EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PEDAGOGY REVIEW

ENGLAND

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OECD

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The review

This review describes variations in, and evidence for, pedagogical approaches in formal early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings; how pedagogy is monitored; and which policies affect pedagogical practice. Its specific focus is on comparisons of England (United Kingdom) with Japan, France, Germany, Denmark and New Zealand.

What is pedagogy?

Although pedagogy is often closely related to a curriculum, pedagogy in essence relates to the *how* or *practice* of educating. It refers to the "set of instructional techniques and strategies, which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). With early numeracy, for example, a pedagogical practice might be to encourage counting ingredients that children show an interest in while cooking, or asking children to count using an abacus, or jointly counting pages after a story they have enjoyed.

Why is pedagogy important?

Pedagogy in ECEC is a topic that has received increased policy attention. A majority of children in OECD countries now attend some form of provision, whether nurseries, preschools or other early education and care. Neurological research has indicated that significant brain and behaviour development occurs during these first years of life, and participation in ECEC has been found to have significant benefits for children's early development, thus influencing their opportunities and outcomes in later life. For example, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analysis from 2014 shows that 15-year-old students who attended preschool for at least one year perform better on PISA tests than students who have not attended ECEC. In the United Kingdom, students who participated for at least one year in preschool education scored over 40 points higher on the 2012 PISA mathematics test after socio-economic background was taken into account. Such results indicate that early experiences matter for children's knowledge and skills development.

Positive child interactions and experiences include age-appropriate behaviour and domain- or subject-specific stimulation in important early development areas such as pre-reading literacy and early numeracy. These interactions and experiences are shaped by pedagogy.

International studies recognise that children's capabilities are shaped by the quality and range of early experiences and interactions *in both the home* and ECEC environment. Experiences of young children in ECEC settings are defined by *process quality*. This refers to the nature of the pedagogical interactions between ECEC staff and children, as well as interactions between peers, and with their environment. Positive interactions and experiences include age-appropriate behaviour towards children and domain- or subject-specific stimulation in important early

development areas such as pre-reading literacy and early numeracy. Research has shown these interactions and experiences are one of the most significant factors explaining the effects of care and early education on children's learning and development. England understands the importance of high-quality ECEC and of pedagogy, and is making efforts to enhance quality in early years provision. This has included making improvements to the curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS) and increasing the level of highly qualified staff in Early Years settings.

What are the different pedagogical theories and practices?

Different theories underpin or contribute to countries' pedagogical principles. Policies and guidance are usually based on a combination of ideas of well-known theorists, even if the links are not explicitly made. In an international survey on pedagogy[1], the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, for example, are frequently mentioned as having influenced curriculum and pedagogy in England, Germany, France and New Zealand. In England, for instance, the pedagogical practice of scaffolding[2] is partly derived from the work of these theorists (although other theories have also influenced pedagogy in England). The Montessori approach has influenced pedagogy in Germany and Japan, and the following theories or theorists have been of influence elsewhere: Developmentally Appropriate Practice or DAP (Japan), Reggio Emilia (Japan), Bronfenbrenner (New Zealand), Rogoff (New Zealand), Bruner (France), Freire (Germany), Robinson (Germany) and Zimmer (Germany), as well as Humboldt (Germany) and Fröbel (Germany). The extent to which these theoretically specified approaches are knowingly practised and abided by in different ECEC settings is unclear from our research with governments. Indeed, settings in a given country can employ a combination of pedagogical practices if they do not subscribe to an exclusive approach.

Despite this diversity in theories and practice, some pedagogical approaches can be thought of as typical in certain OECD countries. For example, a child-centred approach is implemented in England, Denmark, as well as in Germany, and the constructivist/interactive approach is practised in England, France and Germany. There are also less common approaches, such as the "theory of three activities" used in Japan, which specifies three layers of activities that focus on a combination of children's free play, guided play and teacher-instructed play.

What policies or guidance influence pedagogy in different countries?

Pedagogy is influenced by a number of factors, such as a country's ECEC system or organisation, and links to primary school education. In addition, the country's regulatory minimum standards and the curriculum framework (such as the Early Years Foundation Stage in England) influence pedagogical practices. Furthermore, factors such as staff knowledge, initial education qualifications and content, training and their competences and skills influence staff pedagogy, as does the monitoring of quality, and process quality in particular.

Given different cultural and historical contexts, guidance on pedagogical approaches and practices naturally differs between countries. However, some similarities can be found: policies and/or curricular guidance often advocate (structured) play-based learning and a mixed approach of child-centred and staff-initiating practices (Denmark and Germany being the exceptions, with a strong emphasis on child-initiated practices). New Zealand is the only country to emphasise cultural and linguistic heritage in pedagogical approaches.

England's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the curricular document for teaching during children's early education and care. This curriculum does not include any explicit guidance for staff on pedagogical practice and does not prescribe a pedagogical approach, but sets out some parameters that frame pedagogy. For instance, the EYFS recognises the importance of play and a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. It promotes balance between the development of academic and literacy skills, socio-emotional development, and creative and physical

development, and so implicitly encourages practitioners to adopt a wide range of domain-specific learning techniques.

In each of the five case-study countries on which this research focuses, including England, some form of pedagogical guidance is provided in or alongside the national curriculum framework. England developed a best practice guidance booklet based on research[3] in England, entitled "Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (2008). England's child-centred approach, with a mix of pedagogical practices, is reflected in the pedagogy guidance document, which emphasises sustained shared thinking and scaffolding practices. Scaffolding refers to the method where a practitioner helps the child master a task or concept that the child is initially unable to grasp independently. The teacher offers assistance with only those skills that are beyond the child's capability, which has been found effective in stimulating early child development.

England's child-centred pedagogy prioritises play-based learning and mixing staff- and child-initiated activities. This is reflected in its Early Years Foundation Stage framework and in pedagogical guidance for ECEC staff.

Other overarching commonalities between the countries reviewed are a reflection of the importance of meeting children's individual needs, and the belief that children learn and develop in different ways. Pedagogical approaches are only broadly guided by these countries' governments and authorities, so practitioners can adapt the curriculum and pedagogical approaches to accommodate the needs of different children. As part of a review of the EYFS, England has recently acceded to the wishes of ECEC providers to make the framework less prescriptive, leaving the staff more room for innovation and interpretation.

Which pedagogical approaches or practices most improve children's development?

In general, research revealed both positive and negative effects of particular pedagogical approaches with given pedagogical programmes, such as the Montessori or Steiner methods. That said, research evidence and studies evaluating the same approaches in a similar context are extremely limited, since any pedagogical approach is implemented in different ways.

Studies indicate that approaches that adhere strictly to a specific type of pedagogy do not always result in better child outcomes than programmes that take a less prescriptive approach. For instance, evaluation of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) has found no direct effects on academic outcomes, although it was found to have a positive impact on children's ability to initiate and maintain interpersonal relations, and in the long term, on children's motivation and interest in learning. The Montessori approach demonstrates greater gains in, for example, reading, mathematics and social problem solving, although its effectiveness depends on good implementation. Alternative educational programmes, such as Steiner and Freinet, have not been found to be any more effective in enhancing children's development than mainstream programmes.

Certain aspects of pedagogical practices, i.e. actions that the staff implement and use, are found to have a greater influence than others on children's development:

- Firstly, interactions between adults and children are vital in stimulating early learning. In high-quality interactions, adults are genuinely interested in what the child is doing; adults are listening, are helping to extend children's thoughts and knowledge, and implement sustained, shared thinking. In settings where such sustained shared thinking was more common, children have been observed to make greater developmental progress.

- Secondly, play-based learning, for example through the use of puzzles and constructional materials, is found to be a highly effective method of enhancing child development. Within play, the way sensitive adults help children reflect on situations, through scaffolding, for example, is important. Scaffolding-focused learning environments, where the practitioner attempts to help children only with tasks that are just beyond their current capability, demonstrated greater overall positive effects on children's development than teacher-directed and child-centred environments.

- This suggests that, thirdly, pedagogy should neither be too staff-directed or staff-focused, with a high share of staff-initiated activities, or too child-centred, where children decide on the activities. While studies on staff-directed approaches have revealed some advantages, such as better achievement in letters and reading, this approach negatively affects children's motivation to learn. In France, it was found that highly teacher-directed pedagogical practices were less effective. In Germany, for example, a child-centred pedagogy, in combination with specific teacher-managed activities and a high level of assistance, was found to help develop academic skills such as numeracy and literacy, and children also demonstrated higher levels of well-being and motivation to learn. Research in the United States also found that mixed teacher- and child-managed activities are associated with alphabet and letter–word growth, and purely child-managed experiences, including play, were associated with vocabulary growth.

England is one of few governments that have commissioned research in its own country on which pedagogical practices are found to benefit child development.

Research affects pedagogy and pedagogical practices, because its findings can inform policy makers and practitioners on best practices and on what works best in enhancing staff performance, process quality and child development. Research on pedagogy and practices usually focuses on particular programmes, and only limited information is available on specific approaches, regions or ECEC settings. England is one of the few governments to have based its national pedagogical guidance for staff on practices that have been researched within its own borders. New Zealand has carried out something similar, although its best practices are listed as examples online rather than integrated into staff guidance. Many other countries do not conduct any research on pedagogical effectiveness.

Does the regulation or monitoring of ECEC quality influence pedagogy?

While all countries reviewed in this study monitor quality in ECEC, only England, Germany and New Zealand monitor process quality or pedagogical quality in particular. In England, though pedagogical approaches and practices are not specified in the curriculum framework, pedagogical practice is assessed by inspectors regarding its impact upon children's learning, development and well-being. The scope of monitoring process quality in New Zealand and several *Länder* in Germany is broader than in England, including aspects such as the overall quality of teaching/instruction/caring; relationships and interactions between staff and children; collaborations between staff and parents, management, or between colleagues; pedagogy; and implementation of curriculum by staff.

England, like New Zealand and Länder in Germany, monitors process quality by observing and assessing staff practices and interactions with children.

Pedagogical practices are influenced by organisations that monitor settings' results and practices. Indeed, if staff are assessed on their actual interactions and activities with children, and receive feedback, they will to some extent reflect on this and can improve their practices and interactions. However, given the current limitations of the data and information available, it is not

clear how and in what way monitoring influences pedagogy in practice, and what aspects of monitoring most impact pedagogy.

In addition to monitoring quality, the regulatory minimum quality standards regarding staff-child ratios can impact the quality of staff interactions with children. A lower number of children per practitioner makes it possible for staff to pay more individualised attention to children. With a higher number of children per staff member, conditions are less favourable for individualised attention and interaction with children. England and Finland have the highest staff-child ratios in place for children below the age of 3. England's staff-child ratio of 1:8 to 1:13 (depending on staff qualifications) for preschool-aged children aged 3 and older is better than the OECD average, but less beneficial than New Zealand's ratio or the regulated ratio in many German *Länder*.

Conclusion

Pedagogy in England has several strengths. It promotes continuous child development for the whole ECEC age range, by implementing a single curriculum framework; it emphasises age-appropriateness and play in pedagogy; employs different approaches and practices that provide more flexibility for staff; and has a robust monitoring system that even monitors process quality.

Research suggests that it is important that pedagogy remain child-centred, and developmentally appropriate, with an emphasis on play-based learning. The implementation of different curricula at different stages can affect whether this is achieved. In France, for instance, the preschool curriculum is explicitly designed to match the school curriculum (although it are two separate documents and preschool and primary school are regarded as separate cycles), and as a result, pedagogy in preschool is strikingly teacher-centred. In contrast, the early years curriculum in England is distinct from the national school curriculum. The transition between the two curricula is facilitated by the early years curriculum being adopted in school reception classes for children aged 4 to rising 5. This helps children become familiar with school and prepares them for more formal learning. Key Stage 1, the first part of the national school curriculum for children age 5 to 7, introduces academic subjects more formally, building on what has been learnt in EYFS.

Finally, the internationalisation and diversification of societies imposes considerable demands on pedagogy. Early education practitioners need to be prepared to work with more children of different cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, and pedagogical practices need to be adapted to their diverse needs.

NOTES

[1] The survey on pedagogy was developed by the OECD in collaboration with the Department of Education in England (UK) and distributed to the OECD ECEC Network in autumn 2014. The following 21 countries responded to the survey: Belgium (Flemish Community), Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England).

[2] Scaffolding refers to the practice where the practitioner helps the child master a task or concept that the child is initially unable to grasp independently and offers assistance with only those skills that are beyond the child's capability.

[3]www.foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/practice-guidance-for-the-early-years-foundation-stage/

Chapter 1

Introduction

There is increasing recognition that early childhood education and care (ECEC) provides the crucial foundation for learning and helps to develop cognitive and non-cognitive skills important for future success (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). Neurobiological research by Knudsen et al. (2006) highlights the importance of a child's early years on brain and behavioural development. Both occur mostly during early childhood, a phase where development is influenced by the quality of experiences and interactions, and where development occurs at a more rapid pace than in later years (Harrison and Ungerer, 2005; Ridley, 2003; Herschkowitz et al., 2002; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000; NICHD, 1997). While evidence shows that the extent of the benefits depends on the quality of ECEC, there is no consensus on how quality should be defined. Furthermore, structural quality has been extensively studied, but process quality has not. Process quality consists of what children actually experience in their programmes and what happens within a setting (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). A main aspect of process quality is pedagogical practices (Bäumer, 2014).

Thus, the pedagogy implemented by childcare providers and centres plays an important role in ensuring quality in ECEC. This topic is consequently receiving increased attention from governments at policy level (OECD, 2014b). In the United Kingdom, the Department for Education is responsible for providing guidelines for ECEC. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS) sets statutory standards for providers in ECEC and provides quality and consistency (DfE website, 2014). The department is aware how important of high quality and pedagogy are in ECEC. The goal now is to enhance quality in early years provision, by improving the EYFS curriculum and increasing the level of highly qualified staff within Early Years settings. The department recognises that pedagogical practice is inherently linked to both curricula and staff qualifications but acknowledges that information is limited on different pedagogical practices and what drives them.

