural background of child-rearing, which has traditionally fallen to women (OECD, 2006). Although childcare outside the home has been introduced in various ECEC settings, the workforce consists mainly of women. In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovak Republic and the Russian Federation, the pre-primary teaching workforce is exclusively female. France and the Netherlands have the highest proportion of male pre-primary school teachers: 17% and 13% respectively (OECD, 2015b). No other level of education is as exclusively composed of women as ECEC.

A few countries have taken up the challenge to attract more men into the sector. Norway set a target to increase the number of male pedagogues, and has successfully increased their numbers. Further policy options will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Ethnic diversity in ECEC is rare

The literature shows (cf. Lazzari, Vandenbroek and Peters, 2013; Bennett, 2012) that children of ethnic minorities need positive role models and a mix of professionals from their own backgrounds. ECEC teachers of a similar background to the children in their care are able to understand their needs better and provide a more appropriate learning experience. The ECEC workforce, at least in European countries, remains ethnically homogenous. Both researchers in the field and leaders of ECEC services have indicated that ethnic diversity offers equality of opportunity, as well as of quality (OECD, 2006). Research indicates that the “higher the qualifications required and the more institutionalised the service, the less likely it is to have a representative workforce” (OECD, 2006: pp. 173). In Hungary, for instance, difficulties attracting ECEC educators of a Roma background persist, since the education levels of ethnic Roma are low. A below-average proportion of Roma students finish primary school, and only a small percentage complete secondary school. Countries aiming to attract indigenous teachers, for example, including Australia and New Zealand, face similar difficulties.

Challenges in retaining staff in the early childhood education and care workforce

Once people have been recruited into the ECEC teaching workforce, retaining them presents a challenge. The comparatively low pay is only one factor.

Unfavourable working conditions

Working conditions include a variety of factors, often relating to structural quality indicators or aspects such as wages/salary, staff-child ratio, group size, and the working environment and support staff receive. Support from management and leadership within the ECEC settings also contributes to working conditions. These can significantly influence the ability of staff to carry out their required tasks and how they interact with children: in essence, their ability to do their work well. Working conditions thus affect the attractiveness of working in the sector, and the motivation of staff to remain.

Comparatively low remuneration and limited career prospects

The comparatively low pay of ECEC educators is not only an issue in recruiting but in retaining teachers. Salaries of pre-primary teachers are usually lower than those of teachers in secondary and tertiary education, and in some countries, also lower than for primary teachers. Even if starting salaries for pre-primary and primary teaching staff are similar, average pay levels of staff in the two settings usually differ, indicating that salaries in the two sectors do not evolve at a similar pace. In ECEC, comparatively smaller increments in pay are offered when, for example, qualifications or experience have increased (Engel et al., 2015). In addition, the opportunities for career progression can be limited or unclear. Even when some opportunities for progress are available, these may not be clearly understood (Nutbrown, 2012).

Regulations on staff-child ratios

Regulations on staff-child ratios support an important aspect of working conditions, since the number of children that educators are responsible for affects the quality of the interaction between staff and children, as well as the staff's ability to carry out their tasks and activities. In addition, it is likely to influence the amount of individual attention and time a teacher can spend on each child (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015).

Staff-child ratios are usually regulated, with a lower number of children per staff member for the youngest children and a higher number of children per teacher for older children in ECEC. Younger children need more care and attention and are less independent than children of primary school age (OECD, 2012). Regulated ratios nevertheless vary widely between countries. For children aged 0-3 years, England (United Kingdom) has one of the most advantageous ratios: for staff working with 2-year old children, a statutory ratio of 1:4 is applied. For younger children (under the age of 2), a regulated ratio of 1:3 is applied. Finland also has a low staff-child ratio for children aged 0-3, at 1:3. The Slovak Republic and Oklahoma (USA) have far less favourable ratios, near the top of the range, with a staff-child ratio of 1:15 for children aged 0-3. For children of age 3 to school age, Finland has the most favourable ratio, 1:7, closely followed by New Zealand and Estonia at 1:8. Less favourable are Spain and Portugal, at 1:25, with Japan even higher, at 1:35. A full overview of staff-child ratios can be found in Chapter 3. More favourable ratios can positively affect staff satisfaction, and thus retention, since a larger number of children per teacher can affect his or her ability to do the job well and may become a source of demoralisation.

But while ratios may support staff in implementing their tasks and can affect staff and pedagogical quality, staff education and training is highly important both for staff and pedagogical quality. If educators are not educated, trained and equipped to work in ECEC and to stimulate early child development, standards of quality may suffer.

Poor managerial support and leadership

Leadership has an important influence on the retention of educators, since effective leadership generates a supportive and co-operative working environment, and provides clear direction. In such an environment, educators work more congenially together, feeling greater value and purpose in their role, and as such, are more likely to remain in the profession (OECD, 2005).

Developing suitable models of leadership for ECEC is nevertheless a concern for many countries, including England, Australia, and Finland (Murray and McDowell Clark,

2013). Government policies and reports recognise the need to increase leadership capacity through workforce development and quality professional standards. However there are many different forms of leadership, and it is not always made clear what is meant by leadership (ibid). Furthermore, it has been argued that business and school-based leadership models are not suitable for ECEC. A form of hierarchy is typically associated with such models, whereas effective leadership in ECEC should encourage broad participation and engagement, through building relationships with parents, professionals and the wider community. It should also support participative pedagogy by encouraging the sharing of dialogue and knowledge between staff (ibid).

Insufficient training and updating of skills

Training and skills development have been consistently identified as essential elements of achieving high quality services and good staff quality (Howes et al., 2003; OECD 2006, 2012; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). This is no surprise, given the changing and widening responsibilities of educators (discussed below), especially in view of leadership, the need for updating knowledge and changes in pedagogical practices and technologies. In addition, pedagogy and process quality, i.e. the interactions between adults and children, are also key aspects of staff quality, and hence it is important that staff have and update the skills to support high-quality pedagogy.

Widening responsibilities

ECEC teachers face increasing responsibilities at a range of levels: individual, classroom, ECEC setting and in the wider community. As the demands of the ECEC teaching workforce expand, ECEC teachers must not only be trained to an appropriate pedagogical capacity, but also in leadership. The role of ECEC teachers is not just to teach but to lead, mentor and advocate in their work, and with children, families and the wider community (Stamopoulos, 2012). At the individual level, ECEC teachers are required to be sensitive to how an individual child learns best and which mechanisms effectively support this. In addition, they are required to recognise and manage behavioural problems. Moreover, ECEC settings in some countries impose tests on children even in the early years, or continuously monitor children's development, which teachers must implement in an appropriate way and use to help improve a child's learning and development. At the classroom level, teachers must manage the implementation of the curriculum, and are increasingly encouraged to adapt the curriculum to children's individual needs (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). In addition, staff are working with an increasingly diverse group of children and must remain aware of cultural differences (ibid). At the ECEC setting level, teachers are involved in working and planning in teams, on evaluations and systematic improvements, as well as collaborating with management and collaborating with colleagues on shared leadership. Lastly, parental engagement has become increasingly important and is attracting increased interest. Several programmes require teachers to support parents in early child development and provide professional advice to parents regarding their child, and also encourage wider community learning (Stamopoulos, 2012).

The impetus for widening responsibilities in some countries has stemmed from government reforms, which have sought to raise the quality and professionalism of ECEC services (Press, Wong and Gibson, 2015; Stamopoulos, 2012). Responsibilities regarding ECEC are decentralised to local authorities in many countries (especially federal countries), which in turn has increased responsibilities for managers and professionals in ECEC (OECD, 2014a). As a result, accountability has increased in many countries, and

staff are expected to show better leadership in their classroom or playroom (ibid). When staff are given more responsibilities, teachers and care workers require specialised professional knowledge on newly implemented professional standards or administrative activities, for instance (Stamopoulos, 2012). However, training programmes do not always meet the needs of the staff – another challenge for countries to address in ensuring better staff performance and making a career in ECEC attractive.

Lack of ongoing training and development

Staff acquire some skills and knowledge through their initial education and training, but continuous training and professional development are important for building on this and keeping staff up to date with the latest developments in the field (OECD, 2005). While countries tend towards a similar understanding of continuous professional development (CPD) and appreciate its value for early childhood educators, in practice, opportunities and support differ widely (Oberhuemer, 2012). For example, in countries where early childhood educators are state employees (e.g. Slovenia) or work in the state education sector (England, Italy and Hungary in some instances), the opportunities for training are regulated by the state. In countries such as Germany or the non-state sector in England (United Kingdom), where early years employment structures differ more widely between states or settings, development opportunities are less regulated (ibid). Hence, the importance placed by the responsible authorities and ECEC centre management on professional training also affects staff possibilities for training.

Improving staff performance

Since investment in ECEC is increasing (OECD, 2015b), accountability is attracting increasing attention (OECD, 2015a). Staff quality is a fundamental aspect of providing quality ECEC services, and settings are increasingly monitoring their staff performance and identifying needs for training or areas for possible improvement (OECD, 2015a). The monitoring of staff encompasses a variety of processes and procedures that vary not just between countries but within them, since they are mostly implemented at the setting level (ibid).

Lack of transparency in professional standards and monitoring guidelines

Many countries have tried to develop a set of professional standards for ECEC to enforce a certain standard of working conditions and to guide educators on child learning and development practices through curriculum, learning standards or professional codes. Australia has set up the National Quality Standard, which is linked to the national learning framework (ACECQA, 2015), while England (United Kingdom) has created Teaching Standards for the Early Years, which is awarded to educators who have met all of the standards, in practice from birth to the end of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) (NCTL, 2013). New Zealand has produced *Te Whāriki*, an early childhood curriculum produced by the Ministry of Education, providing a framework for early learning and development within a sociocultural context. Professional standards can help provide guidance on how staff performance should be implemented and what is expected of staff. However, not all standards and guidelines are clear or precise enough (Engel et al., 2015), or on the other hand, may be too detailed, preventing staff from doing their job well. In England, for example, the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) was found to be too prescriptive, making it too difficult for staff to adhere to the requirements and standards and leaving too little room for flexibility in adapting the curriculum to

children's individual needs. As a result, England recently revised its framework (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015).

Monitoring for development

The literature widely acknowledges that the quality of staff and their pedagogical activities, interactions and knowledge have a large impact on children's well-being and development (Fukkink, 2011; OECD, 2012). Effective monitoring of staff has been found to be central to the continuous improvement of ECEC services. Staff attributes that research has identified as being important in facilitating high-quality services and outcomes include: a solid understanding of child development and learning, the ability to understand children's perspectives, age-appropriate communication and practices, leadership and problem-solving skills, and development of targeted pedagogy or lesson plans (OECD, 2012).

Monitoring staff quality in most countries involves a variety of processes and practices, including inspections, self-evaluations and/or peer reviews. Since responsibilities for staff evaluation often lie with decentralised authorities or with settings, the methods implemented vary widely (OECD, 2015a). The most common consequence of monitoring staff quality is a requirement that the centre or staff take steps to address any shortcomings (ibid). This can be achieved through a variety of measures, including training. When monitoring is linked to professional development, it can have beneficial outcomes both for children and for staff. For example, an evaluation of staff quality involving 51 early childhood classes for pre-school-age children throughout the United States exposed weaknesses in the instruction of certain subjects in the curriculum. As a result, staff training was developed and offered in those areas. Training staff in subjects in which they were less competent, and offering pedagogical training on how to instruct children better in these subjects, was found to result in better outcomes for the children in these subjects (Odom et al., 2010). This highlights the relevance of monitoring for improving staff performance and identifying training needs.

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Chapter 2

Attracting, recruiting and employing staff

Early childhood education and care systems face a demanding task in recruiting high-quality graduates as ECEC professionals, particularly in areas where shortages persist. To reach its enrolment goal of 100% of all 3- to 6-year-olds by 2020, Kazakhstan will need an influx of new ECEC teachers. Various countries have employed a range of strategies to address challenges in recruiting, selecting and employing staff. Competitive compensation, strong support and preparation and public acknowledgement of the important role of the profession are key. Active recruitment campaigns can emphasise the fulfilling nature of teaching as a profession, and attempt to draw in groups who might not otherwise have considered teaching or to recruit people from underserved areas or of minority backgrounds into the ECEC sector. All this requires initial education to prepare new teachers well, and flexible recruitment procedures to attract staff of diverse backgrounds.

Key messages

- There are two broad concerns concerning the supply of teachers. One concerns the number of teachers: many countries are either currently experiencing, or will shortly face, a quantitative shortage of teachers. This is also true for Kazakhstan. Teacher shortage problems appear to be of particular concern in settings serving disadvantaged or isolated communities. The other concern is qualitative, and reflects trends in the composition of the ECEC workforce in terms of cultural background and gender.
- As a result, there is a need to recruit, select and employ new ECEC educators and teachers. But most countries, Kazakhstan included, face challenges in this task. In a few countries, such as Korea, where teaching is held in high regard as a career, the number of qualified applicants exceeds the teaching vacancies.
- Challenges in the recruitment and employment of graduates and new ECEC teachers concern the appeal of working in the ECEC sector and the incentives for working in ECEC in remote and underserved areas. These include aspects such as working conditions, the status of the profession and how recruitment processes are conducted. In addition, preparing students for the tasks they face in teaching is important and involves the initial education and training of ECEC staff, the support they receive during their studies and career, and the practical experience they gain during their studies.
- Policy responses seek to improve the ECEC sector's general status and competitive position in the job market, to broaden the applicant pool to include well-qualified people from other fields, and to make it attractive for students to start a teaching programme. More targeted responses can be used to address particular types of staff shortages, including stronger incentives for teachers with skills that are in short supply, and encouragement and support for teachers to work in underserved and difficult locations.
- Common policy measures to increase the appeal of ECEC as a career include raising the status of the ECEC sector by professionalising the profession and informing the public about its importance to society, simplifying the recruitment process, diversifying entry routes into the ECEC sector by opening places to people without an ECEC background, funding students' education programmes, recognising prior experience to make it more attractive to (re-)train to become an ECEC professional, and increasing the financial and non-financial benefits.
- Better professional preparation can be achieved through matching the qualification requirements with the job requirements of a teacher or caregiver, revisiting initial education and training to ensure they are up to date and meet on-the-job demands, enhancing knowledge of staff by setting higher minimum education levels, ensuring that practical experience (internships) is included in all education programmes, and a strong mentoring system for students.
- Policy measures for attracting staff to underserved, remote or special needs settings and diversifying the workforce include providing internships to students in understaffed regions, giving the staff who work in the underserved regions financial or non-financial benefits, providing scholarships to attract teachers with specific specialisations, making special needs part of every initial training programme, and providing targeted support. To attract more men, countries have

developed training programmes specifically for men or started recruitment campaigns targeting men. To further diversify the workforce to reflect a country's diverse population, targeted measures for certain sub-populations have been implemented, such as lower tuition fees for certain population groups.

Introduction

Early childhood education systems face a great challenge in recruiting high-quality graduates as teachers or educators and caregivers. This is a particularly demanding task in shortage areas. Many OECD countries are already suffering from staff shortages. In others, large numbers of teachers preparing to retire and high attrition rates, as teachers simply leave the profession, are expected to lead to teacher shortages. Kazakhstan is also expected to need a large number of ECEC teachers in the near future.

As part of the State Programme of Education Development, the number of ECEC places in Kazakhstan has been rapidly increased, and a further expansion of the ECEC system is under way. The government's objective is to reach enrolment of 100% of all children over 3. This will require a large increase in participation (an increase of over 21 percentage points based on a participation rate of 78.6% in 2014), and thus a need for thousands of additional places for 3- to 6-year olds (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming). The surge in spaces for 3- to 6-year olds will require many teachers, but also psychologists, managers and other ECEC workers, for each setting.

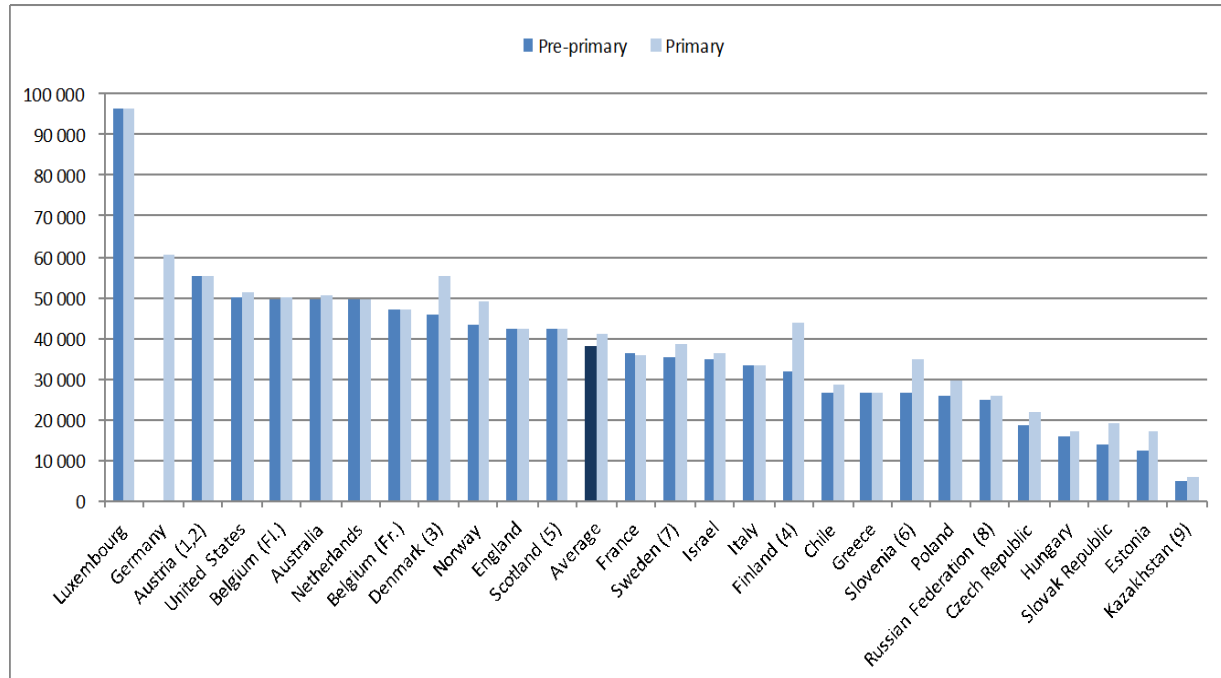
Making the ECEC sector an attractive career choice will require competitive compensation, career prospects, career diversity, and giving teachers responsibility as professionals. Active recruitment campaigns can emphasise the fulfilling nature of teaching as a profession, and seek to attract those who might not otherwise have considered teaching. Where teaching is seen as an attractive profession, its status can be enhanced through selective recruitment that makes teachers feel that they are entering a career that attracts high-flyers. This will also require strong initial preparation, to offer new teachers the pedagogical foundations for their job.

Making early childhood education and care an attractive career choice

A fundamental requirement for providing quality ECEC in early years settings is that they attract motivated people with high-level knowledge and skills. The ECEC profession needs to be competitive with other occupations in recruiting talented people. Recruitment measures and policies can increase the appeal of a career teaching in ECEC, helping to address staff shortages. As noted in Chapter 1, the wages of ECEC staff are an important part of job satisfaction and retention rates. In many OECD countries, pay parity between pre-primary and primary school teachers has been achieved, raising the status of the ECEC profession (see Figure 2.1). On average, primary school teachers earn 9% more than pre-primary school staff, with wide varieties between countries. In Luxembourg, Austria, the Netherlands, England and Greece, pre-primary teachers receive the same wages as their colleagues in primary education.

Figure 2.1. Annual average salaries (including bonuses and allowances) of teachers (25-64 years) in public pre-primary and primary institutions (2013)

In equivalent USD converted using PPPs



Notes: 1. Figures for the pre-primary level refer to primary teachers (in primary schools only) teaching pre-primary classes. 2. Also includes data on salaries of headmasters, deputies and assistants. 3. Also includes data on salaries of teachers in early childhood educational development programmes for pre-primary education. 4. Includes data on the majority, i.e. kindergarten teachers only for pre-primary education. 5. Includes all teachers, irrespective of their age. 6. Includes data on salaries of preschool teaching assistants for pre-primary education. 7. Average teachers' salaries, not including bonuses and allowances; 8. Average teachers' salaries for all teachers, irrespective of the educational level they teach. 9. Data for Kazakhstan excludes bonuses and allowances.

Sources: OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Data for Kazakhstan: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2014), *Main indicators of the preschool education and training system in 2014*, MES RK Department of the Preschool and Secondary Education, Astana.

In Kazakhstan, several measures have been implemented to draw young people into a career in the ECEC sector. The Ministry of Education and Science has made a priority of raising the social status of preschool teachers. It plans to do this through a number of initiatives intended to raise the social status and public image of the teaching profession, including a “Best Teacher” contest, an annual contest launched in 2012, and master-classes, teacher forums, and research and practice seminars to promote communication and learning opportunities between teachers, as well as possibilities for sharing best practices.

In addition, the country has opened the ECEC sector to people who are not specialised in early childhood education and care. The majority of ECEC teachers in the ECEC sector in Kazakhstan are not trained to work with very young children. To attract more teachers, Kazakhstan allows people who do not have a specialised degree in early childhood education and care to work as teachers in ECEC settings. Currently, around one-fifth of teachers with a higher education (university) degree (61% of the ECEC workforce), have a specialisation in ECEC, and the majority do not. Over one-third of

ECEC teachers are trained at vocational level (36%), of whom half are trained to work in ECEC specifically (IAC, 2015). In short, around a third of ECEC teachers are trained to work in early years settings, while most teachers are not: They are trained to teach at different levels of education and are not educated to work with young children. These people form an important part of the ECEC workforce in Kazakhstan.

This section reviews the policy tools and practices that have been used in attracting people into the ECEC sector. It includes descriptions of policy initiatives in a range of other countries, and provides some insights into possible alternative policy options.

Policy options

Funding initial education and training programmes of ECEC students

In **Japan**, prefectures receive government funds to train nursery teachers who do not have prior experience. Japan needs a larger workforce to meet the increased need in nurseries, which is expected to increase by 8 percentage points to 28% between 2007 and 2017. Fully or partially funded initial education programmes, lowering the costs for students, can increase the attractiveness of a teaching programme and thus the teaching profession.

In **Norway**, the state budget was increased by NOK 25 million to NOK 130 million in 2011, to increase the quality and size of the workforce and accommodate an increase in kindergarten places. The budget increase is spent mostly on recruiting and training new staff, as well as professional development for current ECEC staff, to update and expand their skills.

In **England**, government funding is provided to local authorities to increase and sustain the number of graduates employed and to provide other types of pedagogical training for staff. This also extends to the recruitment and deployment of graduate leaders and investment in qualifications.

In **Australia**, the removal of Technical and Further Education fees for diplomas and advanced diplomas in childcare helps lessen the financial burden on students. Additionally, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme – Higher Education Loan Programme provides debt relief for early childhood education teachers working in areas of high disadvantage.

Professionalising ECEC to improve the status of ECEC professionals

In **England (United Kingdom)**, the role of early years educators was reviewed as part of wider reforms to the early years care and education system at the beginning of the 2000s. The reforms acknowledged the importance of increasing skills and competencies of the workforce, as part of making it more professional. As a result, two new roles were created: the Senior Practitioner and the Early Years Professional (EYP). Senior Practitioner status can be attained through a foundation degree approved by the Early Years sector, as well as a vocational qualification, linking academic with work-based learning. The Senior Practitioner status is argued to have opened up routes to higher qualifications and increased professionalism for many practitioners, including progression to EYP (Miller, 2008). The EYP is designed to achieve graduate leadership in early years services, and help support a new professional identity for the early years workforce. Discussions on professional leadership models for EYP centred on the ideas of “pedagogues” and “new teachers”. A pedagogue or “social pedagogue” is a common job

title in ECEC in continental Europe, where the emphasis is on learning, care and upbringing, and all three are perceived as inseparable and interconnected aspects of life (DfES, 2005). The “new teacher” model is more generalist in approach: teachers work across care and education settings for all ages, implementing a holistic or pedagogical approach. The EYP adopted neither approach, but of the two, the EYP title is closer to the idea of “new teachers” (Miller, 2008). In addition, EYP has the equivalent status to that of a qualified teacher. To become an EYP, candidates must possess an undergraduate degree in any discipline and must meet a set of national standards. EYPs work with the newly introduced Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum for early years children, from birth to 5 years old.

In the **Slovak Republic**, kindergartens were not part of the school system, since children’s attendance in kindergarten is not mandatory. However, to improve the status of kindergarten programmes and teachers respectively, the government elected to make kindergartens a part of the school system. As a result of this reform, kindergarten teachers have since been able to obtain bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees at university level, whereas previously they were only able to gain a qualification at the secondary vocational level. This professionalised the ECEC teaching profession and raised its status (OECD, 2014).

In **Germany**, the lower status of ECEC teachers (or “pedagogues”, as they are called in Germany) is partly due to the level of education at which prospective teachers are trained. ECEC teachers in Germany are trained at the vocational level rather than at a more academic level, as is the case in related careers (Rauschenbach and Riedel, 2015). To boost the status of ECEC teachers, bachelor programmes have been established, although not many ECEC teacher training programmes yet exist at this level. *Länder* authorities have adopted a common title for the bachelor degree programme, so that diplomas can be recognised across states. The new bachelor programmes have the potential to boost the professional status of pedagogues.

Media campaigns to attract staff and increase public awareness of ECEC careers

The Ministry of Education in **New Zealand** has helped support the social status of ECEC educators by creating a comprehensive website with information on educational services in New Zealand. “Early learning (0-6 years)” has been given its own section, alongside primary, secondary and further education, emphasising that education starts in the first year of life and has an important role to play. One section on early learning is dedicated to parents and the general public, informing them about ECEC services and staff. The aim is to educate and raise the profile of early learning, and to elevate the status of educators. The website also encourages people to talk, communicate or collaborate with ECEC staff on a regular basis, intending to enhance the status of ECEC staff (Ministry of Education, 2015a).

In **Estonia**, an information campaign labelled “Study to Become a Teacher” was launched, featuring videos of celebrities recalling their memories of school and teachers explaining why they loved their job (European Commission, 2015). In **France**, a video named “Join Us” (*Rejoignez-nous*) was shown on 24 television channels in January 2015 to attract staff to the teaching profession. And in **Latvia**, videos and posters were shown all over public transport in 2015 to attract people to the teaching sector. The campaign was called “Who Will Teach Tomorrow?” (ibid).

The website of the Swedish National Agency for Education includes videos with celebrities describing which teachers made an impact on them and why. The website also

includes a test where readers can assess what the most appropriate educational programme for them is. In England, a website, “Get into Teaching”, has been set up specifically to attract staff. It provides information on how to apply for teaching programmes and professions and emphasises the importance of teaching (European Commission, 2015).

Simplifying the recruitment process

In **Finland**, “nurses” of various specialities work in the childcare sector, such as child minders and day care nurses. Different examinations were administered for each role in care settings, and transferring to different tasks, roles or nursing jobs required passing separate examinations. In the 1990s, the Finnish government established a broader, overarching examination for nurses that provided greater flexibility for them to take on different tasks. This simplified the recruitment process for a broad range of tasks, potentially making a nursing career more attractive (Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki, 2012).

Providing different educational pathways into the ECEC sector

In **Finland**, ECEC centres include multi-professional staff with varied educational backgrounds. ECEC staff can enter the ECEC sector as care workers and teachers with, for example, degrees from universities, polytechnics, upper secondary education and competence-based vocational training. Early child development is taken into consideration in all of these initial staff qualifications. Staff will work with the entire age range (0-7 years old), since Finland has an integrated ECEC system. The advantage in the mix of educational backgrounds is in making recruitment more inclusive, since people from a variety of educational backgrounds can enter the ECEC workforce. Peer learning events allow staff to learn from each other’s different educational backgrounds, skills and knowledge (Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki, 2012).

In **New Zealand**, aspiring early childhood teachers who do not meet the entry criteria for an ECEC qualification education programme can gain a bridging or foundation qualification. These qualifications last up to one year and prepare students for the teacher training at tertiary level. This bridging year also provides a good indication for educational institutions and students themselves of whether a student is capable of sustaining the interest and effort to complete the tertiary education programme. They also help students with other commitments, such as family or work responsibilities, to determine whether further tertiary study is a viable option (Teach New Zealand, 2015).

Validating existing competencies to allow easier entry in the sector

In **Australia**, the government has introduced recognition of prior learning (RPL) initiative. This gives candidates credit towards a vocational qualification to become a qualified ECEC professional for skills, knowledge and experience gained through working and learning, without needing to undertake a full ECEC professional training programme. This allows experienced but unqualified early childhood workers to become qualified ECEC workers through a national assessment process. This mechanism is particularly useful for ECEC staff in rural areas, where it is difficult to attract highly qualified staff and many of the existing staff are unqualified but nevertheless have many years of experience working in the sector. The RPL not only validates their experience, increasing the number of qualified staff in the setting, but also provides as part of the programme funding for staff to travel to other educational institutions, often situated in

more urban areas, increasing the incentive for people to become ECEC professionals (ECTARC, 2015; OECD, 2012).

Since 2002, **Germany** has simplified transitions between different ECEC educational programmes and qualification levels. Colleges, technical schools and professional academies providing ECEC-related studies are now obliged to recognise coursework completed by students at institutions other than their own, including studies carried out in other *Länder*. Institutions are able where appropriate to exempt students from having to pass certain courses when they have already acquired the required knowledge elsewhere. The aim is to encourage more students to choose a career in ECEC, and offer greater flexibility in transitioning between different schools and progressing through education levels (OECD, 2012).

In **Chile**, as part of the Lifelong Learning and Training Project, a pilot scheme was set up to experiment with recognition of existing competencies to decrease staff shortages in (early) education. A certification mechanism for the Certification of Labour Skills was implemented to certify skills-based competencies acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning. A certification process allowed skills acquired through a variety of means to be recognised. The purpose was to enhance individuals' employability and facilitate an easier entry into the (early) education workforce. The pilot was a success, and the programme has been implemented on a permanent basis (United Nations, 2011).

New Zealand also recognises prior learning, and prior learning experiences can be converted into credits towards a recognised ECEC qualification. The government has funded the use of RPL to help increase the supply of qualified and registered teachers (Ministry of Education, 2015b).

Promoting workforce mobility in different regions and countries

British Columbia (Canada) allows Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) trained outside Canada to work in British Columbia if they meet all requirements to work in the sector. They are eligible for employment provided they complete a credential evaluation, along with the necessary paperwork prepared by the hiring institution. Additionally, ECEs trained outside British Columbia who meet all requirements to work in the sector are eligible for employment, provided they submit an official transcript, along with the necessary paperwork prepared by the hiring institution.

New Zealand assesses foreign qualifications and offers a diploma in ECEC if it is comparable to New Zealand's benchmark qualification, the Diploma of Education, required for early childhood teachers.

Ensuring pay parity with other levels of education

Korea increased the wages for childcare teachers working with the Nuri Curriculum (see Table 2.1) with USD 300 a month in 2012, to close the wage gaps between childcare and kindergarten teachers. Childcare staff can also receive additional allowances, such as extra pay for working in rural areas. Additionally, ECEC centres were obliged, from 2012 on, to pay for overtime working hours (staff working more than 40 hours per week), and evening shifts or weekend shifts receive additional pay (OECD, 2012).

Prince Edward Island (Canada) increased the wages for certified ECEC workers. The government developed a policy framework, the Preschool Excellence Initiative, to support this increase. The initiative addressed the need for a salary grid that would increase wages. Along with the Early Childhood Development Association, the

government engaged stakeholders who would be affected by the wage grid changes and staffing requirement. Together, they reached a favourable agreement on the policy framework, which made it possible to implement this improvement of working conditions for ECEC staff.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has increased the salaries of ECEC teachers with a university degree at pay parity with primary school teachers. In **New Zealand, Portugal and Slovak Republic**, kindergarten teachers have also been given pay parity with primary and secondary school teachers. New Zealand has a funding system for ECEC services that provides incentives for services to employ more qualified, registered teachers. More services were thus able to afford to pay higher salaries, significantly increasing the number of registered teachers in the ECEC workforce (OECD, 2012).

Targeting ECEC staff who have left the sector

British Columbia (Canada) had the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Incentive Grant Program in 2008, which recruited ECEs who had left the licensed childcare sector to return to work in a licensed facility. ECEs who had not worked at a licensed setting for at least two years were eligible to receive up to CAD 5 000 over a two-year period. **New Zealand** offers relocation grants and return to teaching allowances to assist qualified staff to get back into the profession.

Ensuring strong preparation for early childhood education and care staff

Staff preparation starts at the initial (pre-service) education programme. Initial education and training of ECEC staff differs widely among OECD countries. In many OECD countries (see Table 2.1), ECEC teachers are trained at university level, as is the case in Kazakhstan, as well as for around 61% of the ECEC staff in Kazakhstan (IAC, 2015). These initial education programmes help to ensure that staff start their teaching job well prepared. A wide range of measures are in place for preparing prospective ECEC professionals through initial education, as well as during their first period as a professional. Many countries have modified their initial teacher education programmes towards a model that trains professionals in ECEC settings, with an appropriate balance between theory and practice. In these programmes, professionals get into play- and classrooms earlier, spend more time there and get more and better support in the process (OECD, 2012). This can include both extensive coursework on how to teach, and an extensive period teaching in a designated ECEC setting. During this time, the students are expected to put acquired knowledge into practice and develop and pilot their own innovative practices. In addition, research evidence emphasises that mentoring as part of induction programmes not only helps to reduce attrition rates, but improves teaching. Staff are better prepared and supported during their job, leading to greater job satisfaction and confidence (Weiss and Weiss, 1999).