Policy relevance of review

This review of pedagogical approaches within Early Years was commissioned by England's Department for Education to elucidate these questions. It was prepared by the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills, Early Childhood and Schools Division. It aims to address an evidence gap in how England's approach to the promotion of high-quality pedagogy in early years' settings compares to the variety of approaches in a selection of contrasting OECD countries. The OECD was commissioned to undertake this review in partnership with DfE, following a discussion led by English delegates on what constitutes high-quality pedagogy at the OECD Early Childhood Education and Care network. This review describes variations in, and evidence for, pedagogical approaches in formal ECEC settings; how pedagogy is monitored; and which policies affect pedagogical practice. The focus will be on comparing England (United Kingdom) with Japan, France, Germany, Denmark and New Zealand.

Research aims

This review aims to provide a better understanding of the policies affecting pedagogy and international pedagogical practices within early years settings; to help draw comparisons between the approach in England and those of other countries/territories; and to offer the necessary scoping information for officials to decide whether to further investigate certain types of approach and ultimately, change policy to influence practice in England.

Research questions

The following research questions are investigated:

1. Context: How does the structure of early years provision in England compare to specific countries of interest? Have differences contributed to different pedagogical approaches?
2. How are different elements of quality, including pedagogical approaches, pedagogical knowledge of staff and child-staff interactions, monitored across the countries and across different types of setting? Do certain countries place more importance on monitoring quality and pedagogy?
3. Do countries predominantly practice one or a variety of pedagogical approaches? What are they, what policies direct or affect them (e.g. curriculum, frameworks and/or qualifications) and so could be used in England, and importantly, what evidence is the practice derived from (e.g. empirical studies, theory, professional opinion, and/or just common practice)?
4. What are the fundamental differences between the pedagogical ideologies/theories subscribed to, and are these reflected in distinct practices, or are practices similar despite different underpinnings?
5. Are different pedagogical approaches appropriate for specific learning objectives, e.g. pre-reading or pre-mathematical abilities?
6. Is early years pedagogy integrated with the formal school system in any way?

The definition used for pedagogy in this review is from Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002): "Pedagogy refers to that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment (which includes the concrete learning environment, the family and community)."[1]

Methodology

Three main methods were incorporated in this study: a literature review, an OECD survey data on countries' monitoring of quality and a bespoke international survey on pedagogy.

i. Literature review

The literature review sought to highlight findings from robust evaluations of pedagogical approaches where available. The literature used for this review was drawn from the following sources: OECD publications regarding early childhood education and care, international literature and research on the effects of pedagogies on child development and policies, as well as government websites and search engines such as Google Scholar, academic libraries and international magazines and databases. The search was conducted in English, French and German. The review was written by ECEC expert Dr Yvonne Anders from the Free University of Berlin, and the findings in her review were incorporated into this report.

The research focused mainly on statistical studies, including qualitative studies where relevant. Standards of evidence were explicitly considered, with attention to high quality. Poorly designed research was disregarded and experimental/quasi-experimental designs given appropriate weight when evaluative evidence was relevant to the research questions.

ii. Analysis of OECD survey data on countries' monitoring of quality

Data and information from the OECD Monitoring Quality survey was analysed and used for answering the research questions in this report. The report provides detail on how England's results compare to those of the sample countries. Analysis involved descriptive findings and more detailed investigation of monitoring pedagogy and curriculum practices in England, compared with that of the other countries.

iii. A bespoke international survey on pedagogy

In order to fill gaps identified in the literature review, a survey of countries was conducted. A short questionnaire was issued electronically to national governments, involving a mixture of closed and open response questions. Topics included: the organisation of ECEC systems; curriculum content and implementation; decision-making on pedagogical activities; pedagogical guidance for staff; theories and ideas influencing pedagogical approaches; type of research on pedagogy; monitoring pedagogy; and what policy levers influence pedagogical approaches.

Through the survey, qualitative information on general pedagogical and curriculum practices was generated. It is, however, worth bearing in mind that information provided by respondents was sometimes limited, since government officials' knowledge of pedagogy is not very detailed.

Limitations of this study

This study synthesises information and evidence from the relevant literature and research, and surveys of officials from a wide range of countries. The result is a detailed exposition of the key issues regarding ECEC pedagogy. Answering some of the research questions posed, however, would require a bespoke primary research surveying actual ECEC services and their practitioners. For instance, estimating the prevalence of different types of pedagogical approaches or activities in practice would require collecting data from practitioners and settings, since such information is not collected at a national, central or regional level. Furthermore, this study describes evidence on the varying impact of different pedagogical approaches on children's development, but is unable to draw firm conclusions from this literature. This is due to the variability in the type and standard of evaluations undertaken, the different types of pedagogical approaches that have been researched, and the fact that these relate to different countries with different policies and traditions. Given these limitations, this work is presented as drawing together a wide range of material in relation to some policy questions on pedagogy that are relevant to a number of countries. The aim of this review is to support and encourage policy thinking and development, rather than to provide specific recommendations.

Outline of this report

The structure of this review is as follows: Chapter 2 outlines the reasons why pedagogy matters in ECEC. It explains why early childhood development is considered to be of high importance, and examines potential effects of participation in ECEC on the child's early development, while highlighting the importance of pedagogy in this context. Chapter 3 explains and defines pedagogy. Chapter 4 examines the structure of early years provision, indicating the differences in the organisation of ECEC systems. In addition, the chapter provides comparative information on the financing and costs of ECEC, parental leave policies, the types of settings in countries, participation in ECEC and entitlements to ECEC. Chapter 5 then looks at pedagogical approaches and practices in formal ECEC settings, as well as types of pedagogical ideologies,

theories and approaches practised in the United Kingdom and other countries. Research findings on the effects of different types of pedagogical approaches or practices are described in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 describes monitoring quality in pedagogy, comparing the form of monitoring in different national contexts and what its goals are. Chapter 8 outlines and describes policy areas that can affect pedagogical practice and considers how these areas are implemented in England by comparison with other countries. Chapter 9 brings together the overall findings of this research report and outlines the key findings on pedagogy in general, and for England in particular.

NOTES

[1] http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4650/1/RR356.pdf

Chapter 2

Pedagogy matters

While children spend a great proportion of their young lives in the home, many children in OECD countries attend some form of childcare or early education (ECEC). Neurological research has shown that significant brain and behaviour development occurs during these first years of life, and that this is influenced by the quality and range of early experiences and interactions. Depending on the nature of these experiences and interactions in the home and in ECEC, the outcome for children's development can potentially vary widely. The experience of young children in ECEC is mostly related to process quality, that is, the nature of the pedagogical interactions between staff and children, as well as between peers, and in relation to their environment. The arena for positive interactions and experiences includes such aspects as child- and age-appropriate behaviour and domain-specific stimulation in important early development areas such as pre-reading literacy and early numeracy. These interactions and experiences are fundamental to pedagogy, which research indicates is one of the most significant factors underlying the effects of care and early education on children's learning and development.

PISA analysis also indicates the benefits of participation in ECEC for children in England. The 2012 data shows that 15-year-old students who attended preschool for at least one year perform better in PISA tests than students who have not attended ECEC. In the United Kingdom, students who participated for at least one year in preschool education scored over 40 points higher on the 2012 PISA mathematics test after socio-economic background was taken into account. These results suggest that what happens in ECEC settings, such as the interactions and the pedagogy, influences children's development.

The importance of early childhood development

In recent years, neurobiological, behavioural and psychological studies have helped to develop a greater understanding of the importance of the early years and the influence of genetics, environment and relationships on children's cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural development (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). Neurological research indicates that significant brain and behaviour development occurs during the first years of life, and that this is influenced by the quality and range of early experiences and interactions. Although the brain continues to develop throughout life, new learning never occurs at the same speed that it does during the early years. Depending on the nature of these experiences, children's future development can cover a wide spectrum (Harrison and Ungerer, 2005; Ridley, 2003; Herschkowitz et al., 2002; NICHD, 1997; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). By the time children enter primary school, their general cognitive, language, pre-reading and early numeracy skills already differ, and these differences are often maintained during further stages of development (cf. Anders et al., 2012; Dornheim 2008; Dubowy et al., 2008; NICHD ECCRN, 2002; 2005; Sammons et al., 2004; Tymms, Merrell and Henderson, 1997).

Although children spend the largest proportion of their young lives in their direct home environment, out-of-home care has become increasingly popular since the 1980s, due to higher female labour participation rates and increasing awareness of the benefits of ECEC (OECD, 2006; Litjens and Taguma, 2010). A large proportion of children in OECD countries now attend some form of childcare or early education (OECD, 2014a). Economists have argued that investment in ECEC programmes have long-term monetary and non-monetary benefits. The long-term returns of investment are highest when spent on the early years of education and include higher graduation rates in secondary education, lower drop-out rates, a larger share of people attending tertiary education, lower crime rates and costs, and even higher tax returns for governments (Heckman, 2006; Knudsen et al., 2006). ECEC has been found to have particularly beneficial effects on children who lack stimulation and support within their own family, i.e. disadvantaged or "at risk" children (Barnett, 2011; Burchinal et al., 2010; CQO Study Team, 1995; Dearing, McCartney and Taylor, 2009; OECD, 2012; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Smith, 2013). PISA analysis shows that 15-year-old students who attended preschool for at least one year perform better in PISA tests than students who have not attended ECEC. In the United Kingdom, students who participated for at least one year in preschool education scored over 40 points[1] higher on the 2012 PISA mathematics test after socio-economic background was taken into account (OECD, 2014b).

As a result, OECD member countries (including the United Kingdom) have strengthened their national focus on ECEC and increased their investments in the early years (OECD, 2001; OECD, 2012). Furthermore, international institutions like UNESCO and the World Bank have encouraged their members globally to invest in ECEC (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005; Penn, 2002).

Quality in ECEC and pedagogy

A few decades ago, concerns existed over placing a child in childcare, because it was feared that the mother would be less able to secure an attachment with her child and this might negatively affect a child's development (Litjens and Taguma, 2010). More recent studies studying the separation of mother and child have found no significant relationship between the use of ECEC services and attachment security between mother and child, although concerns persist with regard to very young children (Ahnert et al., 2004; Friedman and Boyle, 2008; Harrison and Ungerer 2002; NICHD, 1997; Tremblay et al., 2010). On the contrary, research indicates that ECEC can help promote the acquisition of skills and socio-emotional and cognitive development, on the condition that the level of quality is high. This was observed in a cross-sectional analysis of ECEC programmes focusing on centre-based ECEC and family (home-based) ECEC for 4-year-

old children in Austria, Germany, Portugal and Spain. The study showed that although the effect of family background on early development is large, and the development of disadvantaged or "at risk" children lags significantly behind that of children from families with greater advantages, high-quality centre-based ECEC can reduce children's learning disadvantages within one year (Tietze et al., 1998). Tietze's (1998) study of over 400 German kindergartens also found a positive relationship between the quality of ECEC and children's cognitive and social development. Ahnert's (2004) study concluded that high-quality childcare appears to act as a buffer against insecure attachment of children, rather than endangering attachment security. In infancy, babies are inclined towards social interaction. While primary attachments are usually formed with family members, attachments can also be formed with substitute caregivers, such as ECEC staff. Such early relationships are of significance because of their impact not only on social-emotional development but on brain function. The brain circuits involved in social interaction also link closely to circuits controlling other functions, such as creating meaning, moderating emotion, organising memory and regulating body state (Smith, 2012). While it is difficult to analyse the impact of ECEC on these factors that enhance development, an early research study by ECCE (1999), found that the quality of ECEC programmes accounted for up to 15% of differences in school achievement and socio-emotional development among children at the age of 8.

The literature suggests that quality is the most significant factor underlying the degree and the persistence of the impact of ECEC. International studies have differing perspectives on what constitutes quality, but some common components can be found (Litjens and Taguma, 2010; OECD, 2012). High quality appears to be related to both structural and process quality (Philips and Howes, 1987; Andersson, 1992; Broberg et al., 1997; Cryer, 1999; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000; Driessen, 2004; Tietze and Cryer, 2004; Vermeer et al., 2005; Huntsman, 2008). Structural quality refers to aspects such as class size, teacher-child ratio, formal staff qualification levels and size of the setting (Anders, 2015), while process quality focuses on the processes in ECEC settings. A salient factor affecting process quality is context, and in particular, the interactions a young child experiences with his/her direct environment (Litjens and Taguma, 2010), as well as with space and materials (Anders, 2015). Good pedagogical interactions are an essential aspect of child well-being and development, and can be seen as a key dimension of quality, with significant effects on a child's development. The linkage between structural and process quality and pedagogy will be further examined in Chapter 3.

Defining pedagogy

Pedagogy (and pedagogical interactions) concerns how adults in early years settings engage with children to achieve developmental objectives, and what directs their methods. Specifically, pedagogy refers to "that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). It concerns the *how* of adult and child interaction, which is particularly important in an ECEC context, given how children learn and develop during early childhood. How children learn and develop at this stage is subject not only to *what* is taught but more importantly, *how* it is facilitated (Anders, 2015). Consequently, pedagogy has a significant effect upon the (process) quality of ECEC and the impact ECEC can have on children. Effective pedagogies facilitate positive interactions, by structuring environments and planning activities that fully engage children. This in turn enhances the children's cognitive, linguistic and social development, since positive relationships have the most consistent and enduring influence on a child's development (Bowman et al., 2001; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). Characteristics of effective pedagogy include nurturing and consistent relationships, child- and age-appropriate behaviour, a positive class- or playroom environment, and domain-specific stimulation in areas such as verbal and pre-reading

literacy, early numeracy, and science (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

Naturally, pedagogical practices, techniques or strategies differ across countries and cultures. These may vary between national and regional contexts, and between individual ECEC settings (OECD, 2014b). A number of factors are at play, such as a country's political system and policy interests, its overarching pedagogical theory or approach, and the alignment of the ECEC system with formal schooling (ibid.). In Germany's federal political system, for example, many different policies and regulations are set at federal state level, and policies and regulations therefore differ between states. In the United Kingdom, England's pedagogical guidance and curriculum differ from Scotland's. Many countries, including New Zealand, Japan and Denmark, allow ECEC settings to choose their own pedagogical approach. But in France, preschool (*écoles maternelles*) curricula and teacher training are aligned with primary school education, which results in similar pedagogical approaches in different educational contexts.