Table 2.1. Minimum staff qualifications in early childhood education and care, at ISCED level

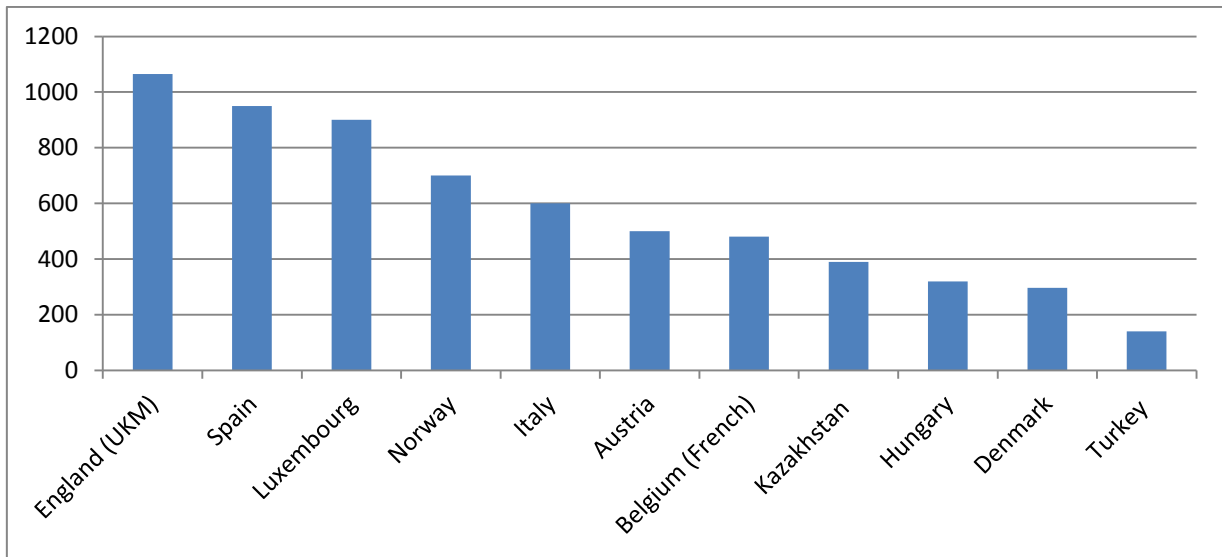
Country	Age							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Staff working for the care sector							
	Teaching staff working for the education sector or in an integrated system for care and education							
	Compulsory schooling							
Australia	Childcare worker (4) / Childcare manager (5)							
Austria	Preschool/Kindergarten teacher (5A)							
Belgium (Flemish Community)	Kindergarten pedagogue (4A)							
	Childcare worker in the care sector (3)							
Belgium (French Community)	2.5y Childcare worker in the education sector (3)							
	2.5y Kindergarten teacher / Pedagogue (5B)							
Canada (British Columbia)	Childcare worker (3)							
	2.5y Pre-primary teacher (5)							
Canada (Manitoba)	Early childhood educator (3)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5A)							
Canada (Prince Edward Island)	Early childhood educator (5B)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5)							
Czech Republic	Family day carer (3) / Childcarer in centre-based care (4)							
	Kindergarten teacher (4)							
Denmark	Childcare worker (3)							
	Pedagogue (3)							
Estonia	Pedagogue (5)							
	1.5y Preschool pedagogue (5)							
Finland	Childcare worker in kindergarten (2/3 of staff should have at least level 3)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5B)						Pre-primary teacher (5B)	
Germany	Childcare worker (3)							
	Pedagogue (4A)							
	Pedagogue for childhood or social pedagogue (5)							
Hungary	Childcare worker (3)							
Ireland	Pedagogue (5)							
	Pre-primary teacher (5)							
Israel	Childcare teacher (5)							
	Pre-primary teacher (5)							
Italy	Educator (Childcare centres) (5B)							
	Pre-primary teacher (6)							
Japan	Nursery teacher (5B)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5B)							
Korea	Childcare teacher (3)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5)							
Luxembourg	Pre-primary teacher (<i>Instituteur</i>) / Educator (5B)							
	Indigenous ECEC teacher (3)						Indigenous preschool teacher (3)	
Mexico	ECE/Preschool teacher (5)							
	Childcarer (centred childcare) / Official childminder (3)							
Netherlands	Playgroup leader (3)						Kindergarten/ primary school teacher (4) until 12y	
	Playcentre leader (3)							
New Zealand	Qualified education and care teacher / Kindergarten teacher (5B)							
	Teacher for pacific/indigenous children (<i>Kaiako</i>) (5B)							
Norway	Child/Youth worker (3)							
	Pedagogical leader (Kindergarten & Family kindergarten) / Headteacher (5A)							
Poland	Childcare worker (3)							
	Kindergarten teacher (5)							
Portugal	Preschool teacher (5A)							
	Nursery school worker (3B)						Kindergarten teacher (3)	
Slovak Republic	Family day carer (3)							
	Preschool teacher (5B)							
Slovenia	Early education teacher (5B)						Preschool teacher (5A)	
	Childminder (3)							
Spain	Preschool teacher (5A)							
	Childminder (3)							
Sweden	Preschool teacher (5A)							
	Pre-primary teacher (5A)							
Turkey	Childcare practitioners (5)							
	Preschool teacher (5)							
United Kingdom (Scotland)	Childcare practitioners (5)							
	Preschool teacher (5)							
United States (Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma)	Preschool teacher (5)							

Notes: The ISCED levels in the table refer to the ISCED 1997 qualifications. An overview of descriptions of the ISCED 1997 levels can be found on: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/isced97-en.pdf>.

Sources: For Kazakhstan: IAC (2015), *Background information for the OECD study on ECEC staff recruitment and retention*, IAC, Astana. Otherwise: OECD (2012), *Starting Strong III*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

In Kazakhstan, students studying early years education and care at a university undertake 390 academic hours of practical experience, a total of 12 credits (out of a total of 140, i.e. less than 9% of the initial education programme, is dedicated to practical training). In OECD countries, practical experience is part of any ECEC teacher’s training and is a central focus of teacher training. In Denmark, educators complete three years of training, of which a large part is dedicated to internships. In the first year of the study, 13 weeks are spent in an ECEC setting. This increases to six months during the second and final year of the teacher programme. On average, across countries (see Figure 2.2), 576 hours of initial education are spent on practical training. Examples of policy options to prepare teachers and educators for their job are highlighted below.

Figure 2.2. Number of hours in initial pre-primary teacher education dedicated to practical training (2012)



Source: Eurydice (2013), *Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe: 2013*, Eurydice, Luxembourg.

Policy options

Setting high qualification requirements that match the needs of the job

In **England**, in group care facilities, 50% of educators in charge of children under 3 are required to have relevant ISCED Level 2 qualifications, while at least one practitioner must have a qualification at Level 3. For children over 3, at least one practitioner has to have an ISCED Level 5 qualification, corresponding to the “Early Years Professional Status”, and another staff member with a Level 3 qualification (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015). By hiring staff with different qualification levels, countries not only open the ECEC sector to a broader range of applicants, but ensure that they are prepared for the tasks aligned with their qualification.

New Zealand applies Graduating Teaching Standards set by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) in 2007 under the Education Act 139AE. Minimum standards of teacher education are ensured by the accreditation and approval of all teacher education programmes by the NZTC. All teacher education providers with programmes approved by the NZTC must demonstrate how they enable students to reach the

Graduating Teacher Standards. Providers guarantee that students have met these standards and are “fit to be a teacher” when they graduate from the programme.

In **Denmark**, pedagogues make up approximately 60% of staff in ECEC facilities. They need a professional bachelor degree in social education at ISCED Level 5B. Their initial education programme typically lasts three and a half years, and involves a number of theoretical modules, including a number of culture-related and activity-based subjects, as well as practical experience. All ECEC facilities have a manager and deputy manager, both of whom are typically qualified social educators. Pedagogical assistants, who support the educators in their tasks and activities, have no formal education requirement, but an 18-month secondary-level vocational training (at ISCED Level 4) is offered. Pedagogical assistants are usually young people, typically between 18 and 25 years old, who wish to work before enrolling in a programme like child and youth education to become a full-fledged pedagogue. Assistants can learn and benefit from the pedagogues’ experience and knowledge (OECD, 2001; 2012).

In **France**, teacher qualifications differ between the care and education divisions, although staff are required to obtain relatively high qualification levels in either sector. For the care sector, staff are trained as paediatric nurses, nursing assistants, early childhood educators, paediatricians or psychologists at ISCED Level 5 (university level). This qualification level matches the purpose set out for the care sector in France, which is to promote the health and well-being of children (Rayna, 2004). Teachers in an *école maternelle* (preschool) require a five-year university-level training at ISCED Level 5. The study programme qualifies them to work both in an *école maternelle* and in a primary school. Assistants in an *école maternelle* must have an ISCED Level 4 certificate in early childhood. Recently, concerns have been raised that teachers in *écoles maternelles* are not specifically trained for working with very young children. As a result, a qualification for the job of “nursery school specialist” is being created. This is an additional training programme for *maîtres-formateurs* (graduated head teachers). This qualification requires passing the CAFIPEMF (*certificat d’aptitude aux fonctions d’instituteur, professeur d’école, maître-formateur*), demonstrating their teaching and instruction skills. Providing specialist training and education programmes focusing on early education ensures that staff are better prepared for their tasks in the preschool (Wall, Taguma and Litjens, 2015).

In ECEC centres in **Japan**, employees who work with zero to 2-year-olds must have a nursery teacher qualification at ISCED Level 5. Those in charge of 3- to 5-year-olds need a kindergarten teaching license, in addition to a nursery teacher qualification. Of all teachers in Japan, 80% have both qualifications (OECD, 2012). The qualifications can be acquired through three different routes qualified at ISCED Level 5: as a Junior College Associate Degree, a bachelor’s, or a master’s degree. In private institutions, the qualification requirements are somewhat more lenient than in public ones, with greater variety in the levels of staff educational levels in private settings (RCCADE, 2011).

Revisiting initial education programmes to meet the demands of the job

New Zealand has transferred ECEC services from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education. After this integration, the government established the Diploma of Education on Early Childhood Education, a three-year teacher training programme, which acted as the benchmark teaching qualification for the new centralised system. This ensured that those with this qualification are well prepared to work under the integrated governance system. The content and quality of early childhood education qualifications, which are offered by universities, continue to be regularly reviewed by the

Committee on University Academic Programmes of Universities New Zealand. This allows for alterations or additions for emerging content areas or changing societal or staff needs (Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki, 2012b).

In **British Columbia (Canada)**, the Child Care Licensing Regulation has been revised to ensure that Early Childhood Educator (ECE) assistants and other adults working in licensed ECEC facilities meet specific course requirements. Previously, ECE assistants could complete any form of ECE-related training to start their job. The new requirements helped improve levels of training, and better meet the requirements in the field. The government did not need to redesign ECE courses for this purpose: it used existing courses and made this part of the mandatory training of assistants. The measure thus had no impact on the content, duration, fees or modes of delivery (OECD, 2012).

In **Germany**, it is recognised that the ECEC sector lacks the “academisation” of other social and educational sectors (Rauschenbach and Riedel, 2015). The majority of the ECEC workforce in Germany has a vocational qualification. A number of catalysts, including the PISA results of 2000/2001 and the Bologna process, led to the introduction of ECEC courses at university level. The provision of ECEC-related courses at ISCED Level 5 has grown ever since (ibid). In 2011, the Ministers of Youth from German *Länder* agreed to a common job title for ECEC teachers: pedagogue for early childhood. The content for the initial education programmes for this qualification was also set up.

England (United Kingdom) launched a review into early education and childcare qualifications and training at the beginning of the 2000s. Many changes have since taken place, and qualifications and training professional frameworks for the ECEC teaching workforce are reviewed on a continual basis, to ensure that they prepare prospective staff for their tasks and meet the needs of society and staff.

Scotland (United Kingdom) established a Common Skills Working group to identify what initial ECEC staff education programmes should include and to strengthen workforce knowledge, skills and understanding. The programmes were adapted to current needs (Scottish Government, 2012).

The government of **Sweden** decided to replace existing degrees in education with four new professional degrees in 2010. The four new degrees focus on preschool education, primary school education, subject education or vocational education. The new degree categories helped to clarify the tasks expected of ECEC staff, provided greater direction to the preschool education sector and helped to secure the supply of well-educated teachers (OECD, 2012). This also ensured that initial education programmes could better meet the requirements linked to each level of education.

Spain increased the length of its pre-primary education programme, raising it from three to four years. Students must complete 240 credits, 50 of which are derived from actual practice. Students also have the opportunity to take more specialised courses, to meet the specific needs of ECEC, such as courses relating to school organisation and management, as well as promoting the school in the community. The general teaching programme includes an extensive range of modules, covering subjects relevant to the work of teachers including “society, family and school”, “childhood, health and nutrition” and “systematic observation and context analysis” (OECD, 2012).

Setting higher minimum education level requirements to ensure better knowledge

In the **Slovak Republic**, ECEC teachers enter the workforce with varying levels of qualification. While ISCED Level 3B is fairly common among ECEC staff, the

government has been reviewing ECEC teacher qualifications and is considering upscaling the minimum qualification requirements for early childhood education teachers to ISCED Level 5A or 5B, to ensure that staff have better pedagogical knowledge and skills for the demanding job of educator (OECD, 2012).

In the 1990s, the government of **Finland** increased the level of education for kindergarten teachers. The minimum education level was set at university level, and initial education aligned more closely with the level of training for primary school teachers to ensure a better level of education for teachers and better quality. Greater synergy and interaction was created between training for ECEC professionals and training for primary school teachers, to support children's development and learning and encourage co-operation between teachers during children's transition from kindergarten to primary school (OECD, 2012).

Slovenia has made several revisions to scale up the levels of initial education. In 1994, a three-year professional study programme was established for prospective professionals wishing to work in preschool education. In addition, a master programme has been established, and teaching assistants now need to hold an upper secondary technical qualification or an upper secondary general school qualification, with an additional degree in preschool education (OECD, 2012).

In 2009-10, **Korea** upgraded the initial education of the ECEC workforce: for kindergarten teachers, qualification levels were upgraded to a four-year bachelor's degree. This not only strengthened skills and knowledge but reduced the number of students in teacher training, to balance the demand and supply of kindergarten teachers and ensure that the most motivated students applied. The level of training and qualifications were also increased for childcare teachers. For example, the number of credits required in college was raised from 35 to 51 credits (i.e. from 12 to 17 courses). In addition, an initial year of training was introduced after high school graduation, where students receive a total of 1 105 hours of training, including four weeks of practice in an ECEC setting (OECD, 2012).

Portugal increased the qualification level required by preschool teachers in 1998, from a three-year bachelor's degree to a four-year master's degree – putting the teacher requirements for preschool on par with primary and secondary school teachers. The new qualification was designed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as well as the universities and polytechnics that provide the initial teaching programmes (OECD, 2012).

Including practical experience in initial education and training

In **Norway**, student kindergarten teachers are required to complete a minimum of 100 days of practical training as part of their degree. Workplace-based learning in Norway is seen as a key element in the six-semester preparation of kindergarten teachers (who work with children from birth to 6 years). Practical experience is referred to both in national legislation (2005) regulating universities and university colleges, and in the Kindergarten Act (2005) (Oberhuemer, 2015). Some degree modules have their main focus on practice in ECEC. For example, a course offered by Queen Maud University College requires students to gain 35 days of practical experience during the 13-week course and to demonstrate practical skills they have learnt. This can be demonstrated in, for example, writing reflective essays.

In **Denmark**, significant emphasis is placed on gaining practical experience during training. To become a pedagogue, students must complete a three-and-a-half-year (or seven semesters) bachelor's degree, and a third of this programme consists of placements in pedagogical settings. Over the course of the study, four placements in ECEC settings equate to 75 higher education credit points (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ECTS). The first placement is worth 10 ECTS and takes place in the second semester. Students work 32 days for an average of six hours per day, receiving a grant for the duration. The second and third placements take place during the third and sixth semesters, and account for 30 ECTS. Each of these placements lasts for six months. Students are paid for these placements. They work an average of 32.5 hours per week, less than the regular Danish working week of 37 hours. Students are evaluated internally during the first and second placement, while also being evaluated by an external evaluator. The fourth placement is part of a revision of initial education programmes for pedagogues in 2014. This stage takes place in the seventh and final semester, and consists of a fieldwork period for students to collect empirical data for their subsequent thesis. The final placement is only 16 days, for which students receive a grant. The placements in Denmark are intended not only to help students master the profession, but to acquire knowledge (Jensen, 2015).

In **Italy**, a five-year master's degree prepares students to become preschool and primary teachers. The master's degree includes 600 hours of compulsory placement, commencing in the second year of the programme and continuing until the final year (fifth year). Training experiences gained during the placements must be documented in a report, which is compiled in the final year of the course and forms part of the thesis dissertation (Baiduzzi and Lazzari, 2015). Students do their practical stage in both pre-primary and primary settings, so that they acquire knowledge and skills appropriate for both educational levels. Workplace-based training consists of two different kinds of activities: indirect and direct. Indirect activities include all tasks that students are required to carry out in order to prepare, organise, document and reflect critically upon their placement experience. Direct activities relate to all activities that students undertake in ECEC or school settings. These include both teaching and observational activities carried out in the classroom, as well as interactions with both colleagues and parents. Students spend 30% of their time conducting indirect activities and 70% of their time carrying out direct activities (ibid.).

In **Finland**, the time allocated to practical experience varies, but is commonly 15 ECTS credits. For example, students at the University of Helsinki spend some weeks in early childhood settings during each of the three years of study. Each placement has its own objectives and goals. The first placement, known as *basic practice*, is worth 3 credits and focuses on observing children and the learning environment, as well as understanding the work and professional identity of the kindergarten teacher. The second placement, known as the *integrative practice*, is worth 6 credits and focuses on planning and evaluation. The final placement known simply as the *final practice* and is also worth 6 credits. The final internship develops students more holistically.

In **Sweden**, students working towards a degree enabling them to become a preschool teacher undergo a work placement for 20 weeks, worth 30 ECTS. The work placements have undergone several evaluations in recent years, but the most recent, in 2013, has led to a new five-year trial programme. During this trial period, placements are being re-organised. An example of the trial includes placing students in the same preschool during all of their internships. Furthermore, the country is piloting to involve the

universities and the workplaces in planning of the placements (Karlsson Lohmander, 2015).

Mentoring students at the start of their professional career

In **Italy**, the mentoring of master students falls under the responsibility of the Master Academic Board. Mentoring is done by tutors at universities, whose role is to co-ordinate between universities and early learning services. There are three types of tutors in universities, defined by the national law that regulates the preschool teacher degree: the organising tutors, the co-ordinating tutors and the students' tutors, i.e. those with a mentoring role in the classroom. All these support the student in their professional development towards becoming a fully-fledged preschool teacher (Balduzzi and Lazzari, 2015). The organising and co-ordinating tutors are experienced teachers, who are chosen for temporary secondment to universities through a selection process. Because of the complexity of their mentoring functions, educators wishing to carry out these roles must have at least five years of full-time experience in an ECEC setting. In addition, the position is limited to a maximum of four years, to avoid the risk that mentors lose their relevant workplace (teaching and pedagogical) skills. Organising tutors have a more operational role, while the co-ordinating tutors work more closely with students, by, for example, helping them to get their preferred choice in placement, and helping them develop competent practices throughout their placement. Co-ordinating tutors train students in monitoring and planning practices, such as carrying out observations, drawing up action plans and evaluating educational practices. At the end of the workplace placement, students write a reflective essay that is used by the co-ordinating tutors to evaluate their development over the course of the practical placement. This report is complemented by a report written by the tutor responsible for monitoring the students' classroom activities (Balduzzi and Lazzari, 2015).

Tutors who mentor students during their placement in early learning services are selected on a voluntary basis. Their role and responsibilities are less clearly defined by the law regulating the preschool teacher degree. Their tasks principally include the "welcoming" of students, introducing them to the classroom, and coaching them so they are able to independently manage educational processes. Furthermore, they provide mentoring to students by discussing the students' practices, helping them to plan and implement classroom activities, and facilitating students' reflective skills.

In **Denmark**, the ECEC setting that accepts a student to do an internship is responsible for mentoring the student. This is regulated under the 2014 Ministerial Decree on Training for Pedagogues. The head of the setting is responsible for appointing the mentor, although it is common for staff to discuss between themselves who would like to be a mentor, and how the role can best be fulfilled (Jensen, 2015). The mentor must be a trained pedagogue who works directly with children. Other staff members can contribute to student support (ibid.).

Mentors in Denmark can attend courses on mentoring, for which they are usually granted full paid leave. These tend to be short-term and paid for by the employer. A mentor receives a financial bonus for the role, whose amount is agreed upon by trade unions and local authorities. In 2014, the average payment was EUR 550 for a six-month placement. In some settings, more than one staff member is a mentor, since some settings take on more than one intern. Examples of monitoring practices include a training session on leadership or a seminar given by an ECEC professional with a particular speciality, such as language development. A typical mentoring session between student and mentor

takes place every week and includes an open discussion on what the student has learnt in the past week, reflection on practice, and reference to relevant literature for further reading. But mentoring also occurs on a daily basis, and students are able to approach their mentor or other staff member regarding any issues that arise. This provides mentors the opportunity to explain things and provide examples in context and more informally than during a planned meeting (Jensen, 2015). Once the student is past two-thirds of his or her placement, the mentor writes a report on how the student is fulfilling the educational goals agreed upon for the placement period.

Finland operates a “double supervision” model where the intern is mentored by a kindergarten teacher supervisor and a university lecturer. The focus of internships is on learning and development within the workplace, in which mentoring plays an important role. On a daily basis, the mentoring kindergarten teacher supports the student in planning and carrying out educational activities. They also have a feedback discussion in the middle and at the end of the placement. The mentoring university lecturer visits the ECEC setting once during a placement. At the setting, the student, kindergarten teacher and university lecturer meet to engage in reflective discussions on their educational activities. The student also has meetings with his/her university lecturer on campus to discuss development (Onnismaa, Tahkokallio and Kalliala, 2015).

Implementing a trial or induction period

Italy requires a one-year trial period for teachers, with guidance and support from a tutor along with participation in an e-learning blended model training organised by the National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy.

In **New Zealand**, following verification of the qualification of graduated ECEC students and a police vetting, beginning staff gain provisional teacher registration and then embark on a two-year teacher induction process with a mentor teacher to oversee their programme. They must demonstrate to their mentor teacher through evidence of their teaching that they are able to meet the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions. At the end of the two years, the mentor may recommend the teacher to the professional leader of the early childhood service as meeting the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions. The professional leader then recommends the teacher to the New Zealand Teacher Council for full registration. The Ministry of Education provides funding support for the first two years of the induction and mentoring programme. Once a teacher is fully registered, the registration needs to be renewed every three years.

In **Flanders (Belgium)**, new kindergarten teachers are entitled to an induction programme with a mentor during their first year. In a large classroom, childcare workers can assist kindergarten teachers to reduce workload and establish a better staff-child ratio.

Attracting staff in underserved areas, regions or in settings with special needs

Attrition and turnover rates are not uniform across ECEC settings, but tend to be higher in ECEC settings located in areas that are disadvantaged to some extent. For example, turnover rates in schools in England are higher in London than in the north of the country because of higher living costs and a more diverse student population. Similar geographic variations in turnover have been reported in the Netherlands, with vacancies harder to fill in regions with a high share of disadvantaged or immigrant children. In New Zealand and Australia, challenges in staff recruitment relate more to remote areas, where staff is unwilling to live and work. Such differential patterns of staff turnover and attrition

are likely to exacerbate inequalities among settings (OECD, 2005). Kazakhstan also faces issues in attracting ECEC teachers in rural areas. To make teaching in these regions more attractive, Kazakhstan offers higher remuneration to staff willing to work in these regions. In addition, they receive a one-off payment (some sort of “start bonus”) and attractive loans for housing. In cities, the population is growing faster, and if Kazakhstan wishes to achieve its goal of full enrolment of all children up to the age of 7, additional teachers will be needed in the cities as well. Besides, Kazakhstan, like OECD countries, often has teacher shortages in settings dedicated to children with special needs or shortages in staff specialised in working with special needs children.

Policy options

Providing internships/practical work experiences in understaffed regions

Australia found that an effective solution for attracting educators to rural settings, albeit mostly in primary and secondary schools, was to include a rural work placement as part of an educator’s training (Green an, 2011). This offers pre-service educators living and work experience in rural areas, making them more willing to apply to a teaching job in these regions. A rural work placement has been found to help students adjust to rural settings, and potentially overcome any misconceptions they may have on living and teaching in a rural area (Hudson and Hudson 2008; Green and Nolan, 2011).

Offering financial and other benefits to staff working in underserved areas

To encourage teachers to teach and remain in rural areas in **Australia**, some states offer special incentives to attract staff. The Queensland *Remote Area Incentive Scheme* (RAIS) for example, provides teachers who teach in remote and rural settings with financial benefits and support, including:

- a compensation benefit to subsidise the cost of travel of a return flight to Brisbane, as well as a return flight to a nominated major centre once a year. The payment is also made for dependents of the teacher;
- an incentive benefit: a payment made to a teacher in an eligible RAIS location as an incentive to remain in a rural and remote location longer than the minimum required service period;
- an identified location incentive for teachers working in particular locations. They are entitled to receive additional incentive payments of up to AUD 1 000 for up to five years of service;
- an additional emergency leave: teachers working in some RAIS locations are eligible for additional leave to assist in attending to medical or personal business (Queensland Government, 2015).

New South Wales offers scholarships to students to work in rural areas, consisting of AUD 6 000 per year of study, and an additional AUD 5 000 on appointment in a rural setting (NSW Government, 2015). Such additional financial and non-financial benefits can make working in underserved areas more attractive.

In **Australia**, a benefit is offered reducing the student loan of teachers working in underserved areas. The HECS/HELP benefit for early childhood education teachers reduces the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt of early childhood education teachers who work in areas of high need, including regional and remote areas, areas with

indigenous communities, and areas of high disadvantage, based on Zipcode location (Australian Government, 2015a).

Offer limited commitments for teaching in underserved areas, to attract staff

In **(Ontario) Canada**, *Teach for Canada*, is a nonprofit organisation that works directly with schools in northern First Nations reserve communities, to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers to work in these remote locations. While the programme is not directed at early years teachers as such, the programme has been successful in attracting teachers to remote areas, since it is a two-year limited commitment. This makes the programme attractive to a larger group of teachers. The programme also consists of a strong preparation period, which makes it a good professional development opportunity. Candidates must be teachers to apply and are chosen through a rigorous selection process. Before they begin teaching in northern First Nations communities, all Teach for Canada teachers attend a four-week, full-time Enrichment Programme in northern Ontario. The course is led by indigenous and experienced Northern Nations teachers. It trains teachers on culturally relevant pedagogies, First Nations community norms, and effective self-reflection practices. Teachers are also supported through mentoring; they receive a professional e-mentor to help develop their skills as an educator, and a community member helps them to integrate into the community.

Providing scholarships to attract specialised teachers

New Zealand offers early years educators a range of special education study awards and scholarships to encourage educators to develop their skills working with students with special educational needs. This staff can become part of the Specialist Education Intervention Service, a team of trained specialists who work with children before they start school, both in the home setting as well as in early learning services, on areas where the children need additional attention and support. Most children with special needs attend a regular ECEC setting in New Zealand. In some cases, an educational support worker (ESW) will be provided by the setting for a few hours each week, to assist with integration of special needs children in a regular ECEC setting (Ministry of Education, 2014). The Ministry of Education promotes working in special needs by publishing profiles of teachers that highlight the rewards of the job, among things.

New Zealand has distinct Māori ECEC settings called *kōhanga reo*. These have a Māori immersion curriculum, with a strong focus on Māori language and *tikanga*, Māori pedagogy, and transferring Māori knowledge, skills and attitudes through the Māori language. Since it is challenging to find trained professionals with a Māori background to work in these areas, the Ministry of Education provides additional financial incentives for these teachers. A number of scholarships are available to students preparing to teach in Māori immersion services, as well as Pasifika services, another key indigenous population in New Zealand (Teach New Zealand, 2015b).

Including special needs in general initial teaching education programmes

In **Italy**, general master's degrees for preschool teachers require students to participate in courses that develop the skills and competencies to support special needs children integrate in an ECEC setting (Balduzzi and Lazzari, 2015). During the internship periods of their studies, student teachers are able to gain experience working in settings that integrate special needs children. By ensuring that all preschool teachers are trained, to some extent, in working with special needs children, more staff is available to work

with these children and may even encourage more teachers to specialise in special needs education.

In **Estonia**, Programme Eduko was launched in 2008 to improve teacher training and development. After an analysis of the previous training system, more attention was paid to working with special needs children in initial education programmes. A legislative document set out the revisions for initial and on-the-job teacher education, stipulating that initial and in-service teacher education must include some modules on special needs education, alternative teaching methods to help address these needs, and child observation and assessment methods to identify special needs children in the first instance.

Establishing targeted support for special needs

In **Australia**, the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) supports staff in the inclusion of special needs children in ECEC services and provides them with professional support. This increases the knowledge and skills of educators by providing professional development training courses, advice to staff, and providing access to additional resources. The professional development and support services include mentoring services; flexible training courses, customised support and professional development programmes; advice and support to staff over the telephone; and providing materials on working with special needs children (Australian Government, 2015b).

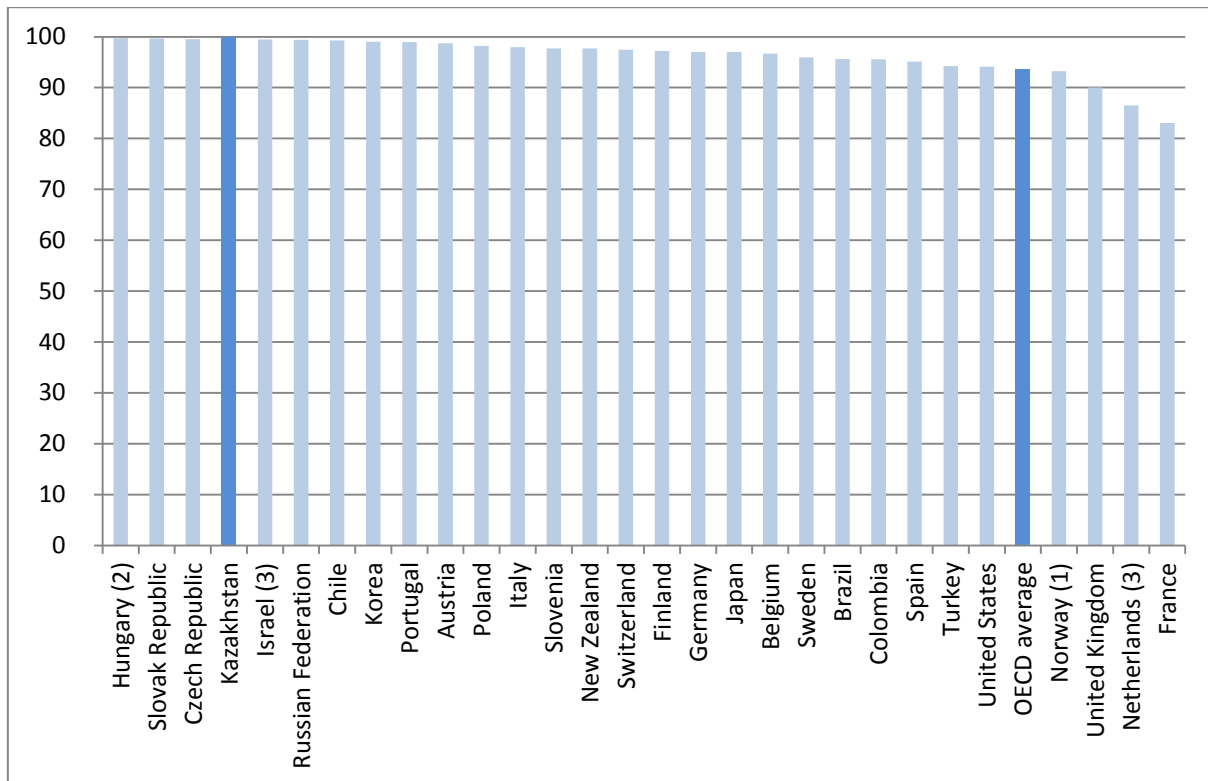
Diversifying the early childhood education and care workforce

All over the world, national governments are now trying to attract new teachers of a variety of backgrounds, not just to overcome shortages, but also to broaden the range of their experience. This includes promoting the benefits of a teaching career to groups who under-represented in the profession, such as males and those from minority groups.

On average across OECD countries, 94% of pre-primary education staff are women. The earliest years of schooling have the highest proportion of female teachers, and this shrinks at each successive level of education. Women represent only 42% of the teaching staff at the tertiary level on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2015). In 33 OECD and G20 countries where data is available, 93% or more of pre-primary teachers are women. In Kazakhstan, almost all ECEC teachers are female and accounted for 99.9% of the profession in 2014 (IAC, 2015). Exceptions include France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where 83%, 87% and 90% of pre-primary teachers respectively, are women (see Figure 2.3). Almost all countries have difficulty recruiting men in the ECEC sector.

The increasing numbers of immigrants in OECD countries mean that preschool populations now include a greater mix of cultures and languages. Australia and Canada, and indeed Kazakhstan, are also coping with children of different linguistic backgrounds, in these cases often from indigenous populations. The needs of this diverse set of groups must be met at an early age, to ensure that they are able to learn the dominant language and to avoid developmental gaps between native and immigrant or indigenous children. However, the ECEC workforce does not often reflect this diversity in population. Certain policy measures can help attract men and staff of minority backgrounds into ECEC. These include developing media campaigns and measures focusing on certain population groups, for example, adapting training for male students.

Figure 2.3. Percentage of women among teaching staff in public and private institutions at pre-primary level (2013)



Notes: 1. Includes early childhood education 2. Includes data on management personnel. 3. Public institutions only. For the Netherlands, private data is available and included for pre-primary education. For Israel, public institutions only for pre-primary and upper secondary education. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Sources: For Kazakhstan: IAC (2015), Background information for the OECD study on ECEC staff recruitment and retention, Information-Analytic Center, Astana. Otherwise: OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>.