While pedagogy in ECEC has received increased attention at policy level, few OECD countries have conducted research on effective pedagogical practices (OECD, 2014b). Little evidence has been gathered within countries on those that are the most effective. Because pedagogy matters for quality in ECEC and for children's development, it is of utmost importance to examine further what it involves, and on the differing approaches between countries.

The next chapter examines the concept of pedagogy more extensively. It describes the pedagogical approaches and practices in formal settings in different OECD countries, with the goal of providing a comparative international picture for England (or the United Kingdom), and presenting practices that have been deemed successful, based on the evidence and information available.

NOTES

[1] Thirty-five score points is the equivalent of one year of schooling (OECD, 2014b).

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Chapter 3

What is pedagogy?

Although pedagogy is often closely related to a curriculum, pedagogy in essence relates to the how or practice of educating. It refers to "that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). In other words, it concerns the how of adult and child interaction. The way children learn and develop at this stage, however, is not just subject to what is intended to be taught, but how it is facilitated.

Pedagogy is influenced by a number of factors in different countries, including the organisation of ECEC settings and whether they are aligned with primary education, as they are in France. In addition, the country's regulatory minimum standards and the curriculum framework (whether or not this is an integrated document for the whole ECEC age range, as it is in England) influence pedagogical practices. Factors such as the knowledge, initial education and training of staff and their competences and skills, and how quality and process quality in particular are monitored, also influence the pedagogy in a given country or setting. Pedagogical approaches vary not only between national and regional contexts, but individual ECEC settings.

What is pedagogy?

Pedagogy is a term both broadly used and understood. It overlaps, and is sometimes used interchangeably, with the concepts of quality of ECEC, curriculum, and a pedagogical/educational approach (Anders, 2015). This report uses the definition from Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002), who define pedagogy as "that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment." Pedagogy is also closely linked with the concepts of quality of ECEC, curriculum and pedagogical approach. These concepts will be defined separately, to distinguish them from pedagogy, and their linkage to pedagogy will also be explored. Subsequently, pedagogy will be defined in itself.

Quality of ECEC

The quality of ECEC is usually broken down into separate but interlinked key forms of quality (NICHD ECCRN, 2002; Pianta et al., 2005): structural quality, process quality, and orientational quality. These forms of quality can influence pedagogy (and vice versa), as explained below.

Structural quality

Structural quality refers to aspects that are often regulated (and that are subject to regulation) and define the structure of a setting, such as class size, staff-child ratio, formal staff qualification levels, provided materials and size of the setting (Anders, 2015). Different aspects of structural quality can influence pedagogy. For example, the choice of interaction and strategies can depend on the staff-child ratio as well as the materials available. As a result, regulation policies and funding can greatly impact structural quality, and hence the quality of pedagogy. From an alternative perspective, pedagogy also impacts structural quality because certain pedagogies make use of the spatial-physical environment in a particular way or use materials or practices that require a certain space or trained staff (ibid.). This will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Process quality

Process quality refers to the processes that occur in an ECEC setting, that is, the nature of the pedagogical interactions between ECEC practitioners and children, the interactions among children, and the interaction of children with space and materials (Anders, 2015). As process quality concerns the nature of the pedagogical interactions, the link and overlap between process quality and pedagogy is clear. However, the two concepts remain distinct: pedagogy defines the *set* of pedagogical strategies and activities and how these are implemented, which may then be evaluated as of high or low process quality.

Orientational quality

Orientational quality is a more subjective concept and refers to the pedagogical beliefs of practitioners and settings. It can include, for example, practitioners' definition of their professional role, the staff and setting's educational values, epistemological beliefs, educational priorities and learning goals (Anders, 2015). Orientations of ECEC staff can develop in the course of professional experience, although they are found to be quite stable (ibid.).

Of these three forms of quality, process quality is perceived to have the most direct effects on children's learning and development, because the nature of pedagogical interactions influences the outcome of children's learning and development. Positive interactions and caregiving are found to be one of the most consistent predictors of children's development and have the most

enduring influence on young children's development (NICHD, 2006; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). Longitudinal studies show that early interactions and experiences set the stage for other relationships, as children move beyond the immediate and direct environment of the home or centre, and that they contribute to how children learn (Thompson et al., 1999; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). Structural and orientational quality are seen to have more indirect effects, for example through their influence on process quality. For instance, the number of children in a room or per staff member affect the nature of pedagogical interactions in the classroom, as do staff beliefs about child development or opinions about what it is appropriate to teach young children (Pianta and Howes, 2005).

Curriculum

Curriculum and pedagogy are not the same conceptually, but both terms have been used interchangeably in different countries (cf. Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). In its narrowest sense, the curriculum describes the content of early childhood education and care, such as the areas that should be taught in the ECEC setting, and/or the learning goals. However, learning during early childhood has a particular specificity. At the early stage of development, children often learn implicitly in play-based situations: learning and development in young children occurs intentionally and unintentionally (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). As a consequence, ECEC curricula in many countries are inclusive and unspecific, and can address more than the subjects an educator is expected to teach to children. They often cover the experiences children in ECEC settings should have, the educational and pedagogical approaches behind the country's ECEC system or programme, the importance of child perspectives and family engagement, as well as quality management (OECD, 2014a). The focus on certain topics in a curriculum differs among countries. Some emphasise learning goals and child outcomes (as is the case in many ECEC curricula in American states), while others are holistic and cover a broader range of topics. In Scandinavian countries, the child perspective is an important aspect of the curriculum, and ECEC staff are encouraged to plan practices and activities according to children's perspective on experiences. In New Zealand, examples of pedagogical practices and experiences are included as part of the ECEC curriculum.

Pedagogical/educational approach

Pedagogy is often referred to as an educational or pedagogical approach. While pedagogy refers to the science and art of teaching, educating and caregiving, the pedagogical/educational approach refers to the overall perspective used to plan and implement pedagogical strategies or practices (Anders, 2015). Examples of influential and well-known pedagogical/educational approaches include the Montessori and Steiner approach (Chapter 5 will further address this topic). When analysing different pedagogical approaches, in general, and broadly speaking, two types of curriculum approaches can be distinguished (Folke-Fichtelius, 2013):

- the early education approach
- the comprehensive/social pedagogy approach.

The early education approach

The early education approach stems from behaviourist or social learning theories that view learning as an input by the environment. Countries that follow the early education approach set concrete learning goals, and often assess children's knowledge by using standardised tests and/or monitor child outcomes frequently. Within this approach, child outcomes are regarded as very important and are often regarded as the key output of ECEC participation. This approach is believed to be more "schoolified", i.e. more in line with formal schooling, than the comprehensive/social pedagogy approach, for two reasons. Firstly, an early education curriculum approach often focuses (more) on preparing children for primary school, and focuses on learning

basic academic skills such as early mathematics or pre-literacy and less on the development of socio-emotional skills. Secondly, the systems or settings implementing an early education approach tend to implement more teacher-directed (teacher-initiated), instructional techniques and practices. This is for example the case in many kindergartens in the United States and in preschools in France (Anders, 2015; OECD, 2014b). The early education approach is therefore also referred to as the direct instruction approach.

The comprehensive/social pedagogy approach

A comprehensive/socio-pedagogic approach focuses more on the experiences and actual pedagogical practices rather than child outcomes and achievements. Assessments through formal testing are less common in social pedagogy approaches, although children's development can be monitored in a more qualitative fashion (e.g. storybooks by ECEC staff that include children's work). Some systems with this approach (e.g. the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy) strongly object to knowledge assessment of ECEC-aged children against any predetermined set of standards (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012; OECD, 2014b).

This approach is also associated with prioritising and promoting socio-emotional development and personal values alongside the development of early academic skills, although the latter do not form the focus of this pedagogical approach. The comprehensive approach usually has a strong focus on child-centred pedagogy and child-initiated experiences, rather than staff-directed practices. The comprehensive/socio-pedagogic tradition is popular in ECEC systems and is implemented in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Norway.

In recent years, countries have been more frequently moving towards combining the early education and social pedagogy approach. This regards both academic and socio-emotional skills as valuable and complementary, and a mix of pedagogical practices stimulates children's initiatives in activities that supplement staff organisation and planning (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012; OECD, 2014b).

Pedagogy

Though pedagogy is closely related to the concepts above, pedagogy in essence relates to the *how* or *practice* of educating and caregiving, i.e. the actions, activities and practices of ECEC staff in relation to the children. In an early years context, however, as noted by Siraj-Blatchford (2002), "any adequate conception of educative practice must be wide enough to include the provision of learning environments for play and exploration". The terms "teaching" and "classroom" are avoided in this conception of ECEC pedagogy and practice since, for many countries, these terms are associated with the "schoolification" of ECEC and with formal schooling. The use of these terms would contrast and misrepresent the ECEC approach and system in many OECD countries, where ECEC systems exemplify a more socio-pedagogical tradition. In referring to pedagogy, the term "instruction" as used in Siraj-Blatchford's (2002) definition of pedagogy, as well as the term "educating" are preferred over the term of "teaching." Instructing and educating refer to *all processes* aiming at initiating or maintaining learning and development processes, and include the whole portfolio of specific didactic techniques, such as phonemic awareness techniques; integrating technology; strategies to encourage interaction among children and co-operative learning; differentiated instructions; goal-setting; assessment; documentation; cross-curriculum teaching; means of sustained shared thinking; preparing physical environments; material and learning environments; and play-based approaches (Anders, 2015).

The relative effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches and pedagogies in early childhood has raised substantial debate (Stipek, 1991; Litjens and Taguma, 2010; Anders, 2015). Typically, teacher-directed, didactic approaches are contrasted with child-centred approaches.

While the former are associated with the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge, the latter are associated with socio-emotional development and problem-solving abilities (see Chapter 6).

Chapter 4 will explain how ECEC systems are organised in the target group countries, while Chapter 5 explains the pedagogical approaches and practices countries adhere to at a national level.

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Chapter 4

The structure of early years provisions

Governance, financing and costs, parental leave policies, entitlements to ECEC, participation rates and the types of ECEC settings that exist in a country are all factors that affect how early years provisions are structured. Financing aspects, parental leave policies and entitlements also influence a country's participation rates in ECEC, while governance and the different types of settings provide background information on its ECEC structure at policy level.

Increasingly, ECEC is organised under an integrated system where the Ministry of Education is responsible for ECEC, as is the case in England. Public financing comes mostly from the national level, but many countries complement national funding with local funding. In most countries, including England, public funding covers the majority of ECEC costs – at least for certain age groups, and the remaining share is usually paid for by parents. England has the longest paid maternity leave entitlement, with a duration of 52 weeks, although this is paid at only 22.5% of the wage (i.e. the average payment rate or APR). Compared to the case-study countries, paid parental leave policies in England are among the least generous; in other countries, paid maternity leave is shorter but usually paid at a much higher APR. The full-rate equivalent (the period paid at 100% of the wage during parental leave) is higher for mothers in England than in Denmark, Japan and New Zealand, but among the lowest for parental and paternity leave. However, participation rates in ECEC are high in England. Taking into account both financial support for leave and ECEC costs for each country, France and Germany provide parents the best financial support.

Enrolment of 3-year-olds in early education increased by more than 6 percentage points on average in the OECD between 2005 and 2012; with England achieving gains of more than 15 percentage points in the same period. A similar trend can be observed for older age groups. Great differences in legal entitlements to free ECEC obtain across countries, with Japan being the only country not providing universal free ECEC to certain age groups. Among the case-study countries, England provides the least generous entitlements to free ECEC in number of hours of free ECEC. England provides free ECEC to all 3- to 5-year-olds, for 15 hours per week. Similar entitlements are in place for eligible 2-year-olds, targeted mainly to low-income families. Different ECEC provisions exist in different countries, but most ECEC settings in OECD countries and jurisdictions fall into one of the five following categories: centre-based ECEC for under 3-year-olds and over 3-year-olds; integrated centre-based ECEC settings; family day care; and drop-in ECEC centres.

The structure of early years provision

ECEC systems and the way they are organised vary between countries and can depend on national as well as regional contexts. This section first explains the differences between ECEC systems, and then analyses how particular factors in these contexts can contribute to different pedagogical approaches. England is compared with Denmark, France, Germany, New Zealand and Japan. These countries represent different ECEC systems (integrated vs. split), regulatory and administrative organisations (centralised vs. decentralised systems), monitoring systems (a national inspection system vs. no inspections), ECEC traditions (a socio-pedagogic tradition vs. an early education tradition), staff qualifications (practitioners trained at university level vs. vocational level) and curriculum (national curriculum defining learning standards and learning goals vs. regional mandatory frameworks) (Anders, 2015). Where relevant, comparisons are made with other OECD countries.