Policy options

Implementing measures encouraging men to join the ECEC sector

In **Scotland (UK)**, “Men in Childcare” was set up in 2001 to encourage more men to enter the childcare profession. A wide variety of publicity materials have been used to market to men and encourage their recruitment. Media channels included posters, flyers, radio and newspaper advertisements with the slogan “Men Can Care, Too”. Childcare courses exclusively for men have been held throughout Scotland, and by 2011, over 1 200 men had attended them. The programme offered high levels of support and a full complement of training. England has also instituted similar measures. As a result, the United Kingdom is one of the few countries with a comparatively high share of men in ECEC (see Figure 2.1). Men in Childcare now has international links with similar organisations in Europe, America and New Zealand (Children in Scotland, 2010). Germany and the Flemish Community of Belgium have also implemented some policies and programmes to attract more men to ECEC (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Attracting men into the early childhood education and care workforce: Case studies from Germany and the Flemish Community of Belgium

Germany: Mehr Männer in Kitas (more men in day care)

Mehr Männer in Kitas was a government initiative running from 2011-2013 in Germany, aiming to encourage more men to participate in the *Kitas* (day care centres) workforce, to support them on entry and to improve the image of men working in ECEC. Funding was provided to support 16 pilot initiatives aimed at strengthening regional networking in 13 of the 16 federal states (*Länder*), and over 1 300 ECEC settings took part. The Evangelical Church of Hesse and Nassau was one organisation that participated in the programme and has since established a document outlining best practices. The organisation's strategy included information, networking and development.

The "inform" aspect included publicity work (press releases, radio and television advertisements), creating an online presence and using ambassadors to promote the concept of men working in day care centres (or *Kitas*). The "networking" aspect set up networking events for employees in day care centres, regionally once a quarter, and nationally once a year. The events were open to both men and women, since one aim of the events was to consider the image of employees at day care centres and why men were more reluctant to become *Kitas*. These events generated the idea of holding events specifically for men. These were subsequently held quarterly and covered such themes as motivating and enrolling men in a predominantly female workforce. "Developing" included furthering capabilities and outreach of the project, for example by creating an online mentoring platform. The platform provided potential male applicants with mentoring and support before and during they application. Other "development" projects included workshops to discuss men's hesitation to work in *Kitas*, as well as individual events held by day care centres and marketed to men. For example, they were encouraged to join arts and crafts projects at the centres, as an introduction to the day care centre environment.

By 2010, 9 979 men were working in *Kitas*, which had increased by 77% in 2014 to 17 644.

Sources: Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, 2013; BMFSFJ, 2015.

Flemish Community of Belgium: Men in Childcare

In 2002, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, only 12 of 3 417 childcare workers were men. In 2002, the government revised the regulations governing childcare quality, which included a stipulation calling for more active attempts to recruit males into childcare. As a result, Belgian agencies came together to create a project called "Men in Childcare". The project's first objective was to create a marketing campaign to create a distinct image of male childcare workers, a strategy that had proven successful in Denmark. A poster campaign was its chief marketing tool. This was picked up by most media channels and discussed on television talk shows and debate programmes. The campaign also included creating a manual to make the selection and recruitment policy more attractive to men, and an event for male childcare workers, to encourage an exchange of ideas about the role of men in the lives of young children, as well as other relevant topics of research.

The project ended after a year, increasing the number of male students from 6.5% to nearly 20%. According to the instructors at a training centre for childcare, most of the male students indicated that the campaign was the deciding factor in their decision to enrol in the course. To support the legacy of the project, the project organisers published a handbook for managers in the day care sector, which includes how to develop a gender-friendly personnel policy.

Source: Peeters, 2003.

Targeting demographic sub-groups to improve social representation in ECEC

British Columbia (Canada) has programmes to increase the number of Aboriginal staff. A number of universities and colleges offer training programmes with an Aboriginal perspective. One university runs a programme entirely for Aboriginal participants, while another college offers an Aboriginal specialisation for post-basic training in working with infants and toddlers or children with special needs.

Slovenia recruits Roma assistants in ECEC settings who serve as a bridge between the Roma community and the educational institution. ECEC assistants trained in the Roma language, history and culture, help children in preschool institutions and primary schools learn and understand the Slovenian language and assist with children's learning and schoolwork. They also co-operate and communicate with parents of Roma children. This initiative has led to higher attendance of Roma children in educational institutions; better co-operation between Roma parents and educational institutions; and increasing awareness among parents of the importance of learning and education. The project also helps combat racism and promotes better intercultural understanding.

Australia established the Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Traineeships programme to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees in eligible schools and indigenous childcare services in remote areas. The traineeships were developed in recognition of the barriers to employment and training in remote communities. To encourage indigenous students to participate in the training programmes, these students only pay the concession tuition fee for the programmes (20% of course costs). Indigenous students can also receive additional funding to cover costs of accommodation, travelling and learning equipment.

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Chapter 3

Retaining staff

While countries including Kazakhstan face challenges in recruiting new early childhood education and care staff, research has also identified issues with ECEC staff retention. These are mostly linked to the lack of (financial) recognition and reward of the ECEC profession, which can be overcome by offering better remuneration or providing other benefits. In addition, working conditions play a key role in job satisfaction and improving them may affect staff retention and turnover. Making the ECEC sector more rewarding and attractive by providing professional development opportunities as well as interesting career development paths may further contribute to staff retention. A system of staff evaluation may help Kazakhstan analyse its training needs and other aspects that can improve its ECEC workforce policies.

Key messages

- ECEC staff policy needs to ensure that teachers work in an environment that facilitates success and that encourages effective professionals to continue in the ECEC sector. Concern persists in a number of countries, including Kazakhstan, that the rate at which professionals are leaving their posts is compounding staffing problems and leading to a loss of expertise.
- Issues associated with the retention of effective ECEC professionals include the limited or lack of rewards and recognition for the ECEC profession. Countries have addressed this in a number of ways: by increasing salaries; ensuring pay parity with teachers in higher levels of education; and providing non-financial benefits, such as additional days of paid leave.
- Working conditions frame the workday of an ECEC professional and can help determine whether a job in ECEC remains attractive for a professional. In comparison with other levels of education, the working conditions for ECEC may be less attractive. Ensuring that minimum standards are favourable for staff do their job well, and strengthening leadership in ECEC settings so that staff feel supported can improve working conditions in the sector.
- Providing ECEC staff with career development opportunities, both inside the ECEC sector, such as the possibility of becoming manager or head teacher, as well as outside it, where professionals can progress into ministerial jobs, can make the ECEC teaching profession more attractive and help retain staff.
- Creating professional development opportunities so that staff can update and enhance their skills also creates more incentives to stay in the ECEC sector. Such measures could include funding training programmes or upgrading educational qualification programmes. Participation in professional development can be ensured by making it mandatory, and can be increased by identifying staff training needs and developing training based on these needs – such as training in curriculum implementation. Providing ECEC staff with professional support in the class- or playroom can also increase skills, enhance job satisfaction and improve working conditions.
- While attractive salaries, working conditions, career and professional development opportunities are important in improving the appeal of teaching, policies need to address more than these areas. A stronger emphasis on teacher evaluation, designed mainly to enhance classroom or playroom practice, would also provide opportunities for staff work to be recognised and celebrated and could help both professionals and ECEC providers identify professional development priorities. Teacher evaluation can also provide a basis for rewarding staff for exemplary performance.

Introduction

Policies to attract, employ and recruit ECEC staff need to be complemented by strategies ensuring both that ECEC professionals work in an environment which facilitates success, and that encourages effective staff to continue working in the ECEC sector. If early learning systems are to ensure a quality ECEC workforce, not only will they need to attract people to the profession, they will also need to retain and further develop the professionals currently employed. Retaining existing staff in the profession and attracting new staff are closely interrelated. Because the ECEC workforce is quite large, even small shifts in the attrition rate can have major consequences for the demand for new staff. The issues of ECEC staff retention and staff recruitment are also linked in that the factors that make a profession attractive to new entrants are also likely to encourage people to stay. Competitive salaries, good working conditions, job satisfaction and opportunities for development will increase the appeal of the ECEC sector for new entrants and existing staff alike.

Although attractive salaries are clearly important in improving the sector's appeal, ECEC policies need to address more than just pay. Staff who work in education value the quality of their relations with children, feeling supported by their managers, good working conditions and any opportunities to develop their skills. A stronger emphasis on teacher evaluation for improvement purposes would provide opportunities for staff's work to be recognised and celebrated, and help both ECEC professionals and their settings to identify professional development priorities. It can also provide a basis for rewarding staff for exemplary performance.

ECEC careers can also benefit from greater diversification, which would provide more opportunities and recognition for staff. Greater emphasis on leadership would help address the need for staff to feel valued and supported in their work. In addition, well-trained professional support and administrative staff can help reduce the burden on teachers. Better facilities for staff preparation and planning would help build collegiality, and more flexible working conditions, especially for more experienced ECEC professionals, would prevent career burnout and help to transmit important skills in early learning settings to new generations of teachers.

This chapter examines the policy options for maintaining effective staffing in early learning settings. It also includes descriptions of policy initiatives in OECD countries.

Ensuring recognition and rewards for work

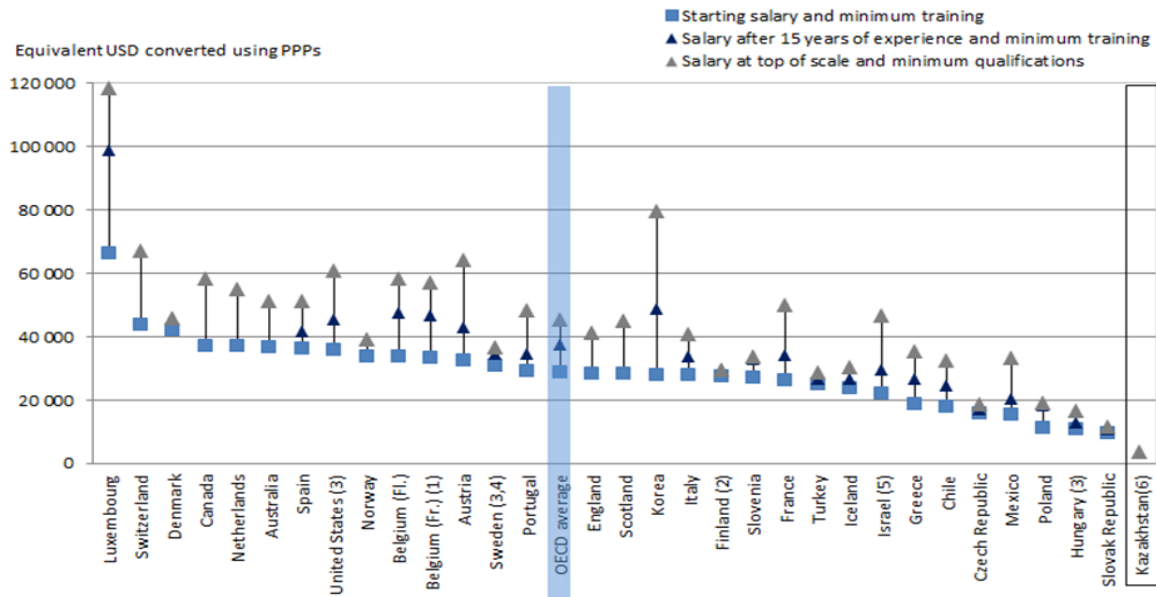
Staff rewards in ECEC generally include salaries, allowances, leave benefits and future pension benefits. Other possibilities, although less frequently applied, are bonuses, time allowances, sabbatical periods or opportunities for ongoing professional development activities, as ways of recognising the work of professionals. In addition, the level of staff compensation is typically associated with qualifications and years of experience. Incentive structures are often limited in the way they reward teachers' accomplishment: *Starting Strong III* and *IV* point out that increases in salaries or financial benefits are not necessarily linked to staff performance (OECD, 2012a; 2015).

In Kazakhstan, salaries of ECEC staff have been increased in recent years. In 2014, caregivers earned KZT 62 359 a year (or around USD 420), an increase of 45% in comparison to 2009. Despite the increase, ECEC staff salaries remain below the Kazakh average annual salary, and a career in ECEC thus pays far less than many other sectors

(IAC, 2015). The salaries of pre-primary teachers in Kazakhstan, for instance, are lower than in all OECD countries, as noted in Chapter 2. Salary increases over time are also comparatively low. In most OECD countries, pre-primary teachers receive salary increases throughout their career (see Figure 3.1). Kazakh pre-primary school teachers can receive salary increases amounting to around 30% over the course of their career (that is, the difference between the minimum and the maximum salary). In OECD countries, the difference between the starting salary and the top salary for pre-primary and primary teachers is almost 60% (OECD, 2014, Table D3.3). The average salaries of ECEC teachers in Kazakhstan is lower than all OECD countries and is between 10 and 12 times lower than the OECD average (see Figure 3.1). Other options to reward and recognise staff performance, as implemented in OECD countries, are discussed below.

Figure 3.1. Pre-primary teachers' salaries at different points in their careers (2012)

Annual statutory teachers' salaries, in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs



Notes:

1. Salaries of teachers with typical qualification instead of minimum. Please refer to Annex 3 of *Education at a Glance 2014* for salaries of teachers with minimum qualification.
2. Includes kindergarten teachers
3. Actual base salaries
4. Year of reference 2011
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.
6. Data for Kazakhstan are provided by the National Centre for Education Statistics.

Source: OECD (2014a), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, Table D3.1.

Policy options

Increasing wages and pension benefits

Manitoba (Canada) introduced a wage adjustment grant, an increase in hourly earnings, so that those with an Early Childhood Educator II classification earn at least CAD 15.50 an hour, and child care assistants in training earn at least CAD 12.25 an hour.

In addition, Manitoba increased operating grants to facilities by 3% in 2008 and again by 3% in 2009, to help boost staff wages. In 2010, the province also launched pension schemes and retirement support (e.g. registered pension plans for full- and part-time child care workers in licensed, non-profit centres and nursery schools; matching registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) contributions, and a long-term service recognition retirement benefit) for the childcare workforce. As those nearer to retirement were less able to take full advantage of the new pension plans, Manitoba introduced a lump-sum retirement benefit at the same time, in recognition of the contributions made by long-term ECEC workers (OECD, 2012a).

Prince Edward Island (Canada) increased the wages for educators in the ECEC workforce who are certified. To achieve this, the government developed the Preschool Excellence Initiative, a policy framework that addressed the need for a salary grid that would increase wages. In collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Association, the government engaged stakeholders who would be affected by the wage grid changes and staffing requirement. Together, they reached a favourable agreement on the policy framework, which made it possible to implement this improvement of working conditions for ECEC staff (OECD, 2012a).

In order to close the wage gaps between childcare and kindergarten teachers, **Korea** increased the wages for childcare teachers working with the Nuri Curriculum by USD 300 per month in 2012. In addition, childcare staff can receive further allowances if, for example, they work in rural areas. ECEC centres are also obliged to pay staff for overtime if they work more than 40 hours per week. In addition, staff receive additional pay if they work evening or weekend shifts (OECD, 2012a).

In **England**, the government provides local authorities with additional funding, which early learning services can apply to help provide salary enhancements to highly qualified staff. One county council provided salary enhancements of up to GBP 2 000 for Early Years Professionals. Settings that fall within the top 30% disadvantaged areas can claim an additional GBP 2 000 per year for a second qualified Early Years Professional/Early Years Teacher, which must be used for salary enhancement and is calculated in the same way (Devon County Council, 2015).

Ensuring pay parity with primary school teachers

In **New Zealand**, kindergarten teachers have been given pay parity with primary and secondary school teachers. The Ministry of Education has a funding system for ECEC services providing incentives for services to employ more qualified, registered teachers. As a result, more services have been able to pay better salaries, increasing the number of registered teachers in the ECEC workforce (OECD, 2012a).

British Columbia (Canada), Portugal, Hungary, Slovak Republic and **Korea** ensured pay parity between pre-primary and primary school teachers. In the **Czech Republic**, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport ensured pay parity with primary school teachers for ECEC teachers with a university diploma (OECD, 2012a). This makes working at a kindergarten as financially attractive as working at a primary school.

Providing non-financial benefits

In **Flanders (Belgium)**, the government has introduced additional holidays for qualified, experienced, older employees working in approved day care centres, to encourage them to remain in the profession (OECD, 2012a).

Ensuring good working conditions

Working conditions can be influenced by policies through the setting of minimum standards. Minimum regulatory standards are structural inputs that can enable a satisfactory quality of the ECEC setting. Structural requirements may define the quality of the physical environment for young children and thus the working space for ECEC professionals. A certain minimum level of ECEC provision can be ensured by a clear formulation of standards and enforcement of legislation or regulations governing staff working conditions, such as the number of children per practitioner and the space for a given number of children (OECD, 2006). A lower staff-child ratio improves working conditions for caregivers and teachers, and makes it possible for more attention to be paid to different areas of development (NICHD, 1996; Pianta et al., 2009; Rao et al., 2003).

There are no regulations regarding staff-child ratios specifically in Kazakhstan, although requirements are in place regarding the number of teachers and teacher assistants per group. Groups in Kazakhstan are relatively large, with a maximum of 20 children in a nursery group for 2-year-olds and a maximum of 25 children aged 3 years and older in preschool groups. Two teachers should be available for a nursery group or preschool group if the setting operates for nine hours per day for five days per week. This is comparable to most ECEC settings in OECD countries. However, these teachers split their work: one teacher works mornings and the other afternoons, which does not affect the teacher-child ratio. Compared to OECD countries, teacher-child ratios in Kazakhstan are high. For nurseries for 2-year-olds, for example, with one teacher present in a group, the teacher-child ratio would be 1:20, and it is even less favourable in preschool settings, at 1:25. Figure 3.2 shows the regulated teacher-child ratios for 2-year-olds and 4-year-olds among OECD countries. The average ratio is 1:7 for children of 2, far lower than the ratio in Kazakhstan. In addition, for older children the ratio is 1:18, also lower than the ratio of 1:25 for this age group in Kazakhstan (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming).

Besides minimum standards, leadership plays an important role in supporting working conditions and retaining staff. Managers matter for the extent to which the centre supports, stimulates and improves working conditions (Ackerman, 2006). Staff quality is maintained by leadership that motivates and encourages working as a team, information sharing and professional staff development (OECD, 2006). ECEC providers that provide better working conditions have been found to provide better care and education (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). The role of managers of ECEC centres is important here, since they are the key factor in providing favourable working conditions for their staff. Evidence shows that ECEC practitioners who have little professional support from the centre's management have lower job satisfaction and perform their teaching and care-giving tasks less well than those who receive support (Ackerman, 2006).

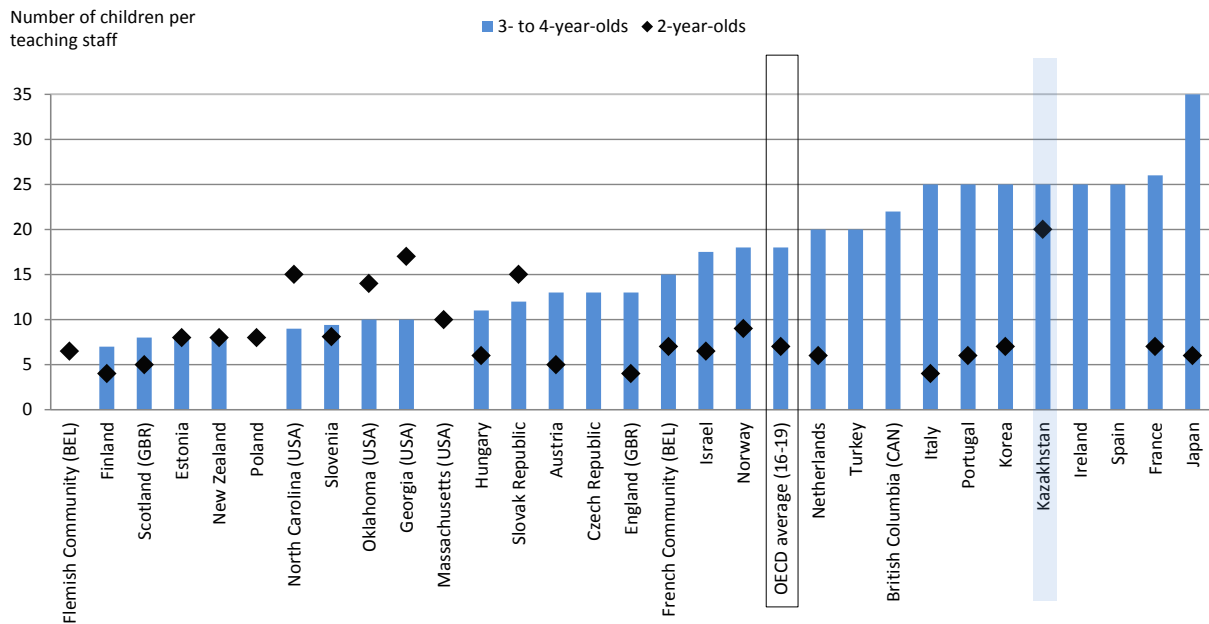
Policy options

Implementing favourable regulatory standards

The stipulated ratio for children aged 3 to 6 years in **England (United Kingdom)**, when there is a qualified teacher or early years practitioner at ISCED Level 6 working in the group, is 13 children per staff member. This is better than the OECD-19 country average staff-child ratio of 1:18 (Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki, 2012). England's regulated ratio decreases to 8 children per practitioner when there is no qualified teacher or early years professional with a Level 6 qualification working directly with the children

(Wall, Taguma, and Litjens, 2015). For staff working with 2-year olds, a statutory ratio of 1:4 is applied. For younger children (under the age of 2), a regulated ratio of 1:3 is applied. As a result, England (United Kingdom), with **Finland**, has the most advantageous ratio for the youngest children in ECEC (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Regulated staff-child ratio (number of children per practitioner) for 2-year-olds and 4-year-olds



Notes: Any assistant staff are excluded from the child-to-teacher ratios. Data for Kazakhstan refers to the number of teachers present in a nursery group operating for 9 hours per day. Data for Flemish Community of Belgium refers to subsidised facilities only. OECD average for 3- to 4-year-olds is based on 16 OECD countries and regions, for 2-year-olds on 19 OECD countries and regions. Countries and regions are ranked in ascending order of the maximum number of pupils per teaching staff for 3- to 4-year-olds. For those countries and regions where this figure is not available, the maximum number of children per teaching staff for 2-year-olds was used.

Sources: OECD (2012), *Starting Strong III*, OECD Publishing, Paris. For Kazakhstan: Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 30 January 2008 No. 77.

Korea has different regulations for staff-child ratios according to age group, but its staff-child ratio for 4-year-olds is 1:25, one of the highest ratios in the world. Other countries, such as **Portugal** and **Spain** also maintain this ratio.

In the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, the Flemish government decided to reduce the ratio of staff per ECEC places in subsidised day care from 1:7 to 1:6.5. It was not financially feasible, however, to revise the ratio at once, and the change was introduced in increments, lowering it from 1:7 to 1:6.8 in 2003; and reducing it again in 2005 to 1:6.5 (OECD, 2012a).

Korea strengthened regulations on childcare centres by amending the Childcare Act in 2005 to improve the quality of childcare. Childcare centres may serve a maximum of 300 children and should be located at least 50 metres away from any dangerous facilities. Additionally, regulated space for children was increased from 3.64 to 4.29 square metres

per child; the classroom space per child was changed to 2.64 square metres. Furthermore, the staff-child ratio was reduced from: 1:5 to 1:3 for children under 1; 1:5 for 1-year-olds; 1:7 for 2-year-olds; 1:20 to 1:15 for 3-year-olds; and 1:20 for 4- and 5-year-olds (OECD, 2012a).

An evaluation of EC services in **Spain** shows that minimum standards for children from infants to 3-year-olds are set at the regional level, and the level of quality for the youngest children greatly differs across the country. Because of these differences, Spain is planning to develop national minimum standards for the ECEC sector for from infants to 3-year-olds, by revising the regional standards and setting out national minimum standards.

Strengthening leadership and support to improve ECEC working conditions

New Zealand has launched a programme of resources to promote leadership in early childhood education called ‘5 out of 5’ children. The Ministry of Education has developed the resources to promote leadership conversations and actions between people holding lead positions in ECE, between ECE leaders and team members, as well as ECE and school leaders (Ministry of Education, 2015a). A video and written material have been published in the form of a brochure, poster and wildcard. Wildcards are intended for facilitators to use during leadership workshops to direct discussion or stimulate additional reflection and conversation, in addition to the questions on the brochure and posters. The resources outline the five key aspects of being a good leader, one of which is “growing others”. This includes “How do you work with team members to strengthen their professional competencies?” and emphasises the role of leaders in supporting their staff. The brochure includes a range of questions to provoke conversation, reflection and action on being a good leader. Example questions refer to how to address the needs of children from ethnic minorities or with special needs. The brochure is designed to be used alongside the video in a facilitated workshop situation with colleagues. The wildcards are also designed to aid workshop discussion or stimulate additional reflection and conversation. The posters serve as a reminder of the key points of good leadership, and can be posted in the ECEC setting. Finally, templates for *self-reflection*, *examples of leadership practice*, as well as *actions and indicators of success* are distributed, to encourage leaders to reflect on how they are putting leadership into practice in the ECEC setting (Ministry of Education, 2015a).

In **England (United Kingdom)**, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) introduced a *Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)* to address the needs of leaders within multi-agency early years settings, such as Sure Start. NPQICL was aimed at leaders of children’s centres based on Sure Start local programmes, neighbourhood nursery initiatives and maintained nursery schools. The qualification recognised the uniqueness of leadership in early years, especially as services develop and mixed staffing models (i.e. staff with differing experience and qualifications) persist in early years services. The qualification is designed to help increase awareness of the practical challenges faced when leading such a setting. The programme materials have been openly released, so that all leaders and services can use them for their learning and training development needs (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2014).

In **Australia**, the National Quality Framework (NQF) requires one person to be formally appointed to the role of educational leader. This need not be the supervisor of the centre; while supervisors may appear to be the obvious choice, an educator with more

time and energy to commit to the role may be a better option (Early Childhood Australia, 2012). The qualities of an educational leader are outlined in the NQF, as follows:

- someone who is not just qualified in early childhood education, but has a strong knowledge of theories of learning and development and is able to share these, along with updates, in an accessible manner, to all members of staff;
- someone who can lead and update staff on the curriculum and is able to guide others in reflecting on their practice;
- someone who has knowledge of individual children and learning styles so that approaches can be differentiated to meet the complex needs of children from a range of backgrounds and abilities;
- someone who has personal qualities and a willingness to listen as well as coach, mentor and reflect alongside their team.

Leaders should also be able to create a shared vision of children’s learning, motivating educators to work towards shared goals for children’s learning and development. The NQF stipulates that “a strong vision, which guides pedagogical decisions and a shared approach about how to achieve best learning outcomes for children, will enable the educational leader to effectively unite a team of educators to work towards a consistent approach to curriculum” (ibid, p. 4). A clear understanding of leadership and a framework for enhancing stronger and better leadership can help improve working conditions for a whole team.

In **Indiana (United States)**, Partnerships for Early Learning has been launched to increase access and quality of early learning services. Five key strategy areas for the project include “innovation and leadership”. Part of this strategy area is to cultivate leaders, since it is understood that they are key to better working environments. As a result, emerging leaders from different backgrounds are being identified to join and expand the early learning leadership network. In addition, leadership training and technical assistance is being provided to leaders (Early Learning Indiana, 2015).

It is recognised in **New Jersey (United States)** that early learning managers or supervisors are in the best position to develop effective working environments and early learning foundations. Few professional development opportunities used to be available for them to learn how to lead their staff towards this goal, and they lacked the means to form a broader vision of early learning. As a result, the Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ), the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) came together to set up a comprehensive early learning professional development programme, the PreK-3rd Leadership Training Series. The series provided the same training for leaders in kindergarten to third grade in elementary school, to support continuity and consistency throughout early childhood services and beyond. Experts, including two DECE staff members and two early childhood and special education professionals, were responsible for developing the training. This includes research-based strategies and techniques, allowing educators in preschool and up to third grade to evaluate their early childhood learning schemes and develop the skills to lead their staff (Rice and Costanza, 2011). This helps improve not only the quality of services provided, but also the working environment for staff.

Making an early childhood education and care career appealing

Attracting staff and matching demand and supply requires an environment that facilitates success and encourages effective professionals to continue in teaching. Teacher attrition rates tend to be higher in the first few years of teaching, but they decline the longer that teachers are in the profession, before increasing again as teachers approach retirement (OECD, 2012b). Considerable private and social costs are incurred in preparing some people for a profession that they may discover either falls short of their expectations, is insufficiently rewarding or too difficult, or a combination of these factors. This underlines the importance of good training for new teachers, including structured induction or mentoring programmes, and internship and practical work experience.

Although attractive salaries are clearly important for making teaching more appealing and retaining effective staff (OECD, 2012a), ECEC policies need to address more than pay. Teaching professionals place considerable emphasis on the quality of their relations with children and colleagues, on feeling supported by school leaders, on good working conditions, and on opportunities to develop their skills. The latter will be addressed in this section, with example policy practices from a wide range of OECD countries.

Policy options

Offering strong career development opportunities within and outside ECEC

In **England (United Kingdom)** early years teachers can, after gaining a number of years of experience, progress into more advanced roles. This can include moving into a speciality, such as special needs, or into management roles, such as becoming a deputy or head teacher. Teachers can also move up to work for local authorities, for example within their early years and childcare department (Pacey, 2015).

In **New Zealand**, certain career development options can be followed both inside and outside the early childhood system. Options inside include leadership roles in an early learning setting or management roles across several settings. Options that can be followed outside include: teaching trainee teachers in tertiary institutions; doing research, policy or advisory work in the education sector; or working in training and education roles in business (University of Auckland, 2015).

In **Italy**, early years educators who have gained at least five years of experience have the option to apply for a secondment to a university to mentor early years students through their internship placements. There are different mentoring profiles they can choose from, each with a differing mentoring focus and function. An organisational tutor has a more operational role, assigning students to their co-ordinating tutor and organising schools for students to take their placements. Co-ordinating tutors work more closely with the students, organising the tools for them to carry out observations, and helping them to evaluate educational practices (Balduzzi and Lazzari, 2015).

In **Sweden**, preschool teachers can be promoted to senior subject teachers (experts on subjects) after they have undertaken further research studies which award them a bachelor or doctoral degree. Preschool teachers can also be promoted to preschool heads, school managers or municipal administrators (OECD, 2012a).

Flanders (Belgium) planned a new Flemish qualification structure, calibrated to the European Qualification Framework, that promotes multidirectional mobility, such as from family day carer to kindergarten teacher (horizontal) and from staff to manager (vertical).

This will be made possible by permitting the comparison of diplomas, certificates of training courses and recognition of prior learning certifications.

Box 3.1 Developing career opportunities for ECEC staff in Canada

The “Securing the Future for Our Children: Preschool Excellence Initiative” is a five-year transition programme in Prince Edward Island (Canada) for the development of an early learning and childcare system. Starting in 2010, Phase 1 included the introduction of Early Years Centres, regulated parent fees, wage enhancements, training and a career ladder for staff, as well as sector planning and management support for programmes.

The development of the new reformed early learning and childcare system recognised that educators who teach and care for children had been previously undervalued, resulting in high levels of turnover. The Preschool Excellence Initiative instead set out to support educators as professionals. Few educators were properly qualified and certified, hence the initiative created a new entry-level and one-year training programme, which could then lead to further qualifications, such as higher diplomas. These levels of qualification are integrated into a career ladder, with differentiated wages. The wages also meet regional averages to ensure that ECEC is a viable career path financially.

Sources: Government of Prince Edward Island, n.d.; Time for Preschool, 2014.

Providing professional development opportunities and updating of skills

Recruiting and selecting promising graduates is crucial for meeting the demand for ECEC staff, but it is only one part of managing human resources. When there are staff shortages, successful ECEC systems cannot wait for a new generation of professionals. Investment in the present workforce is required, providing quality professional development, adequate career structures and a commitment to improve staff performance. The ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations Concerning Teaching Personnel notes in its 2009 report that “Teaching career structures ... are evolving to encourage better teaching practices and incentives for teachers to remain in teaching, but much more needs to be done to link teacher education and professional development, evaluation and career progression. Evidence from international surveys ... point(s) to a general lack of professional development support adapted to the needs of teachers and learners” (Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations Concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) October 2009: p. 4). And no matter how good the pre-service education system is, it cannot be expected to prepare ECEC staff for every challenge they will face in their careers.

Given the complexity of teaching, caring and early learning, high-quality professional development is necessary to ensure that all ECEC professionals are able to meet the needs of diverse populations, engage parents and become active agents of their own professional growth. The development of staff beyond their initial education can serve a range of purposes, including to:

- update individuals’ knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;
- update individuals’ skills and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances, and new educational research;

- enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice; and/or
- help weaker teachers become more effective.

Teachers in Kazakhstan go through an attestation procedure every five years, while managers (directors) are required to go through an attestation procedure every three years. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to participate in professional development programmes, although this is not mandatory in Kazakhstan. Professional development is provided through a central network of in-service teacher training institutions, the National Centre for Professional Development, or *Orleu*. The entity has a network of one institution in a republican city, two city institutions and 14 branches in municipalities. The institute trains thousands of teachers each year (5 739 in 2012 and almost 4 000 in 2013) under government order, and paid by the government (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2014). In addition, there are several private institutes or organisations providing professional development training for teachers. Participation in professional development can be through following formal courses, but is also provided in the form of seminars and workshops (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming). In 2014, 12 640 ECEC teachers participated in professional training in Kazakhstan (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2014).

In seeking to meet ECEC staff professional development requirements, policy makers and practitioners need to consider both how to support and encourage participation and how to ensure that opportunities match staff needs. The following section looks at how the development of teachers can be improved, how professional development can improve quality through sharpening skills, and how it can be matched better to the needs of those working in ECEC.

Policy options

Funding training and development

The Preschool Excellence Initiative was introduced in **Prince Edward Island (Canada)** to improve quality in ECEC. When the state implemented the Preschool Excellence Initiative's Entry Level certification programme, the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning funded the cost of the tuition and books for all previously uncertified staff required to participate in the training. If participants did not meet the qualifications upon completion of the training, they could work with Workplace Prince Edward Island to upgrade their academic skills. This education was provided at no cost to participants and was intended to prepare them for participating a second time in the Entry Level programme (OECD, 2012a).

In **England**, the government provides local authorities with additional funding, which early learning services can apply to, to help provide training incentives to achieve further qualifications. One county council offers foundation degree funding of GBP 500 to staff members wishing to upgrade their qualifications (Devon County Council, 2015).