Governance

ECEC services can be integrated or split, that is, responsibility at national level for education and care services can be divided (split) or merged (integrated). Of the group of case-study countries, only Japan and France have a split system (see Table 4.1). Of OECD member countries more generally, about half the members have a split system and half an integrated one (OECD, 2014a). In the countries with an integrated system, that is, England (United Kingdom) and New Zealand, the Department of Education or its country equivalent is responsible for ECEC. In Denmark the Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs carries the responsibilities for ECEC and in Germany, the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible for ECEC. In France and Japan, the age split between education and care falls at 3 years of age. In France, care services for children under 3 are the responsibility of Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment, and Solidarity and the Ministry of Health, Family and Handicapped Persons (ibid.), while preschool education is organised and regulated by the Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research. In Japan, care services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, while education is overseen by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (ibid.).

Financing and costs of ECEC

Public spending on childcare and early education is over 1% of GDP in France, Denmark, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, while in Japan and Germany public spending is under 0.6%. Preschool spending is significantly higher than spending on childcare in Denmark, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Germany. In France, spending is almost equally split, while in Japan, the majority of spending goes towards childcare. Actual spending per child aged 3 years and older (in USD PPP) is highest in Denmark and New Zealand, at USD 11 000 to USD 14 000, followed by England (over USD 9 000), Germany (over USD 8 000). Only France (USD 6 600) and Japan (USD 5 500) spend a significantly lower amount per child (OECD, 2014b). Depending on what the resources are spent on, whether on professional development of staff, hiring of staff, buildings and equipment, salaries and so on, quality and pedagogy may be affected. A breakdown of what the money is spent on in each country is currently unavailable, and it is therefore not possible to draw any conclusions about how public spending in these countries affects pedagogy. However, low public spending levels usually imply higher parental costs. This has two potential effects on quality and pedagogy. First, since parents spend a higher amount of money on ECEC than in countries where public spending levels are higher, they may be concerned to obtain the best quality offered for the price they pay. This may boost quality in ECEC. However, when public spending is low, and because parents do not have unlimited resources, they may not feel they can be too demanding. To keep ECEC affordable while still making a profit (since in countries with low public spending, provision is often privatised), providers may opt for cheaper

forms of providing ECEC, negatively impacting quality levels and pedagogy. A minimum level of quality can be guaranteed by implementing regulatory minimum quality standards.

ECEC services in England are partly financed by the state and partly by private individuals and organisations. The central government provides funding to local authorities through the early education and childcare fund, so that every 3- and 4-year-old, as well as 40% of 2-year-olds, have had access as of September 2014 to a part-time nursery education (DfE, 2013a). This funding covers the costs for up to 15 hours per week of ECEC for 38 weeks per year. Over 60% of early years education is available through the state education sector, while the rest is provided through the market at a fixed subsidy (Blackburn, 2012). The state also funds all children's centres, school-based and local authority provisions for children in particular need.

In Denmark, most of the costs are covered by public resources. Local authorities are obliged to provide a subsidy directly to the provider for each child's place in a day care, covering at least 75% of the expenses, while parents pay the remainder (Naumann et al., 2013). In addition, reductions in parental fees are available for parents of low income through the aided place subsidy. As result, such parents pay from zero to less than 25% of the ECEC operating costs. There is also a sibling discount available for parents with more than one child (PLA Copenhagen, 2013). A treatment aided place subsidy is given when a child with considerably and permanently diminished physical or mental capacity stays in a day-care facility for treatment reasons. The socio-pedagogic aided place subsidy is given when a place in a day-care facility is deemed necessary for social or pedagogical reasons and the costs for participation reduces the child's possibility of being admitted to, or remaining in, a day-care facility. The local council of a local authority must provide guaranteed day care availability, i.e. it must offer a place in an age-appropriate day-care facility to all children aged 26 weeks to school age. If the local authority cannot offer a place, it must offer to cover either the parents' expenses for a private care scheme, or the expenses for a place in another local authority. Under the free-choice scheme, parents who do not wish their child to take a place in a day-care facility can get financial support from local authorities for a private care scheme (Socialministeriet, 2000).

In France, the *école maternelle* is funded by the state and provided free of charge for parents with children of 2.5 years or older (Naumann et al., 2013). Meals are not included, but can be subsidised for families in need. In terms of childcare, parents are required to pay for approximately 27% of the costs, while the rest is financed through different allowance schemes by the national family allowance fund, *Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales,* and the decentralised *Caisses des Allocations Familiale*s (Naumann et al., 2013).

In New Zealand, parents cover a similar proportion of ECEC expenses, as they do in France (i.e. around 25% of the costs), with the government covering the remaining costs (Arnold and Scott, 2011). All 3- to 5-year-olds are entitled to 20 hours of ECEC without any compulsory charges. These must, however, be claimed instead of, and not in addition to, the subsidised places.

In Germany, the situation varies between the federal states. Municipalities are in charge of organising and securing funding for early education and care provision. They co-operate with a variety of service providers, including non-governmental providers and churches, which play a particularly important role. The funding provided by the federal state governments varies, with some federal states offering free entitlement for one, two or three years before formal school enrolment. Where parental financial contributions are required, this is dependent on their income, but for a 2-year-old in care for 40 hours a week, the parental contribution equals around 20% of the average wage (AW) in Germany (OECD, 2014).

In Japan, even though ministries and prefectures subsidise some of the costs of private day care, public expenditure on ECEC is actually relatively low (Taguma, Litjens and Kim, 2012). As a result, parental costs of ECEC are very high in Japan. The parental costs for a two year-old in care for 40 hours a week can be 50% of the average wage. Private day-care centres charge higher

fees than public day-care centres, but demand for public places is high, and a public place cannot be guaranteed. Public centres also have limited hours, which are not always appropriate for families where both parents are employed. As a result, many children attend private ECEC settings in Japan (Holthus, 2010).

Parental leave policies

As in England (United Kingdom), Denmark, France, Germany, New Zealand and Japan all have regulations on minimum parental leave policies. The leave is usually divided into maternity leave, stipulated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) at a minimum of 14 weeks, paternity leave and parental leave, which can usually be shared between the parents (OECD Family Database). An overview of the duration and the average payment rate (APR)[1] and full-rate equivalent (or FRE, the number of weeks paid at 100% of a person's wage when on leave) of the maternity, paternity and parental leave in each of the countries can be found in Table 3.2. Parental leave policies differ between the case-study countries, but these do not have a real impact on the point at which children start attending preschool education or care in the case-study countries. Paid maternity leave is not very generous in England by comparison with the case-study countries.

As Table 4.1 shows, England has the longest paid maternity leave entitlement, with a duration of 52 weeks, although these are paid at only 22.5% of the wage (i.e. the average payment rate). Mothers in England receive over 11 weeks of fully paid leave (paid at 100% of their earnings). Denmark has 18 weeks of paid leave, with an average payment rate at 51.5%, and over nine weeks paid at 100%. But for people in employment, there is a possibility to extend their paid leave to 50 weeks. France is more generous, with an average payment rate of 98.4% for 16 weeks, and almost all of these are paid at the full rate. Japan, New Zealand and Germany each have 14 weeks of paid maternity leave, against an average payment rate of 66.7%, 46.5% and 100% respectively. In New Zealand, women only get 6.5 weeks paid at 100%, while Japan offers 9.3 weeks. Paternity leave is the same in England (United Kingdom), Denmark and France, at two weeks, while in Japan and Germany, 8.7 weeks is granted. All countries except New Zealand and England (United Kingdom) also offer additional paid parental leave, ranging from 26 weeks in France to 44 weeks in Japan. The average APR for parental leave is approximately 50%.

Taking both the payment and flexibility into account, the policies in Denmark and Germany provide families the highest flexibility (Anders, 2015). In Denmark, ECEC entitlement starts at 6 months of age, and the overlap between leave and ECEC entitlement allows parents to choose when they want to go back to work (Bloksgaard and Rostgaard, 2014). In Germany, the first 12 months of leave are paid at a high average payment rate, after which ECEC entitlement starts. Leave can, however, still be extended for up to three years (Blum and Erler, 2014). In Germany, this is not specified, and there is a further difference between western federal states, which offer mostly part-time services, and eastern federal states, which offer mostly full-time provisions (ibid.).

In France, there is also a gap between parental leave and ECEC entitlement. Leave is available for a maximum of three years (Fagnani, Boyer and Thevenon, 2014), but the high APR lasts only up to four months, resulting in a 2- to 2.5-year period of low paid or unpaid leave before the child is guaranteed a place in ECEC (Fagnani, Boyer and Thevenon, 2014). However, with 15.7 weeks of maternity leave paid at 100% of the mother's most recent earnings, France has relatively good maternity leave policies, although full-time equivalent (FTE) paid parental leave is very low in France (along with England and New Zealand). New Zealand has a less generous leave policy than France. Leave can be taken for up to one year, but only the first 14 weeks are paid at an average payment rate of 46.5%, and only 6.6 weeks are paid at 100% for the mother. ECEC entitlement only starts at 3 years of age and only for part-time nursery care (McDonald, 2014). In Japan, the longest possible leave is 14 months, with 8 months of those paid at an APR of

66.7% and a little over 9 weeks paid at 100%. FTE paid parental leave is relatively long in Japan, at 22 weeks, compared to zero weeks in England and 16.5 weeks in Denmark, for example. Local authorities in Japan have an obligation to provide childcare places for children below school starting age with both parents working or with parental health issues, but no general entitlement for ECEC exists (Nakazato and Nishimura, 2014)

Table 4.1 Overview of ECEC governance, curriculum, participation rates, and parental leave

Country	Split system	National curriculum	Ministry in charge		Participation rates (%) in formal ECEC services*		Parental leave (2013)**								
							Maternity			Paternity			Parental (excl. exclusively maternity or paternity)		
			0-3 years	3 years - schooling age	0-3 years	3 years - schooling age	Duration in weeks	APR ***	FRE***	Duration in weeks	APR	FRE	Duration in weeks	APR	FRE
England	No	Yes	Department for Education		58	91	52	22,5	11,7	2	19,1	0,4	0	0	0
Denmark	No	Yes	Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs		67,9	97,3	18	51,5	9,3	2	51,5	1	32	51,5	16,5
France	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Ministry of National Education	48,7	97-100	16	98,4	15,7	2	98,4	2	26	18,7	4,9
Germany	No	No	Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth		27,6	93,4	14	100	14	8,7	49,4	4,3	43,3	49,4	21,4
Japan	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (for children up to primary school age in childcare)	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (for children 3 years and older in pre-primary education)	25,9	90,3	14	66,7	9,3	8,7	50	4,9	44	50	22
New Zealand	No	Yes	Ministry of Education		41,4	66,5	14	46,5	6,5	0	0	0	0	0	0

Notes: ***APR: "average payment rate" = the average replacement rate over the length of paid leave entitlement for a person normally on average wages, i.e. the share of the wage a person receives when on leave. FRE "full-rate rate equivalent" = duration of leave in weeks * payment (as a percentage of average wage earnings) received by the claimant, i.e. number of weeks paid at 100% of last earnings.

Sources: * for England – 2012, Huskinson, et al. (2014); Denmark – 2013, Statistics Denmark, own calculations; France – 2011, Naumann et al. (2013); Germany – 2012, *Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder*; Japan – 2010, OECD Family Database; New Zealand – 2013, Statistics New Zealand, Education Counts, own calculations ** OECD Family Database, Table PF2.1.A

Types of ECEC settings

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the different ECEC settings available in Germany, England (United Kingdom), France, New Zealand and Japan. Various forms of ECEC settings are available in each country, and from a broad perspective, educational settings are the most popular.

In England (United Kingdom), early education and childcare encompasses a wide range of services. Formal provision includes different forms of nurseries (day nurseries, nursery schools and nursery classes), playgroups, children or family centres and childminders (DfE, 2013). Many children are also looked after informally by grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers (Naumann et al., 2013).

In Germany, services can be categorised into *Kindertagespflege* (family day care) and *Kindertageseinrichtungen* (child day-care centres). Enrolment in *Kindertageseinrichtungen* is much higher in comparison to *Kindertagespflege*, with the highest enrolment rates for 3- to 5-year-olds. With regard to *Kindertageseinrichtungen*, infant-toddler centres (*Kinderkrippe*) serve children from birth to 3 years old, while *Kindergartens* serve children aged between 3 and 6. *Kindertagespflege* generally involves home-based day care (*Tagespflege*) or family centres and childminding.

In France, public and private services for children under the age of 3 years old exist. The different types of collective childcare settings are referred to as *établissements d'accueil des jeunes enfants* (EAJE) and include centre-based full time or part time public, for- and non-profit, and parent-run institutions. In addition, some children are looked after by licensed childminders. Children between 3 and 6 years old (and some disadvantaged 2-year-olds) attend the *écoles maternelles*, which are institutions for early childhood education (preschools), prior to compulsory education. They provide care for children, educate them and prepare them for subsequent schooling (Garnier, 2011). They operate during the school year for 24 hours per week and have an instructional approach that is similar to regular schooling, with large class sizes.

In New Zealand, services are divided into teacher-led and parent-led services. Teacher-led services include:

- Kindergartens: accepting children between 2 and 5 years of age for age-divided sessions or more flexible-hour and all-day sessions integrated across ages;
- Education and care services: accepting children from birth to school age for all-day or flexible-hour sessions, which can be organised according to a particular cultural topic or follow predetermined programs such as Montessori or Rudolph Steiner;
- Home-based education and care: accepting children aged from birth to 5 years old for sessions in small groups of up to four children in the educator's or children's own home (Naumann et al., 2013).

Parent-led services all accept children from birth to school age and include:

- Te Kōhanga Reo: provides Māori language and culture immersion education;
- Playcentres: these focus on parent education and children learning;
- playgroups: community-based groups that meet for one to five sessions a week and provide an environment for play and learning. There are specific playgroups that focus on the preservation of the Pasefika language and culture. In addition, due to extremely low population density, for children with limited access to ECEC, there is a Correspondence School that allows parents to borrow materials and work with educators to develop a program for the child (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2014).