In **Korea**, kindergarten in-service teacher training conducted by local Offices of Education is subsidised through financial grants. In addition, teachers who are recognised as excellent during their appraisal are provided additional funding for their professional development. This can be used to take sabbatical leave or in-service training courses, for example (OECD, 2014).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in **Slovenia** organises and finances in-service training for pedagogical staff. Preschool institutions and schools plan for continuing professional development for their pedagogical staff in the annual work plan, although preschool teachers usually select training programmes themselves. The financial means for training are allocated by the state. Preschool teachers in Slovenia receive paid study leave, and their transport costs and participation fees are also covered. In addition, Slovenia offers “study help for school fees for further education of pedagogical workers” each year. The grant is targeted to employed teachers and other pedagogical staff who wish to attain a higher level of education or qualification. Candidates must meet certain criteria, such as being employed, and enrolled in a further education course at an appropriate level (OECD, 2014).

In **Finland**, the state provides funding towards in-service training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for educators and assisting staff. The Ministry of Education and Culture has almost doubled its funding for CPD and in-service training since 2010, currently spending over EUR 20 million for this purpose (OECD, 2012a).

To strengthen staff competence, **Sweden** allocated SEK 600 million on continuing education for preschool teachers and child minders for a three-year period running from 2009-11 with the programme “The Boost for Preschool”. The training was primarily directed at advancing pedagogical competence for preschool staff. The programme gave thousands of preschool teachers and child minders the chance to take further education courses – at the university level (for preschool teachers) and at the upper secondary/high school level (for child minders). Teachers and child minders keep 80% of their salary during the study period, co-funded by the government and the preschool principal organisers. The courses focus on children’s linguistic and mathematical development and evaluation of preschool activities. There was also an opportunity for preschool teachers to take research studies to have a licentiate degree (OECD, 2012a).

Manitoba (Canada) introduced training grants to support the childcare workforce and assist facilities in meeting trained staff requirements. The grants include funding for students to study full-time, as well as a workplace grant for those who study part-time while remaining employed. The province also has a grant for facilities to cover the cost of replacing a staff member who is enrolled in a workplace training programme (OECD, 2012a).

In the **Netherlands**, training is free for staff working in ECEC institutions. A source book was created to help training institutions include ECEC in their education programmes; and research is being conducted into on whether institutions can offer a programme focusing solely on young children (OECD, 2012a).

In **Germany**, the federal government invested EUR 400 million over four years (starting in 2013) towards professional development for specialist staff and systematic human resources development on the part of providers. There is emphasis on language and integration support in early childhood. Additionally, as part of the Qualification Initiative for Germany, the federal and *Länder* governments resolved, in 2008, to train more nurses and day care staff.

Ensure participation in on-going training and development

In **Slovenia**, preschool teachers have the right and responsibility to continual professional development (CPD). The law regulates that pedagogical staff have the right to 5 days of in-service training a year, or 15 days spread over 3 years. Preschool teachers

can choose different training programmes, which are usually offered by various public and private providers. Programmes are occasionally provided during the week, but mostly on the weekends, during school holidays and in the evenings, so that it is compatible with the staff's professional careers (OECD, 2014).

In **Luxembourg**, ECEC staff members are legally obliged to follow a certain minimum number of hours of continuous training. This in-service training keeps staff up to date with curriculum changes and offers extra training in the profession. Training courses on child observation and assessment were organised when changes in the curriculum were made (OECD, 2014).

In **Finland**, the Social Welfare Act (50/2005) stipulates that all ECEC staff should have between 3 and 10 days of in-service training per year, subject to their qualifications and job requirement. This Act also requires local authorities to ensure and provide an adequate level of continuous training to ECEC staff, which both maintains and improves the professional skills of staff. The state will provide funding towards training, and in addition, continuous training can be needs-based. For example, in the city of Tampere, needs-based continuous training is carried out in co-operation between the University of Tampere and kindergarten staff. Staff and leaders of ECEC centres indicate their needs for development, and based on these needs, training is developed. The training usually lasts between six months and one year (OECD, 2014).

Identifying staff needs for further learning or training

In **Chile**, the Ministry of Education asks the directors of providers to review the professional performance of educators and to submit their reports. The ministry also uses an educator from an alternative setting to evaluate the performance of individual educators. The peer evaluator is a classroom teacher working at the same educational level and in the same pedagogical area, trained and accredited by the Ministry of Education. The review of the professional performance of the educator is a structured questionnaire covering a range of domains on the teacher's professional activity (and pedagogical orientation). Each question requires both the director of the provider and the alternate evaluator to rate the teacher's performance on four performance levels. The report consists of five parts: *i*) basic information on both the teacher and the evaluators; *ii*) ratings by evaluators across a range of domains and criteria (13 questions); *iii*) information about the teacher's performance (including whether the teacher has previously been evaluated; actions taken by an evaluator as a result of previous evaluation; comparison of current performance to the previous evaluation); *iv*) contextual information; and *v*) a qualitative assessment of the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. The information gathered in the reference report is also used for written feedback that is provided to educators as they complete the evaluation process (OECD, 2014; 2015).

In **France**, inspectors take on the role of education and training consultant. A key part of their inspections in *école maternelle* (preschool) settings is to evaluate the individual performance of teachers. After a direct observation of about two hours in the classroom, the inspector conducts a follow-up interview with the teacher to analyse the practices observed. Based on the observations and discussions with the teacher, the inspector advises on areas where further training is necessary, or where it would be useful for a teacher to observe another teacher's pedagogical practices (OECD, 2014).

In **Germany**, ECEC providers use monitoring results to identify areas in which staff need to improve, and then agree on strategies, goals and training requirements with the staff member (OECD, 2014).

Designing demand-driven training

In **Finland**, municipalities are responsible for determining the content of social welfare training; however, municipalities do not always maintain diversified know-how about the needs of the social welfare sector. Centres of excellence on social welfare were set up by the government in 2002 to convey expertise to municipalities on this topic and ensure that training content is consistent and relevant. These centres of excellence work in close connection with universities and other educational institutions. At the University of Tampere (Finland), continuous training is carried out in co-operation with the city of Tampere and the kindergarten staff (especially the leaders of the kindergartens and the day care centres) as custom-made training. Information about the demands and need for training is generated by the staff and leaders (OECD, 2012a).

Finland and **Mexico** aim to cover a wide range of skills, such as communication with parents, orientation of activities' contents and materials, and teaching strategies and upbringing practices with a child-centred focus (e.g., how children move, play, experience art, explore, etc.). When training is designed to meet needs of staff, this may stimulate staff to continue developing their knowledge and skills, which can enhance their job satisfaction and reduce turnover (OECD, 2012a).

Portugal and **Sweden** focus on language development, mathematics, experimental sciences and child assessment of learning and well-being. Following an evaluation of continuous training programmes, Sweden mostly focuses on children's linguistic and mathematical development as well as evaluation of preschool activities (OECD, 2012a).

Korea has diversified the training possibilities ECEC staff can participate in to meet the staff's diverse needs. Since time constraints often prevent staff from participating in training opportunities, online training is being offered as well, which can increase participation and job satisfaction (OECD, 2012a).

Providing training on curriculum implementation

In **Australia**, the Professional Support Coordinators (PSC) and the Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU) networks in each state and territory are funded by the national government to deliver training and mentoring services to ECEC services to support their implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Programme (EYLF PLP), developed for the government by Early Childhood Australia, also provides ongoing professional support and assistance to services as they engage in the EYLF implementation process. The programme is a national initiative that started in 2010. As part of this programme, ECEC professionals have access to an online interactive EYLF PLP Forum, where they can raise questions, share ideas and interact with other educators implementing the EYLF. High-calibre early childhood experts and practitioners from across Australia are available on the Forum to respond to questions and conduct topical discussions – about issues raised by experts and practitioners via the forum and the national workshop programme – regarding implementation of the EYLF (OECD, 2012a).

In **Luxembourg**, peers (ECEC workers) are trained to educate and inform their colleagues on, for example, changes in the curriculum. This has been found to be an effective method in training staff, since they feel more comfortable asking questions to peers (OECD, 2014).

The Ministry of Education in **Mexico** developed a training course for staff to implement the revised curriculum. Centres of Permanent Training were established to

provide in-service training to ECEC workers and teachers. For the Early Childhood Health and Care and Welfare Curriculum framework, special training strategies were set up to ensure that it is properly implemented and that children will receive quality service (OECD, 2012a).

Providing professional support to ECEC staff

In the **French Community of Belgium**, the *Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance* (the Department for Birth and Childhood) has created a special role for *conseillers pédagogiques* (pedagogical counsellors). Their task is to supervise and assist practitioners to reflect on their practices based on the results of inspections in pre-primary schools. By providing care professionals with information and answers to their questions on a regular basis, the intent is to help staff improve their practices and thus the level of quality (OECD, 2015).

In the **Nordic countries**, pedagogical advisers work comprehensively at the local level to improve the quality of pedagogy in all services, providing up-to-date information on new pedagogical approaches and supporting the organisation in internal quality-improvement processes, such as team evaluation and documentation (OECD, 2012a).

Establishing a system of staff evaluation

Lastly, improving staff performance and evaluating quality is critical to reconcile the demands for educational quality, the enhancement of pedagogical practices through professional development, and the recognition of staff knowledge, skills and competencies. Staff evaluation can be a key lever for increasing the focus on staff quality and continuous professional development, in keeping with the growing recognition that the quality of teaching affects learning outcomes. It provides opportunities to incentivise, recognise and reward competence and high performance. This, in turn, may help address concerns about the attractiveness of ECEC as a career choice and about the image and status of educators. Since evaluation can also help to raise staff's efficacy, it is a key component of effective ECEC staffing policies. Staff evaluation can also help ECEC sensitise settings to individual talent, performance and motivation, by allowing educators to progress in their career and take on new roles and responsibilities based on evaluations of their performance. Teachers often learn best from other teachers, and peer reviews can be a useful tool in appraisals to help teachers improve (Coggshall et al., 2011; Jackson and Bruegmann, 2009).

Research (OECD, 2012b) highlights the importance of systematic approaches to staff appraisal that support continuous learning for staff throughout their career and for the profession as a whole. Such appraisal needs to be based on a shared understanding of good teaching, through, for example, the development of teaching standards. This also professionalises the teaching. This section addresses which countries have developed such standards, and how staff performance is being evaluated to enhance quality.

Policy options

Developing professional standards

In **England (United Kingdom)**, the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) is the accreditation awarded to graduates who lead practice with children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYPS has corresponding standards, which

cover a range of essential aspects regarding high quality practice and leadership. There are eight standards, which each have further sub-aims. Together they promote mentoring, reflection and working in partnership with parents/carers and professionals, to ensure effective early education and care of all children. These standards clarify what is expected from staff and professionalise their job (Teaching Agency, 2012).

In **Australia**, the government has designed the Early Years Learning Framework to provide clear expectations of effective practice from early childhood educators. Three key aspects in the framework: “principles”, “practice” and “child outcomes”, outline the professional standards required from educators. The “Principles”, such as “respect for diversity” underpin practice. The educator is then expected to use a repertoire of pedagogical practice to promote children’s learning and produce certain learning outcomes. These standards clearly set out the expectations of the teaching job in early years, which can give greater social status to the profession and can increase job satisfaction (DEEWR, 2009).

Evaluating staff to improve their quality

In **Chile**, all teachers are evaluated every four years through an evaluation system known as the *Evaluación Docente*. Teachers who are rated “Basic” are evaluated every other year. Teachers who are rated “Unsatisfactory” are evaluated the following year. As of 2011, if a second consecutive “Unsatisfactory” rating is given to the teacher, he or she is removed from the teaching post. Also, under the Quality and Equality of Education Law of 2011, school directors are authorised to dismiss up to 5% of the teaching’s staff annually, among the teachers rated “Unsatisfactory” in their most recent evaluation. Evaluations can thus lead to improved staff performance and quality provision.

In the **United States**, in several districts, peer assistant and review (PAR) programmes are implemented. These programmes use expert mentor teachers or coaches to support new teachers and experienced teachers who are struggling, and conduct some of the teachers’ appraisal aspects. From this appraisal, teachers design professional development plans that are tailored to the strengths and weaknesses identified during the appraisal. They then work with mentor teachers to achieve the goals outlined in the plan.

In **Australia**, the National Quality Standard (NQS) has been designed to set a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and has introduced a ratings system to ECEC. There are seven quality areas under the NQS, including *Educational program and practice*, as well as *Leadership and service management*. Under each quality area, several standards are set outlining what the quality areas cover, and several “elements” that should be completed to achieve it. For example, under *Educational program and practice*, one “standard” is “Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the programme for each child”. Elements for achieving this include, “Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning”. Staff and settings are monitored based on these standards, to ensure a good level of quality of staff (ACECQA, 2015).

The Netherlands has developed the sKoop programme, which involves educators of one school visiting and reviewing educators in another. They use a methodology based on a supervisory framework, developed by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, to observe lessons and conduct panel interviews in order to form an impression of the school. That impression is then discussed with the school authorities, and a written report is produced. The results from the programme have been encouraging, and it is believed that this type

of peer review can make a valuable contribution to the professionalisation of teaching staff, helping them to make full use of their professional autonomy.

New Zealand implemented *Kei Tua o te Pae*, Assessment for Learning, in which teachers are expected to develop effective assessment practices that meet the aspirations of the *Te Whāriki* early childhood curriculum policy. The national government offers training on this assessment practice to ECEC staff. The curriculum programme is also evaluated in terms of its capacity to provide activities and relationships that stimulate early development. Children and parents can help in deciding what should be included in the process of assessing the programme and the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2015b).

Instituting a peer-review system

Chile uses external peer reviews as one means of monitoring staff quality. An educator from another setting, at the same educational level and qualified in the same educational area, interviews an educator and produces an evaluation based on a structured questionnaire of 13 questions covering the teacher's professional activity. The intent is to identify if the educator could benefit from training and to enhance staff performance (see Box 3.2).

In **Korea**, peer reviews are used as part of the "Appraisal for Kindergarten Teacher Professional Development". All teachers of public kindergartens with more than three classes participate in peer reviews. Peer reviews include, for example, observation and evaluation of class preparation, class implementation, family engagement and adjustment for children. Again, these peer reviews can strengthen staff performance (OECD, 2014).

Box 3.2. External peer review of staff quality in Chile

When monitoring staff quality in Chile, the Ministry of Education first requires the head of the ECEC setting to send a review of the professional performance of the educators. Following up on this review, external peer review is conducted by an educator working in another ECEC setting. He or she will interview the educator and evaluate him or her. The peer evaluator is, in general, a practitioner at the same educational level and in the same area(s) of teaching as the staff member under evaluation. Evaluators receive training on peer review by the Ministry of Education to prepare them for this task. Peer review is conducted through a structured questionnaire covering a range of areas of the practitioner's pedagogical activities. The survey includes 13 questions, which are standardised at the national level. For each question, the evaluators rate the teacher's performance according to four performance levels. The results of the survey and interviews as well as observations feed into a final evaluation report that is delivered to the respective ECEC setting and staff eight months later. The final evaluation report consists of five parts, including: *i*) basic information on both the teacher and the evaluators; *ii*) the ratings given by the evaluators on a range of domains and criteria (as listed in 13 questions); *iii*) information about the past performance of the teacher, including whether the teacher has been evaluated before, the actions taken as a result of previous evaluations, and comparison of the staff member's current performance relative to the previous evaluation; *iv*) contextual information; and *v*) a qualitative assessment of the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. The results are used by the Municipal Evaluation Commission as background information on staff and setting performance, and are also used to provide feedback to teachers. The teacher evaluation process will be a central part of the educational reforms currently being undertaken in Chile.

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

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Chapter 4

Conclusions and policy considerations

Kazakhstan is not alone in facing challenges in recruiting and retaining high quality early childhood education and care staff. Policies are needed to respond to the nature of the ECEC profession and work environment. Many of the factors that make the ECEC sector an attractive career choice for new entrants are also important in encouraging people to stay in the profession. Based on the background report prepared by Kazakhstan, and the findings, policy options and country experiences outlined in the previous chapters, some policy considerations have been drafted for Kazakhstan. These highlight the key aspects to consider in attracting and retaining ECEC staff, and provide some guidance for future policy pointers on the subject of ECEC educators.

Conclusion

Many ECEC systems face a daunting challenge in recruiting high-quality ECEC staff, particularly in areas where they are in short supply, and retaining them once they are hired. This report has outlined a range of policy options Kazakhstan might adopt both to attract new staff in ECEC and to retain them. ECEC staff demand and supply is a complex and multi-dimensional question reflecting several challenges: how to expand the pool of qualified staff, how to address shortages in specific regions or areas, how to recruit professionals in the places where they are most needed, how to distribute staff in equitable and efficient ways, and how to retain qualified staff over time. Policy responses are called for that can best shape the ECEC profession and the work environment and enhance the status and position of the profession. Targeted responses and incentives for particular types of staff shortage are also needed for underserved or disadvantaged areas. Competitive compensation and other incentives, career prospects and diversity, and professionalising and upskilling the workforce can be helpful strategies to attract well-qualified professionals to the most challenging areas or regions, as well as to reduce staff shortages and retain effective educators. Active recruitment campaigns can emphasise the fulfilling nature of ECEC as a profession, and seek to draw in groups of applicants who might not otherwise have considered an ECEC career. Initial education is another important part of the equation that can help maintain the supply of a high-quality workforce in the longer term. Last but not least, no matter how good the pre-service education is, it cannot be expected to prepare ECEC staff for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. High-quality professional continuing development is necessary to help educators and teachers meet the demands of diverse populations and become active agents of their own professional growth.

Many of the factors that make the ECEC sector an attractive career choice for new entrants are also important in encouraging people to stay in the profession. Some strategies for improving the sector's appeal to recent graduates and people from other careers – such as improving the image and status of ECEC jobs, providing financial incentives to work in underserved regions or areas and ensuring better pay – will also encourage ECEC professionals to stay. However, once people have been in the job for some time, other factors also start to become important in shaping their attitudes towards ECEC as a career, including non-financial benefits, the work climate, the support they receive, leadership, and opportunities for professional and career growth. Such factors can be difficult for prospective ECEC staff to assess, but studies like the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) indicate how important they can be on influencing whether professionals decide to remain in or leave an educational profession. Policy makers also need to be concerned about the continuing effectiveness of the ECEC workforce. The policy goal, after all, is to retain effective educators and professionals, which implies not only that all staff have the opportunities, support and incentives to continue to improve and perform at high levels, but also that ineffective teachers and educators do not remain in the profession. Hence, staff evaluation is important to increase effectiveness and improve quality in ECEC provision.

Based on the background report prepared by Kazakhstan, and the findings, policy options and country experiences described in the previous chapters, some policy considerations have been drafted for Kazakhstan. These highlight the aspects that are important to consider when attracting and retaining ECEC staff, and provide some guidance for future policy pointers on the subject of ECEC educators.

Policy considerations

Improving the image and status of the ECEC profession

A key part of any general strategy must involve reminding ECEC professionals that they are highly skilled professionals doing important work. Surveys from a number of countries report that secondary school teachers' self-image is relatively low, and indeed lower than wider public opinion of the value of their work (Hanushek and Pace, 1995; Haydn, Cockburn and Oliver, 2001; OECD, 2005). This may very well be the case with preschool teachers and care workers in ECEC as well. Role models are likely to be an important influence on students' interest in an ECEC career. Research (OECD, 2005; OECD, 2011) shows that people who have close contact with schools – such as parents who assist in classrooms, or employers who have students in workplace learning programmes – have much more positive attitudes towards teachers than people with little direct contact with them. This suggests that building stronger links between ECEC settings and schools and the community can help enhance the status of the profession. Such initiatives can be reinforced with general campaigns in the media to enhance the image of the profession by highlighting its importance to the nation, as well as its sophistication and complexity, and the intellectual excitement it can generate. Examples of such campaigns have been highlighted in Chapter 2. Countries also report success with promotional programmes targeted at groups of “non-traditional” entrants to teaching, such as people from other professions who are looking for a career change. There is also a need to promote the benefits of a career in ECEC to groups that are often under-represented among education jobs, including both men and candidates from minority backgrounds. This would include promoting and disseminating information about the ECEC sector through forums and media designed for these demographic groups.

Improving remuneration

Although there are a number of country exceptions where pay parity exists between preschool and primary school teachers (see Chapter 2), in general, ECEC staff salaries are low relative to those working in higher levels of education. In Kazakhstan, ECEC staff salaries are far lower than in OECD countries, and rank even below the average wage in Kazakhstan: ECEC professionals earn much less than people working in most other sectors. Research, however (see Chapter 1), demonstrates that wages are an important part of job satisfaction, status, and ultimately, turnover rates.

But raising salaries by even a few percentage points is very costly. It may be more cost-effective, therefore, to target larger salary raises to the key groups in short supply, such as the cities where an increasing number of children are attending ECEC and as the demand for staff is high. Kazakhstan already provides additional financial remuneration for teachers working in remote areas, and has found this measure effective. This could be a model for attracting staff to areas with a current or expected shortage of ECEC staff (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming). Offering higher wages to beginning staff can also be effective. The countries that have given much larger pay rises for beginning teachers in primary and secondary education have tended to see an increase in teacher education enrolments, some indication of increased academic quality among new student teachers, and increased numbers of young people joining the profession (OECD, 2005). Similar results have been reported for targeted salary rises in the nursing profession (Simoens and Hurst, 2004). Improving salaries is also likely to improve its appeal to men and members of minority groups who are currently under-represented in the profession. Additional financial measures such as fee waivers, scholarships and forgivable loans are

some of the financial incentives that can attract more people into ECEC pre-service education.

Improving working conditions

In addition to salaries, this report discussed the importance of working conditions and policy options drawn from the experience of other countries. As explained earlier, staff-child ratios can influence the interactions between children and staff, which have been found to contribute to teacher quality and also to job satisfaction. One example for improving staff-child ratios during (parts of) the day, would be to employ (more) support staff in ECEC settings. This strategy would both make the ECEC sector more attractive and, by employing more support staff, give staff more freedom to focus on their specialist expertise and on the children. Increasing salaries of all ECEC staff can be costly, but an alternative option might be to reconfigure staffing in some ECEC settings subject to staff shortages. This would mean employing fewer teachers, who are paid substantially more but given much more extensive support from support staff. This would limit the cost of salary increases for teachers by hiring only the number of teachers strictly necessary. Funding could be devoted to hiring support staff, improving working conditions in two respects: increasing teachers' pay and decreasing the workload of ECEC staff.

Expanding the supply pool of potential ECEC professionals

New applicants are being recruited into ECEC all over the world, not just to overcome shortages, but to broaden the range of backgrounds and experiences in ECEC settings. Some countries have had a long tradition of requiring practical experience for teaching, while others focus more on pedagogical knowledge and subject knowledge. The potential pool of ECEC educators can be expanded by opening the profession to individuals with relevant experience outside education. Some countries recognise the skills and experience gained outside education in starting salaries, and enable appropriately qualified entrants to start working and earning a salary before completing ECEC teaching training qualifications (see Chapter 2). This can offer a useful model, complemented by offering more flexible approaches to initial teacher education for entrants from another sector, offering opportunities for part-time study and distance learning, and giving credit for relevant qualifications and experience. Alternative pathways into the ECEC sector can attract not only people with alternative professional backgrounds but appeal to men and applicants from under-represented minorities.

Another way to expand the potential pool of applicants, which this report has not discussed in detail, is increasing the mobility of teachers across educational levels. This can be achieved by ensuring that teacher education programmes have more elements in common, and providing more opportunities for retraining and upgrading teachers' skills. In the Netherlands, preschool teachers and primary school teachers follow the same education programme, and are employed both in preschool and primary school (OECD, 2012). Former ECEC staff also can also help increase the supply of personnel.

Implementing a mandatory probationary period

Considerable evidence from the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and country reviews suggests that some beginning ECEC professionals, no matter how well-prepared and supported, find it difficult to perform well on the job or that it does not meet their expectations. A formal probationary process can help both new staff and their employers to determine whether ECEC is the right career for them. The

satisfactory completion of a probationary period of, for example, six months to two years, could be made mandatory, as it is in New Zealand, before awarding full certification or a permanent post. Beginning staff should be given every opportunity to work in a stable and well-supported environment, and the decision about permanent certification should be taken by a well-trained panel with the resources for assessing new ECEC workers. Successful completion of the probationary period should be acknowledged as a major step in the ECEC career, since it can raise the status of the ECEC profession and increase job satisfaction. It will help ensure that the most effective and enthusiastic ECEC teachers remain on the job, decreasing staff turnover (OECD, 2005).

Encouraging greater mobility

Typically, mobility between teachers, educators and ECEC professionals in different ECEC settings, and between ECEC and other occupations is somewhat limited. This is also the case in other levels of education (OECD, 2012). This restricts the spread of new ideas and approaches, and leaves ECEC professionals with few opportunities for diverse career experiences. It can also mean an inequitable distribution of ECEC staff, since staff do not move from the most desirable settings or regions. In Kazakhstan, for example, staff may remain working in advantaged regions or in private ECEC settings with more generous budgets or better work environments. Policies that remove such barriers and offer incentives for greater career mobility are one possible option. In countries with different ECEC jurisdictions (such as federal systems like Germany and Canada), mutual recognition of ECEC qualifications is a fundamental step in that direction, as is ensuring portability of entitlements for leave and retirement benefits. The recognition of skills and experience gained outside ECEC is another important means of encouraging greater career mobility among ECEC staff. This can be done through recognition of prior learning and skills, as well as providing more diverse entry routes into the ECEC sector and the provision of flexible (re-)entry pathways to the profession.

Making practical experience a more important aspect of initial education

In Kazakhstan, staff are not always well prepared to start teaching, a factor that may deter new recruits (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming). To ensure that staff are better prepared for their job, intensive internship programmes in many OECD countries are a strict requirement for graduation. Practical experience is key to successful teaching. While “stages” are a formal requirement in Kazakh pre-service education teacher programmes, interviews conducted during the OECD review visit in 2013 suggested that not all students are able to do an internship useful for their career or subsequent job, and may lack the practical experience they need. Practical experience is a comparatively minor part of the initial education programme in Kazakhstan, as noted in Chapter 2.

Opportunities for practical experience for prospective teachers offer double benefits. Internship programmes can make the use of interns more attractive. Interns are a relatively cheap labour force who can not only assist ECEC staff with their duties but gain relevant experience in the process. But time is needed for ECEC staff to train an intern well, and to be a good internship mentor. One solution could be to train ECEC staff on mentoring interns, so that on the one hand, they are better prepared and feel more confident and, on the other hand, mentors of interns receive incentives. These may be either financial, and cover the additional time a teacher must invest in training an intern, or non-monetary, such as additional holidays or the possibility of undergoing extra training in a topic they are interested in. If implemented well, such measures can attract additional students to the ECEC sector, and prepare them for their teaching work.

This could help make the pre-service programme, and the teaching jobs, more appealing (Litjens, Shmis and Melhuish, forthcoming).

Viewing professional development as a continuum

Much of the focus of staff development is on initial education, and the knowledge and skills staff acquire before starting work as ECEC practitioners. Given the potentially long careers that many preschool teachers will have, keeping professional development up to date is a key concern, since pedagogical skills and knowledge develop over time. ECEC professional development must be viewed in lifelong learning terms, with initial education conceived as providing the foundations for ongoing learning, rather than producing ready-made professionals.

High-quality initial education is necessary and important, but it is not sufficient on its own to meet the needs of staff and settings. Initial education, induction and professional development should be integrated into a coherent learning and development system. Making professional training mandatory for all ECEC staff in Kazakhstan can increase the awareness among staff and ECEC settings that professional development is a necessary element in ensuring high staff quality. A lifelong learning perspective will necessarily entail providing incentives and resources for ongoing professional development. Pre-service education will always be important, but as a foundation that will require continuous development.

Integrating professional development throughout ECEC careers

Ensuring that all staff – not only the most motivated ones – are lifelong learners presents a challenge, and in linking individual development to the needs of ECEC provisions. In many OECD countries, ECEC staff are entitled to a certain amount of time and/or financial support for recognised professional development. Many countries make it mandatory for ECEC staff to participate in professional development every couple of years (OECD, 2012). It is also fairly common to monitor professional development needs through self-assessment, peer review or inspection. This is the case in Kazakhstan, where underperforming settings and staff are required to undertake training or work on improving their level of quality (OECD, 2015).

A comprehensive approach to professional development could include mandatory monitoring and evaluation procedures, and providing staff with agreed levels of time release or financial support for professional development. This would be an explicit recognition of the importance of professional training in ECEC work, and a way of making participation possible. However, it is also important that staff recognise the value of taking part in professional development, to understand that it is an important part of their professional role, and to see the “entitlement” or “obligatory participation” as the minimum extent of their participation rather than the maximum. This is most likely to occur when staff can see a clear link between professional development activities, improvements in their own practice, child development and overall improvement of the quality of the setting (OECD, 2005; OECD, 2011).

The development of professional standards of performance at different stages of a career will help to provide a purpose and a framework for professional development, as well as criteria for assessing the results. Effective professional development is ongoing, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support (OECD, 2011; 2012).

Evaluating and rewarding effective ECEC staff

Recognising and rewarding the work of ECEC staff is often given short shrift. ECEC staff are not evaluated on an annual basis in several countries (OECD, 2015). Failing to evaluate staff practices and performance, or to establish clear links to improvement or career development, may send ECEC professionals the implicit message that their work is not important. Regular appraisal should be an integral, routine part of professional life. Stronger emphasis should be placed on staff monitoring and evaluation for the purpose of improvement (i.e. formative evaluation). Such appraisal can be low-key and low-cost, and include self-evaluation, informal peer evaluation, observations and structured conversations or interviews and regular feedback from experienced peers or management (OECD, 2015). Designed mainly to enhance professional practice, this could provide regular opportunities for staff work to be recognised and celebrated, and help both staff and ECEC provisions identify professional development priorities. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is important in monitoring staff to establish professional standards that clarify not only the responsibilities incumbent on different roles and jobs but also the expectations. Head masters or managers and other (senior) colleagues need to be trained in monitoring processes (and to be regularly monitored themselves), and ECEC provisions need to have the resources to meet identified needs in professional development. Monitoring frameworks and tools can assist evaluators, and can help ECEC staff prepare for and benefit from such assessments (OECD, 2015). In Kazakhstan, staff are monitored internally (with self-assessments and peer reviews) as well as externally through inspections, for instance. This system could be used to further raise the status of the ECEC profession, increase job satisfaction and retain staff.

Although the principal focus of monitoring staff is on professional improvement, as reported by Kazakhstan and other countries in *Starting Strong IV*, it can also provide a basis for rewarding ECEC staff for exemplary performance. Salary increases could be linked to outstanding performance and contributions. Rewarding staff with additional leave days, allowances for training (financial and time), and opportunities for educational upskilling could also be appealing for many ECEC professionals and help to overcome the limited flexibility in raising salaries that applies in many countries due to financial or regulatory constraints. Building a closer linkage between monitoring and rewarding outcomes, though, needs to ensure that the measures (tools) used to assess staff performance are broadly based, to reflect ECEC objectives and take into account the context of the class- or playroom contexts in which staff are working. In some circumstances, it may be more effective to focus on group recognition of ECEC staff and rewards at the setting level, rather than individual staff rewards, since it may be easier to implement more overall staff monitoring practices. Ongoing, informal monitoring for professional improvement must be distinguished from evaluation at key stages in a teaching career, such as at the transition from probationary status to established ECEC professional, or when applying for promotion (OECD, 2005).

Making education and training more responsive

Initial education has an important role to play in ensuring that a career in ECEC is open to a wide range of well-qualified people, and that emerging needs in the ECEC system are responded to effectively. In addition, on-the-job training ensures that staff remain up to date with skills and knowledge and maintain their level of quality. This can be enhanced through making initial and in-service education and training more responsive to the needs of students and professionals:

- Providing opportunities to train as an ECEC professional after having completed studies in another field. This involves providing consecutive or post-graduate programmes of teacher education in addition to concurrent programmes for those who decide relatively early that they wish to be teachers.
- Enabling people to enrol part-time or via distance education, and to combine initial education with work or family responsibilities.
- Providing alternative routes into ECEC for those who come into the profession mid-career, which combine formal study and on-the-job support.
- Providing study credits for qualifications and experience gained outside initial education, so as to reduce course length and costs.
- Establishing retraining and upgrading programmes that enable existing ECEC professionals to gain new qualifications to teach in other types of settings or other levels of education, or to take on subject areas in high demand.
- Establishing close relationships between education and training institutions, ECEC professionals, and ECEC settings.
- Implementing evaluation mechanisms that enable the outcomes of initial education to be monitored and quality improved.
- Adapting training programmes to the needs of ECEC staff, based on monitoring results on staff developmental needs.

Setting up induction and mentoring programmes

The crucial importance of induction programmes for new teachers in the early years of their teaching careers is widely acknowledged. In successful programmes, mentors in ECEC settings provide guidance and supervision to beginning ECEC professionals, in close collaboration with the initial education institution (OECD, 2011). The early years of the professional career of an educator can be seen as an extension of the training period, or a form of internship, and would benefit from close interaction with the initial education institution and well-trained and resourced mentors in ECEC settings. These mentors provide on-the-job support, diagnose deficits in subject matter knowledge, classroom management strategies and pedagogical processes. Central to the success of induction and mentoring programmes is the quality of mentor training.

Improving leadership

Managers and head teachers in ECEC settings often play an important role in professional development, and often have a say in who participates at what time in training, and arranging time and funding for development opportunities. Leadership and management are thus of critical importance in professional development, and the skills and knowledge of these people deserve attention too. Priorities for improving leadership include improved training, selection and evaluation processes for leaders and managers, providing support services for their roles, and providing more attractive compensation packages. Given the range of responsibilities of principals and managers, it is important that each setting include a leadership team to share the load and ensure effective delivery. This enables the principal or manager to focus on educational leadership for improving learning and teaching of young children and staff, rather than concentrating on administrative tasks. It is also important that principals and other managers be trained and

supported in conducting staff monitoring procedures and evaluations and linking this to professional development planning. Staff should also be able to see that principals and managers are themselves evaluated or monitored on a regular basis, and that they actively engage in professional development (Pont et al., 2008; OECD, 2011).

Developing a more comprehensive approach

No single strategy can ensure that all ECEC practitioners continue to develop and improve, and that effective educators will choose to remain in the ECEC sector. Action is needed on a variety of fronts, including career structure, evaluation, work conditions, and funding. Well-designed policies drawing on the lessons learned in recent research can help to attract new staff, retain ECEC professionals in the sector and make the ECEC sector a more attractive career choice.

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