In Japan, care is provided in day nurseries (*hoikuen*) for all children under compulsory schooling age. Education is provided in kindergartens (*yōchien*) for children between the ages of 3 and 5. Day nurseries are either publicly or privately provided, while kindergartens are mostly privately owned. In 2006, the two ministries responsible for ECEC and the central government passed a law that allowed for the establishment of ECEC centres (*kodomo-en*), which combine education and care. These facilities are becoming more widely used with time (Abumiya, 2011). Most ECEC services are not provided on a full-day basis, so many children are still looked after in family settings on a part-time basis, most commonly by mothers or grandparents (ibid.).

The type of setting (i.e. what form of ECEC is offered), care and education, both highly influence pedagogical approaches and practices. All countries note that pedagogies should be age appropriate, and since different settings often cater to different age groups, pedagogies vary between settings. In England, care services and childminders are involved more in care than educators and practitioners in reception classes and nursery schools, where education plays a key role. Hence, pedagogical practices and approaches differ between these settings. Similar trends are observed in other countries, including France (where preschool follows a school-like approach), New Zealand and Germany. In Denmark, ECEC settings are integrated and cater to the whole ECEC age range, so that pedagogies are much more closely aligned.

Table 4.2. Types of ECEC settings, by country

Country	Names of ECEC settings
Germany	*Kindertagespflege* (family day care), including *Tagespflege* (home-based day care), family centres and childminding
	Kindertageseinrichtungen (child day-care centres), including *Krippe* (infant-toddler centres) and kindergartens (preschool)
France	*Crèches collectives* (EAJE)/childcare centres
	Assistantes maternelles
	Ecoles maternelles (preschool education)
	Jardins d'éveil
	Classes passerelles
Japan	*Yochi-en* (Kindergarten)
	Hoiku-sho (nursery centres)
New Zealand	Education and care centres
	Kindergartens
	Home-based ECEC
	Playcentres
	Te Kōhanga Reo/Māori language nest (Māori ECEC settings)
England	Full-day care
	Sessional ECEC
	Child minders
	Nursery schools
	Primary schools with nursery classes
	Primary schools with reception classes but no nursery classes

Note: Information on ECEC settings for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

Participation in ECEC

ECEC services include all services for children prior to compulsory schooling age, which is set at 5 years old in England and 6 years old in the other five countries. While the starting age of compulsory education is 6 years on average in the OECD, some countries use younger starting ages as a tool to ensure participation in education at an early age. In New Zealand, children are allowed to start primary school at age 5, and most do, leaving only a few 5 year-olds in ECEC (Ministry of Education, 2014; Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

Participation rates are high for children of 3, 4 and 5 years old. This is associated with greater public financial support from national governments for ECEC for children at these ages and/or the end of parental leave rights. At ages 4 and 5, countries reach almost full enrolment (OECD, 2014b). The types of settings children attend differ among countries. In Germany, more children attend child day-care centres than family day-care. In Japan, participation at nursery centres increases rapidly as children get older. In New Zealand, most children attend education and care centres. Participation in England is relatively evenly split between the five existing types of ECEC settings (OECD, 2014b).

Enrolment of 3-year-olds in early education increased by more than 6 percentage points on average in the OECD between 2005 and 2012. The United Kingdom achieved gains of more than 15 percentage points during the same period. A similar trend can be observed for older age groups. In 2012, 82% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in early education (with 2% in primary education) and 81% of 5-year-olds (13% in primary school). This means that early education is becoming more universal in many countries, with 95% or more of 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool, including France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and Norway, among others (OECD, 2014b).

Entitlements to ECEC

Table 4.3 outlines the legal entitlements to free ECEC in the different case-study countries. In most countries, legal entitlements to free ECEC usually commence at the age of 3. As a result, a noticeable increase in participation can be observed at this age in all countries. Only Japan has no universal entitlement to free ECEC – free ECEC is only available for children of low-income families. All 3- and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to free ECEC for up to 570 hours a year. This entitlement has been extended to the 40% most disadvantaged 2-year-olds. By comparison with the case-study countries in number of hours of free ECEC, England has the lowest legal access entitlement, at 15 hours per week (based on 38 weeks per year for all countries). New Zealand follows, with 20 hours per week. France offers 24 hours per week of free preschool (and a right to 60 hours of subsidised care for children under the age of 3). In Germany, entitlement and access depends on the *Land* (i.e. county), and ranges from 25 to 40 hours per week.

In Germany, entitlement to a place in ECEC commences at the age of 1, although the hours children are legally entitled to per week varies according to the age of the child and between the *Länder*. Besides, free ECEC is mandated in six *Länder*. In Hamburg, for example, children are entitled to 25 hours per week of free ECEC in the year before they start school, and in Lower Saxony, children are entitled to 40 hours per week of free ECEC (OECD, 2014a).

In France, children up to the age of 3 years old are entitled to up to 60 hours per week of childcare (40 hours of childcare is the average). The entitlements to free childcare depend on the parents' income. In addition, public subsidies are available for parents to cover childcare costs. Early education provision (i.e. preschool) is available for all children aged 2 to 6 years (although children usually start at the age of 3) free of parental costs for 24 hours per week.

In Japan, childcare covers all children from birth to 6 years, while kindergartens cater for children between 3 and 6 years of age entitlements to free ECEC in Japan are targeted to low-income children in both childcare and preschool.. Children of low-income families have a legal

entitlement to 20 hours of free kindergarten per week, for up to 39 weeks per year (OECD, 2014a). Parental fees are set according to income. Both the national and local governments provide funding to kindergartens and nursery centres, to compensate for the lower fees paid by lower-income parents (OECD, 2014a). While there is no universal entitlement to ECEC in Japan, there is a zero waiting-list policy, which means that officially, waiting lists are not allowed. However, due to difficulties in obtaining places, waiting lists do exist, especially in large urban areas (Nakazato and Nishimura, 2014).

New Zealand offers ECEC to children between 3 and 5, with free access for 20 hours per week in education and care centres, *Te Kōhanga Reo* and Playcentres.

In England (United Kingdom), children aged 3 to 5 have a right to free ECEC, and in some circumstances, 2-year-olds do, too[2]. The legal entitlement to free ECEC for all children 3 to 5 years, as well as for eligible 2-year-olds, is 570 hours per year, which equates to 11 hours per week for 52 weeks, or 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (depending on the number of weeks the ECEC setting is open). Only England, France and Germany have legal entitlements for children below the age of 3.

Table 4.3 Legal entitlements to free ECEC, by country

Country	Age covered	Scope	Maximum number of hours of free access, based on 38 weeks per year
Germany	1 year - school start	Universal	Number of free hours varies between the *Länder* and according to age
France	0-3 years in childcare	Universal	60 hours, although free access for under 3-year-olds is dependent on income
	2-6 years in preschool	Universal	24 hours
Japan	0-6 years (nursery centres)	Targeted	Free access is dependent on income
	3-6 years (Kindergartens)	Targeted	20 hours for 39 weeks per year, although free access depends on income
New Zealand	3-5 years	Universal	20 hours (up to 6 per day) provided by Education and Care centres, *Te Kōhanga Reo*, and Playcentres
England	3-5 years (2 years under certain criteria, see footnote 6 in this chapter)	Universal	15 hours (570 hours a year)

Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

NOTES

[1] Calculated by the proportion of salary paid per week.

[2] Two-year-olds are also entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare a year if the parent/guardian is receiving certain forms of support from the government, such as income support, Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Child Tax Credit. Children are also entitled to a place if: they are looked after by a local council; they have a current statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education health and care plan; they get Disability Living Allowance; they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order (website of the UK Government, 2014).

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Chapter 5

Pedagogical approaches and practices in formal ECEC settings

None of the case-study countries practice a single pedagogical approach or practice, because pedagogical approaches and practices are not explicitly defined by the national government. Decisions on the pedagogical approach (and practices) used is decided at setting or staff level.

As a result, pedagogical approaches between countries and within countries vary widely. Few countries monitor at national or state level which pedagogical approaches are used and implemented, and little research on pedagogical approaches within settings and on their effectiveness is conducted. England alone has conducted distinctive research work on pedagogy on which practice and approaches are based (REPY study). As a result, little information is available at national or state level on what approaches are used within settings (at practice level) and it is difficult to compare countries (OECD, 2014). Instead, pedagogical approaches are guided by a national or state-level curriculum in all OECD countries, which is either a curriculum specifically for ECEC, as in England, or for the whole education system more generally, as in many German Länder. In all OECD countries, the curriculum gives some insight into what is expected of ECEC staff regarding caring, educating and instructing, as well as the values and goals of the country's ECEC system. In addition, curricula and values for ECEC are based on certain early childhood development theories and educators such as Piaget. The curriculum and its guiding documents for staff, as well as the values behind an ECEC system, can provide information on a country or state's pedagogical approach at a more general level.

It is difficult to identify distinct differences between pedagogical approaches in the different countries, given the freedom ECEC settings are given to implement the curriculum, and the lack of monitoring. Furthermore, it is not clear which philosophical approaches and theories commonly underpin the pedagogical approaches chosen, because the approaches have developed over time in response to a number of factors, including emerging theories, cultural heritage and research. All case-study countries explicitly promote child-centred, play-based practices and approaches although France stands out with a more didactic approach, and New Zealand is the only country to emphasise cultural and linguistic heritage in its pedagogical approaches. In general, the case-study countries emphasise the importance of meeting children's individual needs, and the belief that children learn and develop in different ways. The pedagogical approach is only guided by the countries, and practitioners are free to adapt the curriculum to the needs of different children.

Pedagogical approaches and practices in formal ECEC settings

This chapter discusses pedagogical ideologies, theories and approaches practiced in England (United Kingdom) and other selected countries. It first considers the pedagogical approaches practiced in England, Denmark, France, Germany and Japan, before examining pedagogical ideologies and theories that underpin these approaches. Next, it seeks to identify commonalities and differences between the approaches.

Which pedagogical approaches do countries adhere to?

A pedagogical or educational approach refers to the perspective used to plan and implement one or more pedagogical practices or techniques. A pedagogical/educational approach explains the roles of the staff, the materials and space, the appropriate pedagogy (practices), and in some cases, the learning objectives. Pedagogical/educational approaches are not explicitly specified at national or state level in any of the case-study countries. Instead, the curriculum frameworks provide guiding principles. ECEC settings and practitioners otherwise implement the pedagogical approaches and practices of their choice. Curricula are commonly guided by a set of principles, which differ or converge in both emphasis and objectives between countries. All curricula stipulate the learning areas, usually a combination of academic areas and socio-emotional development. France's curriculum clearly presents a more academic approach, in contrast to the frameworks of Denmark and Germany, which emphasise socio-emotional development over the pursuit of academic objectives. England's curriculum has a mix of both, suggesting that academic knowledge development is important, as well as socio-emotional development. All case-study countries emphasise play-based activities in their curriculum. While this is not very present yet in France's current curriculum, its revised curriculum of 2015 will have a larger focus on play-based learning. New Zealand is the only country that integrates culture into its curriculum. *Te Whāriki,* cultural values and languages, are a key aspect of quality ECEC.

None of the case-study countries practice a single pedagogical approach. Some common approaches include the child-centred approach, favoured in England and Denmark, as well as in Germany, and the constructivist/interactive approach, practised in England, France and Germany. It is also important to note that pedagogical approaches are not mutually exclusive and often have overlapping elements. For example, the "theory of three activities" used in Japan incorporates elements of a play-based approach. Noticeable differences are demonstrated in France, the only country to implement a more didactic approach, and New Zealand, whose approach embraces a distinct cultural focus. However, the pedagogical approaches used in the different countries are not the result of distinct theories and research. Pedagogical approaches have evolved over time in response to emerging theories, cultural heritage and research.

England

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides the curriculum for the early years in England. This sets out the pedagogical approach for children's learning and development from birth to age 5, targeting six areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development.

The EYFS does not require practitioners to use particular pedagogies to support young children's learning and development, although a guidance booklet for staff on pedagogy was developed in 2011.[1] The guidance booklet only provides examples of best practices leaving the choice of pedagogy to the responsibility of ECEC managers and staff. The EYFS requires only that the areas of learning must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In settings where child-led activities occur, children can also influence which activities are implemented on the day, although they are not involved with longer-term planning or organisation.

The pedagogical environment in practice is considered to be a "blend" of adult and child-led activity. The leader of the interactions continually changes (co-instruction/co-leading, for example in "circle time"). It emphasises that every child is a unique, competent learner and should be supported to progress at his or her own pace. It emphasises that children learn and develop in different ways, and that, as such, all areas of learning and development are equally important. In practice, this means that skilled practitioners should, like parents and carers, look for opportunities to participate in children's activities and to guide children's learning. For example, if a practitioner sees that a child likes playing with water, he or she might help the child to build a water chute, and talk with them about how the water runs to the ground. Other children might like playing with mud, and so a practitioner might assist them to draw patterns in the mud using a stick – helping to develop their motor control, and their understanding that objects can be used to make marks.

Denmark

In Denmark, no document specifically provides pedagogical guidance or prescribes particular pedagogical approaches, but a pedagogical approach is broadly provided through defined learning objectives in the *pædagogiske læreplan* (the educational curriculum for all ECEC-aged children from. birth to 6 years). This learning plan is developed by each ECEC setting and must include goals for children's learning in the following learning areas:

- versatile personal development
- social skills
- language development
- body movement
- nature and natural phenomena
- cultural expressions and values.

These learning areas demonstrate that Denmark employs a holistic perspective and objective for ECEC, as other Nordic countries do, emphasising the importance of socio-emotional development. School-readiness objectives in the academic sense are avoided because a school-like environment is considered inappropriate at this early stage in a child's life, and such objectives are thought to be unnecessary or even potentially harmful (Jensen, 2009). The concept that "One size does not fit all" is a central premise of Denmark's pedagogical approaches and practices for different ECEC settings and children of different backgrounds (OECD, 2014b). The country's acts on day care and *Folkeskole* (schools), further reveal this pedagogical approach at a more general level.

Under the Day Care Services Act, children are considered to be active participants in democracy, contributing to the development of society and culture. The Danish curriculum places great importance on the dialogue between adults and children in ECEC settings (Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs, or MFCA, 2007). As a result, day-care centres are organised as democratic meeting places where the child has an active voice (Jensen, Broström and Hansen,

2010). Child-initiated activities are therefore very common in Danish ECEC settings, and practitioners are expected to provide care and learning opportunities for each child based on his or her individual needs in a play-based, child-centred environment (Winther-Lindqvist, 2013; OECD, 2014b). Adult-initiated and adult-structured activities are limited, and only about 30 minutes per day is usually devoted to adult-centred interaction. The Folkeskole (Consolidation) Act, which provides the legal provision for a compulsory one-year preschool class for 6 year-olds, stipulates that teaching should also as far as possible be play based (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Germany

Germany operates a decentralised ECEC system. Each of the 16 *Länder* in the country has autonomy over ECEC settings. A national framework is in place, the *Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen* (Common Framework of the *Länder* for Early Education in ECEC Centres) but as for the pedagogical approach, it specifies only that ECEC staff must respect the individual personality of each child. Children are seen as active, self-motivated learners seeking to understand the world they live in and actively modelling social interactions. They are believed to learn by constructing meanings and interpretations of reality with supportive adults through "sustained shared thinking" (Sylva et al., 2004). As in other countries, ECEC settings in the *Länder* have full flexibility regarding the pedagogical approach they use. A wide variety of approaches thus co-exist, which makes it difficult to generalise about pedagogical practices in Germany as a whole. A few general statements can nevertheless be made. As in Denmark, German ECEC settings take a holistic view of ECEC and consider that developing socio-emotional skills is more important than promoting early academic skills (Tietze et al., 1998). In general, Germany's curricular frameworks take a child-centred approach that emphasises that learning in early childhood takes place in social, mainly play-based situations (Preissing, 2007; Prott and Preissing, 2006; Zimmer, 2007).

German ECEC settings take a flexible approach to activities, balancing free play and structured activities, while accommodating children's interests. As a result, many ECEC institutions apply an "open concept" approach to pedagogical practices. Children can choose the activities they want to participate in, which are usually offered in different rooms in the ECEC centre. These are not classrooms as such, but rooms with areas for construction play, reading, playing with dolls and creative activities. Academic learning activities, such as language learning, are typically embedded in everyday activities. Traditionally, ECEC is provided in mixed age groups, which may cover an age span from 1 year of age until school enrolment. This gives children the opportunity to learn from those older than they are and for older children to take responsibility for younger children. This pedagogical set-up demonstrates the importance Germany places on socio-emotional development rather than academic learning, since children are not grouped by age or academic level.

France

No national curriculum is in place for the care sector in France. Curriculum frameworks are developed at setting level (OECD, 2014a; 2014b). Given the decentralisation of curriculum development at the level of care settings (crèches), pedagogical approaches differ. However, they are based on the official objectives of "well-being and harmonious development of children"(Francis, 2007) and the focus is on children's motor, intellectual and emotional development (OECD, 2014a).

Écoles maternelles have a strong academic orientation. The current curriculum in place focuses on early language and literacy skills, working to prepare the child for school entry (Moisset, 2007; Rayna, 2004). The national curriculum, or *programme de l'école maternelle*, provides pedagogical guidance for staff, which is also available in complementary documents (OECD, 2014a; 2014b). Teachers are encouraged to implement methods/practices of teaching and

learning appropriate to the age of the children and their actual capabilities. The most common methods and practices used in France include: discovery-inducing situations (e.g. spontaneous investigations), exploration, research (e.g. guided research activities), training and memorisation (ibid.). Individual activities are alternated with small-group and whole class activities, as are teacher- and child-initiated activities, although staff-initiated activities are more common (Francis, 2007). Activities in preschools are conducted according to a timetable set at the beginning of school year, corresponding to the five learning areas specified in the curriculum, and there is also time allocated for morning reception, meals, recess and rest (ibid.). At the end of 2015, a new preschool curriculum will be implemented in France, which will place greater emphasis on play and defines preschool more separately from primary school. In contrast with the current curriculum, where play is not considered an integral part of learning, and personal toys and other games are not allowed in classrooms besides stuffed animals for the very young children, the new curriculum embraces a more play-based approach (Francis, 2007; Brougère, Guénif-Souilamas and Rayna, 2008). Free play is, in the current curriculum, allowed during the recess period of 30 minutes twice a day. The revised curriculum of 2015 will emphasise more on how play can stimulate early child development (Brougère et al., 2008; Cochran, 2011).

New Zealand

New Zealand has a national curriculum in place, *Te Whāriki,* applicable to all ECEC settings, which promotes holistic, continuous development from birth to the school starting age. In line with most other curricula in OECD countries, *Te Whāriki* perceives play as an effective learning strategy and provides opportunity for open-ended exploration and play as a way of integrating children's learning and development (Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki, 2012). No explicit pedagogical approach, however, is defined in the curriculum. Pedagogical guidance is available in a separate document, but this only provides suggestions for pedagogical approaches and practices. Staff are free to choose their own pedagogical approaches and practices. Suggestions for good pedagogical practice include questioning children during activities ("Can you tell me what you are doing?"; "How do you think you can solve this puzzle?"), modelling conversations and desired behaviours, and integrating literacy and numeracy learning into meaningful experiences, such as counting the number of bananas at lunchtime or writing out colours while drawing (ERO, 2013).

The focus in *Te Whāriki* and its guiding document for staff focuses on building individual children's strengths and interests within a socio-cultural and holistic context. It is understood that children learn and develop differently and that learning expectations for each child should be flexible. Needs-based and age-appropriate pedagogical approaches and practices are key aspects of New Zealand's early childhood curriculum. As such, activities should be adapted and suited to children's functioning level, current knowledge and understanding, and should take into account the children's age as well as their cultural, religious, linguistic, socio-economic and ideological background.

Japan

All ECEC settings in Japan are subject either to an education or childcare curriculum, stipulated respectively in the 2008 Course of Study for Kindergarten (for children aged 3 to 6) and the 2008 National Curriculum of Day-Care Centres (for children from birth to 6 years). Though these curricula provide pedagogical guidance, as they do in France, New Zealand, England and Germany, ECEC staff in Japan are able to select pedagogical approaches and practices. However, several ideals and principles in the curricula influence overall pedagogy/pedagogical approaches. Both curricula highlight the importance of individuality of children and the development of independent decision-making skills, relationship building and play-based learning.

The National Curriculum of Day-Care Centres specifies principles for day care methods childcare workers are expected to follow. The curriculum does not describe how the pedagogical methods should be applied, but the principles are as follows (OECD, 2014a; 2014b):

- Knowing the situation for each and every child and the daily life circumstances in the child's home and local community; responding appropriately to the emotions and needs of the child so that the child can act with a sense of security and trust.
- Respecting the rhythm of the child's daily life, and preparing an environment where children can have a healthy, secure, and stable emotional life and fully express themselves.
- Understanding child development, and providing care that responds to the development of each and every child; and in doing so, paying sufficient consideration to the individual differences among children.
- Encouraging children's ability to make mutual relationships and respect each other; providing support to make children's behaviour in groups effective.
- Providing an environment in which children can voluntarily and willingly become involved; encouraging children's positive activities and mutual involvement. In particular, providing comprehensive care through daily life and play so that children can gain appropriate experiences during their early childhood.
- Understanding and accepting the situation of each parent, and providing opportunities and appropriate support; keeping in mind the children's relationships with their parents and their family life.

The Course of Study for Kindergarten explicitly states that the goal of kindergarten education is to help develop a foundation for life and learning in and after elementary school, in order to stimulate creative thinking and a desire to participate in voluntary activities (OECD, 2014a). The curriculum provides some detailed principles for early education to shape pedagogical approaches in settings, as the National Curriculum of Day-Care Centres does. They state that staff are expected to:

- Encourage children to undertake voluntary activities and allow them to lead a life appropriate to early childhood, based on the idea that young children utilise experiences essential to their development by fully demonstrating their abilities in an emotionally stable manner.
- Facilitate play-centred instruction, on the idea that play, a child's voluntary activity, is a key aspect of learning that builds a foundation for balanced physical and mental development.
- Carry out developmental tasks while responding to the individual characteristics of each child, based on the idea that early childhood development is achieved through diverse processes and interactions between various physical and mental aspects, and that each child's life experiences are diverse.
- Create a learning environment with the intention of ensuring that children participate in voluntary activities, based on an understanding and anticipation of the individual actions of each child.
- Create a physical and psychological environment that recognises the importance of the relationship between the child, other people and things.

Philosophical approaches and theories underpinning pedagogy

Different theories underpin countries' ECEC systems, objectives, curriculum and pedagogy. They are usually based on a combination of theories from well-known researchers and psychologists, and these differ greatly between countries. Countries' curriculum, and thus their general pedagogical approach, is influenced by well-known child psychologists and educators. The theories of Piaget and Vygotsky are the most frequently mentioned as foundational to the curriculum and pedagogical beliefs (England, Germany, France, and New Zealand). England's curriculum, for instance, is partly based on the theories of these two educators. The Montessori approach has also influenced pedagogy, in Germany and Japan, for example. Pedagogy and curriculum are also influenced by theories such as the Developmentally Appropriate Practice or DAP (Japan), the Reggio Emilia approach (Japan), Bronfenbrenner's theory (New Zealand), Rogoff (New Zealand), Bruner (France), Freire (Germany), Robinson (Germany) and Zimmer (Germany), as well as by Humboldt (Germany) and Fröbel (Germany). The salient aspects of these theories are outlined below.

England

England's EYFS statutory framework emphasises a play-based approach with individualised learning and integrated activities. The approach is based on child-centred and constructivist perspectives (Siraj-Blatchford and Nah, 2014). Practices of sustained shared thinking and adult-led activities are based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural constructivism (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2008). Vygotsky and Piaget's concept of "scaffolding" also provides important theoretical underpinning, and other theories, and national research, have also been influential in shaping the EYFS.

Denmark

Denmark's ECEC system emphasises the socio-pedagogic tradition and a child-centred approach without emphasising a single philosophical approach. The socio-pedagogic approach in Denmark highlights the importance of dialogue between adults and children, as well as creative activities with discussions and reflections (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2014b).

Germany

In Germany, a variety of philosophical traditions influence ECEC and pedagogy, as shown in the different curricular frameworks. The situation-oriented approach, which goes back to ideas of Freire, Robinson, Zimmer and others, is key to Germany's ECEC system and pedagogy. In addition, the influence of ideas, views and practices of other approaches, such as those of Humboldt, Fröbel, Montessori and Piaget, are reflected in the pedagogical principles underpinning the German curricula. Piaget, for example, views learning as an active exchange between the child and the environment that progresses in stages, in which adults and peers play a crucial role as a stimulus in learning. In the Montessori approach, the educator's role is reduced to a minimum, to encourage the child's own natural inner guidance and interest in learning.

France

In France, curriculum and pedagogy are based on the theories and ideas of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, which are all based on constructivist theory, i.e. that learners construct new ideas/concepts based on their existing knowledge and that children learn in "stages", based on previous knowledge they have gained (OECD, 2014a). It is not clear however, whether these theories and ideas influenced the split between the care and early education system, (OECD, 2014a).

Japan

ECEC in Japan is guided by the "free childcare and education" or the "guiding childcare theory", which holds that children learn best when they feel free and supported by the teacher in a sympathetic way, while they interact with their environment and gradually build close relationships with peers (RCCADE, 2011). Interaction with children is often based on the "theory of three activities in preschool", which posits three layers of activities, all of which emphasise children's play:

- *Life that serves as the base*: activities comprised of free play and guidance aimed at developing daily life skills.
- *Central activity*: elements are extracted from the child's play and reconstructed as educational, for example, in a cultural sense.
- *Systematised learning activities*: which aim at directly teaching linguistic, mathematical or artistic concepts and skills.

These three categories are inspired by several philosophical approaches, including those of Montessori, Reggio Emilia[2] and the Developmentally Appropriate Practice,[3] and are applied in a flexible manner, so they can be adapted to the needs of individual children (Anders, 2015).

New Zealand

In New Zealand, all ECEC settings are guided by the *Te Whāriki* curriculum. The framework for this curriculum was influenced by *Te Ao Māori*, (the Māori culture), Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner and Rogoff. Flexibility in instruction/pedagogical practice is encouraged in order to develop different patterns in the *whāriki* ("mat"), which evolve and flow from these philosophical theories (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996).

Table 5.1 gives an overview of the key pedagogical approaches at national level, and the evidence (research or theories) they are based on. It also lists the main features of the pedagogical approaches used at national level, although it is not known how far these are implemented at setting and staff level, since settings and staff are free to choose their own pedagogical approaches.

Table 5.1 Pedagogical approaches and evidence

	Key Pedagogical Approaches	Main features	What evidence are pedagogical approaches and practices based on?
England	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.	Research Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY - 2002) Early Years Foundation Stage Review (2011) and the Practice guidance for the early years foundation stage (2011)
	Teacher-directed	Teacher initiated, programmed learning approach.	
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning.	
	Play-based	Guided play opportunities are offered to children.	
	Sustained shared thinking	Two individuals work together in an intellectual way to perform activities such as solving a problem or clarifying a concept - both parties must contribute to the thinking and develop and extend it.	
	Scaffolding	Process in which the child is seen as a learner, rather than passive entity,and the adult acts respectfully, allowing the child to enter 'flow' a period of high concentrated play.	

Table 5.1 Pedagogical approaches and evidence (continued)

	Key Pedagogical Approaches	Main features	What evidence are pedagogical approaches and practices based on?
Japan	Guiding Child Care Theory	Children learn best when they feel 'free' and are supported by the teacher in a sympathetic way.	Inspiration drawn from Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Developmentally Appropriate Practice.
	Theory of three activities in preschool (play-based)	1. Activities comprise of free play and guidance aimed at developing daily life skills. 2. Elements are extracted from child's play and re-constructed to be educational. 3. Directly teach linguistic, mathematical or artistic concepts and skills.	
France	Didactic Pedagogy/ Direct Instruction	Classic method of learning with mainly teacher-initiated activities including repetition.	The theories and ideas of Piaget, Vgotsky and Bruner. Recent research studies on for example effective literacy, numeracy and phonology practices
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning. Learning is organised so that it constantly builds on what has already been taught.	
Denmark	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.	
	Socio-pedagogic	Emphasis on dialogue between adults and children, as well as creative activities with discussions and reflections.	
Germany	Situation-orientated	Emphasis on learning in social situations, mainly play-based.	Theoretical ideas from Friere, Robinson, Zimmer. Pedagogical approaches from Humbolt, Fröbel, Montessori, Piaget. Statistical evaluations and qualitiative research on effective practices, particularly language stimulation.
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning. Learning is organised do that it constantly builds on what has already been taught.	
	Sustained shared thinking	Two individuals work together in an intellectual way to perform activities such as solving a problem or clarifying a concept - both parties must contribute to the thinking and develop and extend it.	
	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.	
New Zealand	Te Whāriki	Adopts a specific socio-cultural perspective that acknowledges the different culutral and social contexts in New Zealand. A social and interactive way of learning is highly important.	Te Ao Māori (the Maori culture) Pedagogical approaches and theories from Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Rogoff. Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services: Good Practice

Sources: OECD (2014), "Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development", OECD, Paris; OECD (2014), Pedagogy Survey, OECD, Paris; Anders, Y. (2015), Literature Review on Pedagogy, OECD, Paris.

NOTES

[1] www.foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/practice-guidance-for-the-early-years-foundation-stage/

[2] The programme aims to develop learning competences through creative communication and dialogue, so children will develop thinking capacity and construct their own theories and understanding.

[3] A balance of child-initiated learning and guidance from staff members. The approach offers a range of activities carried out in groups or independently, focusing on socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development.

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Chapter 6

Research findings: The effects of different pedagogical approaches and practices

In general, research revealed both positive and negative effects of pedagogical approaches, without favouring specific pedagogical approaches over mainstream ones. However, it is important to note that research evidence and studies considering the same approaches in the same context are very limited. On the other hand, specific pedagogical practices are found to enhance child development, including high-quality interactions involving sustained-shared thinking methods, play-based learning, scaffolding, as well as a combination of staff- and child-initiated activities.

Research impacts pedagogy and pedagogical practices in the sense that research findings can inform policy makers and practitioners on best practices and what works best in enhancing staff performance, process quality and child development. Research on pedagogy and practices is usually not conducted at the national level, but focuses on particular programmes. In England, research has been used to provide pedagogical guidance for ECEC staff in England, and is thus one of the few countries that base pedagogical guidance for staff on practices that have been researched in their own country. Many other countries do not conduct any research on pedagogical effectiveness.

This chapter considers the effects and outcomes revealed by the limited research into different pedagogical approaches and practices. Few robust evaluation studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches and programmes, or on which pedagogical practices work best in stimulating child development. The chapter reviews the evidence on the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches and specific practices from a general perspective, and compares pedagogical approaches where possible. Comparative studies on the effects of pedagogical approaches are, however, rare, and most focus chiefly on primary or secondary school age. The research considered here is based on a review of the literature prepared for this report, and on additional research on pedagogy. Research conducted in the case-study countries on effective pedagogical approaches and practices is discussed, and how this has affected the countries' own approaches.

Research evidence on the effects of pedagogical approaches/programmes

This section considers the evidence on some of the best-known pedagogical approaches, including the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), Montessori and Steiner, indicating what effects research has found these approaches have. More specific pedagogical practices, such as the nature of interaction, teacher- versus child-led activities, and the effects of specific practices on certain abilities are considered next. Table 6.1 provides an overview of these pedagogical approaches and practices for quick reference.

DAP

Developmentally Appropriate Practice offers a general picture of what a developmentally appropriate classroom should look like. The approach includes examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices, and emphasises that decisions on the curriculum, teaching and interactions should respect individual variations in development and learning – taking account of the uniqueness of each child, as well as group differences in temperament, growth rate, personality and background. DAP also highlights the importance of secure social relationships with responsive adults and multiple social and cultural settings for child development and growth. Examples for effective teaching practices include "acknowledge what children do or say", "encourage persistence and effort, rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has done", "give specific feedback rather than general comments", and "create or add challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do". DAP is seen as a framework that supports a child-centred approach and stresses the importance of scaffolding (Walsh et al., 2010). DAP guidelines are commonly referred to when effective child pedagogy is discussed in the United States, and the guidelines for the approach are also used in other countries.

Van Horn et al. (2005) reviewed existing US studies on the effectiveness of the DAP approach, and though they found that DAP was widely accepted, they found no evidence that DAP had consistent effects on cognitive or academic outcomes. Some effects on socio-emotional development were found. Children in developmentally appropriate classrooms, especially boys, suffer considerably less stress, and show improvements in motivation and emotional development by comparison with children in more traditional classrooms (Dunn and Kontos, 1997; van Horn et al., 2005; NAEYC, 2009). In addition, research suggests DAP has a positive impact on children's ability to initiate and maintain interpersonal relations (Schmidt et al., 2007).

The Enriched Curriculum (EC) in Northern Ireland is based on DAP, and has been found to have a mainly positive impact on children's development. Sproule et al. (2005) presented results on the primary school careers of two successive cohorts of EC children, comparing them with year-ahead control children who attended the same school. In the first two years of primary school, EC children fell behind in reading and mathematics, although by Year 4 they began to show improvements in the areas of oral language, mathematical concepts, narrative and creative writing, domains that are important in the EC curriculum. Walsh et al. (2010) also reported

positive effects on attitudes and dispositions towards learning as the pupils progressed into Key Stage 2;[1] this was particularly true as the children got older. It was also found that pupils had a stronger conviction that they could influence their learning through their own efforts and were more motivated both because of an innate interest and a desire to improve their knowledge and skills. They were also more curious, prepared to accept greater mental challenges and to take on more difficult work (Walsh et al., 2010).

Montessori approach

Montessori education has a wide reach globally, and a number of studies examining its effects have been conducted, with mixed results. Early studies found no significant differences in outcomes between children attending Montessori and regular preschools (cf. Karnes, Shewedel and Williams, 1983; Miller and Dyer, 1975). However, later research did find some benefits of the Montessori approach over mainstream ECEC and schooling. Dohrmann et al. (2007), in a study conducted in the United States, found that children who had attended state Montessori programmes from ages 3 to 11 performed better in mathematics and science when they reached ages 15 and 18 than children who had attended mainstream preschool and elementary schools. Lillard and Else-Quest (2006) also found that low-income children participating in a (pre)school applying a Montessori approach, when observed at ages 5 and 12, had better outcomes than low-income children attending mainstream (pre)schools.

Lilliard (2012) found that the key to the success of the Montessori approach is related to the implementation of the approach. Lillard (2012) tested in the United States whether the effects of attending a Montessori preschool vary according to the programmes' fidelity to the implementation of the Montessori method. Three groups were compared: classic Montessori programmes, less rigorously Montessori programmes that supplemented the programme with conventional (mainstream) school activities, and conventional (mainstream) programmes. The sample consisted of 172 children of preschool age. Children were tested at the start and end of the school year on a range of social and academic skills. Although they performed no better in the fall, children in classic, high-fidelity Montessori programmes showed significantly greater gains over the school year than children in supplemented Montessori and mainstream programmes on outcome measures such as executive function, reading, mathematics, vocabulary and social problem solving. This indicates that programmes strictly implementing the Montessori approach support better child development outcomes.

Other pedagogical approaches

Andrews (2012) investigated children attending different types of kindergarten in the United States. He compared Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio Emilia programmes and mainstream programmes without an identified curriculum and pedagogy model. The 126 children included in the study were rated on their school readiness. His overall finding was that children from schools without an identified curriculum (regular schools) scored significantly better. However, the sample in his study is rather small (Anders, 2015).

Bilde et al. (2013) studied a sample of 2 776 children from mainstream, Freinet, and Waldorf[2] schools from their third year in kindergarten until third grade in primary school. The Freinet and Waldorf schools were not found to improve school engagement. Furthermore, children enrolled in alternative pedagogical programmes, such as Freinet and Waldorf, showed less independence than children enrolled in traditional preschools with mainstream approaches.

KiDZ

KiDZ (Kindergarten of the Future in Bavaria) is a model early years programme developed in Bavaria. It serves preschool children aged 3 to 6 in mixed age classes and broadly followed the goals of preschool education (including developing knowledge, metacognitive competences and

stimulating interest and motivation), enriched with domain-specific stimulation. The comprehensive domain-specific stimulation of preschoolers' emergent skills in literacy, mathematics and science is not primarily carried out at specific, planned hours but is integrated into daily routines. KiDZ uses a combination of child-centred pedagogy and specific teacher-led efforts to stimulate children. Primary school and preschool teachers work together at the preschool centres. An empirical evaluation of the programme found that by comparison with a control group that did not benefit from KiDZ, children in the KiDZ programme demonstrate greater progress in academic skills such as numeracy, literacy and grammar. The study attributes this to the higher level of assistance from staff in the KiDZ programme, and the child-centred focus. The study concluded that, in general, these aspects result in greater progress on skills (Rossbach et al. 2010; Sechtig et al. 2012).

The study also collected information about children's well-being and satisfaction by asking the children in the KiDZ programme 25 questions relating to well-being, anxiousness and learning motivation. These included questions such as, "Do you like going to kindergarten?", "Are you worried when you fight with another child?" and "Do you find mathematics fun in kindergarten?" The results of these questions, in comparison to the control group, indicated that children in the KiDZ programme have higher levels of well-being and motivation to learn (ibid.). However, it is unclear which aspects of the KiDZ programme support greater well-being and learning motivation.

The KiDZ study indicates that certain practices, such as staff-directed assistance while focusing on the child, positively impact children's development. This will be further discussed in the next section, which addresses which pedagogical practices and activities have been found most effective in stimulating early childhood development.

Table 6.1 Overview of pedagogical approaches and practices and their effects

Pedagogical approach/practice	Description	Effects
Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)	A balance of child-initiated learning and guidance from staff members. The approach provides a wide range of different activities, which are carried out in groups, or independently. The approach focuses on socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development. All practices are based on i) theories of child development; ii) individual needs; and iii) the child's cultural background.	• No consistent effects towards cognitive or academic outcomes. *Positive impact on children's ability to initiate and maintain interpersonal relations. • Long-term positive effects on motivation and interest in learning and knowledge acquisition.
Montessori programme	The programme is organised into five basic categories: practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and culture – and is based on the child's own natural inner guidance and interest in learning. The educator's involvement is reduced to the least amount possible.	• Indication that students who attend Montessori schools, and where the Montessori programme is strictly adhered to, demonstrate greater school gains in, for example, reading, mathematics and social problem solving.
Freinet programme	The approach emphasises the role of the imagination in learning, developing thinking that includes a creative as well as an analytic component. The education emphasises learning through practical activities, and materials are kept simple to employ and strengthen their imagination and creativity.	• Programme was not found to improve children's engagement in school, and children demonstrated less independence.
KiDZ	Early years programme developed in Bavaria, Germany. Balance of situation-oriented, child-centred and teacher-led pedagogy to stimulate children. Emergent skills in literacy, mathematics, and science integrated into daily routines.	• Positive effects found on process quality of the participating preschool centres.

Table 6.1 Overview of pedagogical approaches and practices and their effects (continued)

Pedagogical approach/practice	Description	Effects
Play-based learning	Different forms of "play-based learning". Traditionally, free-play activities are initiated and freely chosen by the child.	• Some play activities, such as puzzles and games, are more engaging than others, for example playing in sand and dressing up. • Play partners and sensitive adults are important to help children reflect on play situations and understand what they have learnt. • The role of practitioners in play situations is important. In high-quality situations, adults listen to and extend children's thoughts and knowledge.
Sustained shared thinking	"Two or more individuals work together in an interrelated way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, etc." (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2012)	• Children have been noted to make greater progress generally in settings where more sustained shared thinking took place.
Scaffolding	Involves helpful, structured interaction between an adult and a child, with the aim of helping the child achieve a specific goal.	• Children in scaffolding-focused learning environments demonstrated in one study greater overall positive effects on their development than children in teacher-directed and children-centred environments.
Child-directed	Method of learning that prioritises child-initiated activities, i.e. activities that are chosen by the child. Few staff-initiated activities.	• Child-directed practices are likely to improve children's socio-emotional and soft skills, such as their motivation to learn, creativity, independence, self-confidence, general knowledge and initiative.
Teacher(staff)-directed	Classic method of learning with activities mainly initiated by the teacher, which include frequent repetition.	• French children taught in chiefly teacher-led environments performed better on spatial organisation and rhythm tests than German children from child-centred environments. • Marcon (2002) concluded that the development of children who are teacher-led at the ECEC stage is slowed because the introduction of formalised learning experiences is too early for children's developmental status at this age.

Sources: Anders (2015); Dohrmann et al. (2007) ; Dunn and Kontos (1997) ; Haan, Elbers and Leseman (2004); Lilliard (2012); Lilliard and Else-Quest (2006); Miller (1975); AEYC (2009); Schmidt et al. (2007); Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002); Stipek et al. (1995); Sylva et al. (2004).

Research on the effects of pedagogical practices

The previous section indicated that certain pedagogical practices are found to stimulate children's development. This section considers the effects of a range of pedagogical practices (including play-based learning, child-initiated and staff-initiated activities) on certain abilities, such as pre-reading and pre-mathematics abilities and socio-emotional skills.

High-quality staff-child interactions

As discussed in Chapter 3, interactions between staff and children are crucially important in pedagogical quality and in enhancing early development. High-quality verbal interactions between children and adults were characterised as critical by Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2012). Staff-

child interactions can take place in different circumstances and during different activities and practices.

A study on what high-quality adult-child interactions occur and can be used in ECEC settings was researched by Dunkin and Hanna (2001) in New Zealand, drawing on the results of New Zealand's Competent Child longitudinal study (Wylie, Thompson and Lythe, 1999). Based on their findings, a resource for early years teaching called "Thinking Together" was developed that highlights interactions that are of high quality and are believed to influence development. They concluded that in high-quality interactions, adults are genuinely interested in what the child is doing and are listening and extending children's thoughts and knowledge (Dunkin and Hanna, 2001). Further strategies to promote children's acquisition of new knowledge are open-ended questions or comments, giving the child time to respond and using a child's knowledge to extend the interaction. These elements are reminiscent of the concept of "sustained shared thinking" and are often referred to in other studies as "scaffolding" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002).

Sustained shared thinking occurs when "two or more individuals work together in an interrelated way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, valuate an activity, extend a narrative, etc." This means that both parties must contribute to the thinking and that it develops and extends the understanding. Highly qualified staff were found to carry out sustained shared thinking interactions more often than those with lower qualifications. This is because initiating and maintaining child-led interaction places demands on the skills and abilities of preschool teachers, which suggests that preschool teachers need to be well trained in comprehensive professional development programmes (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2012).

Play-based learning

Play-based learning is a fundamental concept for explaining how children in their early years learn and develop. The efficacy of a pedagogical practice and approach is linked to how well it facilitates play in the learning environment. A further dimension of this notion examines the forms of play used and which are found to be most effective in helping children to learn and develop.

Traditionally, free play, that is, activities that are initiated and freely chosen by the child, and sustained without adult interference, is perceived as the purest form of play and is most highly valued by early years practitioners, especially in ECEC systems with socio-pedagogic traditions (Walsh et al., 2010). However, research by Sylva (1984) demonstrates that some activities are more engaging and stimulating for children (e.g. art, puzzles and games, constructional materials) than others (e.g. dough, sand and dressing up). Play has been found to contribute to a child's development most when it is regarded as meaningful. Meaningful play is seen as a medium for learning when "play opportunities offered to children are playful and engaging to them" (Stephen, 2010: pp.4). It is thus worth differentiating between unguided and guided free play.

Unguided free play is found to be far less effective in stimulating early learning than guided free play. Plowman and Stephen (2005) found varied patterns of engagement in unguided free play in the context of children interacting freely with ICT. Children were either highly engaged, tried different games at random, or wandered off and became frustrated, highlighting the limitations of unguided free play. A recent study by Slot et al. (submitted) on a sample of Dutch preschoolers also found that unguided free play does not benefit process quality or children's language development. ECEC practitioners have been found to play a crucial role in ensuring that play has beneficial effects (Sylva, 1984). Play partners and sensitive adults who help children reflect in play situations and question and understand what they have learnt, i.e. through scaffolding, are deemed important in this task (Sylva, 1984).

Child-initiated (child-centred) and staff-initiated (staff-centred) activities

The EPPE project (Sylva et al., 2004) and the REPEY project (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002), both conducted in England, have provided some of the most comprehensive and robust research on the identification of effective pedagogy. The researchers first identified ECEC settings that improved children's development in different areas (cognitive and social-behavioural) most effectively, and then investigated the features of pedagogy carried out in these settings. They found that excellent settings struck a balance between staff-initiated group-work, free play and instructive play activities.

The pedagogies designated as effective in the studies noted have been identified in other studies. Willson-Quayle and Winsler (2000) compared environments that were highly teacher-directed, child-centred and those that adopted a mix of both practices, known as the scaffolding environment, to show whether they enhanced low-income Latino preschoolers' learning, motivation and language development. In the process of scaffolding, children are helped by the practitioner to master a task or concept that they are initially unable to grasp independently. The practitioner offers assistance only with skills that are beyond the child's capability. The child must be allowed to complete as much of the task as possible unassisted. The practitioner only attempts to help children with tasks just beyond their current capability. The children in the scaffolding-focused learning environment performed best in the study tasks set, and also showed greatest overall positive effects on their development. The authors concluded that learning and motivation benefit most from moderate levels of staff involvement and a practice that is also not too child-centred.

Tazouti et al. (2011) compared the early learning abilities of 299 French and 253 German children who attended either preschool (*école maternelle*) in France or traditional kindergarten in Germany. The study concluded that staff-initiated or child-initiated practices can each have its their advantages. A cross-country comparison between France and Germany is of particular interest to compare the effects of a formal, didactic "work"-oriented approach as practised in French preschools (i.e. a mostly teacher-initiated approach), with a child-centred one in Germany. The tests covered nine learning areas related to arithmetic (spatial organisation, counting, rhythms), reading-writing (visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, sound-spelling patterns), and transversal learning (handwriting, visual memory, auditory memory). Three groups of variables were measured to identify potential differences between the French and German children, including the nature of the educational establishment, individual variables (such as social class and gender), and parental expectations. On pupils' total scores, the nature of the educational establishment (the country variable) did not in fact have a significant effect. Though the mean performances of the children in both France and Germany would render the ECEC systems equal in their effect, significant differences in different areas distinguish French and German children, which can be attributed to the ECEC country variation. For example, French children obtained better results on the rhythm, visual discrimination and spatial organisation tests, because French nursery schools frequently practice these activities, while German children performed significantly better on arithmetic tests. German children also performed better in sound-spelling pattern tests and on the visual memory and auditory memory tests, which are found to develop more quickly in play situations. One important aspect of comparing child development outcomes is how the tests are performed. In Germany, evaluations or tests are carried out in a spontaneous, informal and formative way, whereas in France, evaluations are more programmed and formal. As a result, French children are more stressed during the tests, while the German children were more relaxed and motivated by them (Tazouti et al. 2011).

Marcon (2002) investigated the effects of different pedagogical preschool models, child-centred, staff-centred, and mixed, on later school success, examining the progress of children in Year 5 and Year 6 of primary school. The study examined report card grades, retention rates and special education placement of 160 children at the end of their fifth year in school, and 183

children at the end of their sixth year in school. By the end of Year 5, there were no differences between the three groups with regard to their academic achievements, but at the end of Year 6, children who had been enrolled in child-centred programmes showed better school grades than the children in other groups. Marcon (2002) concludes that the progress of children who were cared for in overly academic and staff-directed environments may have been slowed because the introduction of formalised learning experiences happened too early for children's developmental status. This indicates that staff-initiated practices alone do not have a beneficial impact, and should be implemented in combination with child-initiated practices.

Pedagogy and the development of pre-reading and pre-mathematics abilities

Research has identified pedagogical practices that support the development of specific abilities in certain domains. De Haan, Elbers and Leseman (2014) observed preschool and kindergarten children in the Netherlands and investigated the effects of teacher-managed and child-managed academic activities. Of the 92 children observed, 49 boys and 43 girls, the mean age of the children at first measurement was 3.68 years. The observations found that staff-initiated practices have a larger impact on mathematics skills, while child-initiated practices affect pre-reading abilities more. In classrooms where teachers initiated relatively more language-literacy and mathematics activities, children demonstrated greater gains in mathematics skills – most likely because improved language skills help children to better understand mathematical concepts. Furthermore, language and literacy activities are likely to incorporate words for counting, comparison words and other mathematical concepts as well. However, teacher-managed language and literacy activities did not result in any notable improvement on children's language and literacy development, due to the global nature of the activities and practices, which did not address children's individual needs. Child-initiated practices, such as picture-book reading and copying words with stamps, were found to have positive effects on emergent literacy skills. By contrast, child-centred pre-mathematics practices were not found to impact children's early mathematics skills. This study indicates that academic content in early childhood programmes is important for school readiness, and that both staff-initiated and child-initiated practices can benefit children's early literacy and mathematics development, as noted in previous sections.

McDonald, Connor et al. (2009) investigated the classroom language and literacy experiences of 156 preschoolers in the United States using video observations. Language and literacy experiences were defined across multiple dimensions, and vocabulary and emergent literacy development were measured. The observations revealed that high variance exists in the types of language and literacy activities used between classrooms, and for individual children within classrooms. The findings indicate that interaction (processes) between staff and children is key in emerging literacy development. Staff- and child-managed code-focused[3] activities are associated with alphabet and letter–word growth, and meaning-focused[4] staff-child-managed experiences, including play, are associated with vocabulary growth. The growth in alphabet and letter-word recognition as a result of staff-child-combined code-focused practices was greatest for children who initially had low alphabet and letter-word decoding scores. Staff-child, meaning-focused practices only benefited children whose scores were initially high.

These findings point to the importance of child-initiated activities in combination with some staff intervention and staff-initiated practices for language development. To be more precise, the most effective method of advancing preschoolers' emergent literacy development, according to this study, involves a combination of activities, such as teaching letters, letter sounds, phonological decoding and phonological awareness, in conjunction with meaning-focused experiences including play, rather than a focus on only one activity.

Pedagogy and the development of social-emotional skills

Research indicates that strong, didactic, staff-directed practices may have benefits for academic learning. However, such practices can hinder the development of children's motivation, interest and self-regulation in the long run. By contrast, child-initiated practices can boost socio-emotional development. A study by Lerkkanen (2012) investigated the association between observed staff practices and children's interest in reading and mathematics. The study assessed the pre-reading and pre-mathematics skills of 515 children and the beginning of the kindergarten year, and re-assessed their interest in these learning areas the following spring. The study found that a child-centred approach, with a high percentage of child-initiated practices, was positively associated with the development of children's interest in reading and mathematics, while a staff-directed approach had a negative effect.

Stipek et al. (1995) compared 227 children aged 4 to 6 in didactic, highly academic programmes with those in child-centred preschool programmes. Their achievements in basic skills and a set of motivation variables were measured. Children in didactic, teacher-directed programmes showed better skills in a letters/reading achievement test than children enrolled in child-centred programmes. However, they showed relatively negative outcomes on most of the socio-emotional measures, including dependency on adults, self-esteem, and beliefs in the success of their own accomplishments.

The findings of Lerkkanen (2012) and Stipek et al. (1995) are in line with those of Goldberg (2002) on the effects of academically oriented versus child-centred preschool programmes. He stressed that children in more academically oriented preschool programmes do better in achievement tests, since that is the focus of academically oriented approaches, but that child-centred preschool programmes enhance children's socio-emotional development. In general, children in such programmes show higher self-efficacy, less dependency on adults, more pride in their own accomplishments, and have less concern about school later on. Since socio-emotional development is found to be related to later academic success (e.g. self-regulation), this area is important to include in ECEC.

Other research on different pedagogical focuses (e.g. Barnett et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2009; Laevers, 2011; Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997) indicates that both staff-initiated and child-initiated practices consist of elements that can be used to develop comprehensive and effective ECEC programmes (see Table 6.2). Academic, staff-initiated practices and approaches are more likely to improve children's academic outcomes, including IQ scores, literacy and numeracy skills, specific subject knowledge, and are most likely to have short-term outcomes. Child-centred practices are more likely to improve a child's socio-emotional and soft skills such as motivation to learn, creativity, independence, self-confidence, general knowledge and initiative, and have more long-term outcomes.

Academic, teacher-directed approaches generally have clearly defined, specific aims and strategies. This can be an advantage for the practitioners, since these are easier to apply. They may also make it easier to monitor children's development, as well as conduct staff self-evaluations. On the other hand, giving children choices and opportunities for autonomy may promote children's socio-emotional abilities, such as self-regulation and self-control. These are believed crucial for development and success as children move through the education path, and policy documents and studies generally recommend combining both approaches and practices to stimulate early development.

Table 6.2. Effects of early education (academic) and comprehensive (child-centred) approaches

Which approach is most likely to improve a child's...	Academic/ Staff-initiated	Comprehensive/Child-initiated
IQ scores	X	
Motivation to learn		X
Literacy and numeracy	X	
Creativity		X
Independence		X
Specific knowledge	X	
Self-confidence		X
General knowledge		X
Initiative		X
Short-term outcomes	X	
Long-term outcomes	X	X

Sources: Barnett et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2009; Laevers, 2011; Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997.

Research influencing pedagogical approaches and practices

Research can impact pedagogy and pedagogical practices in the sense that research findings can inform policy makers and practitioners on best practices and what works best in enhancing staff performance, process quality and child development. This section addresses the research that has been conducted on effective pedagogies, and how, as far as it can be ascertained, this has affected pedagogical approaches and practices.

In a survey on pedagogy answered by 24 jurisdictions (OECD, 2014a), half responded positively that research had been conducted research on pedagogy and pedagogical approaches in general. The other half reported that no research in this field had been carried out. While many countries conduct research in ECEC, most focuses on the impacts of ECEC systems or programmes (ibid.). Of those that reported research on pedagogy, five indicated they conducted statistical evaluations, alongside non-statistical/qualitative research and literature reviews, while the research in the remaining countries is mostly qualitative and/or literature reviews. The research on pedagogy and practices are usually not conducted nation-wide but focus on particular programmes, and simply produce findings on specific approaches, regions or ECEC settings.

England has conducted non-statistical/qualitative research and literature reviews in its research on effective pedagogical practices. One of the best-known qualitative studies on the effectiveness of pedagogy is the 2009 study "Research on Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years" (REPEY). REPEY qualitatively assessed two reception classes and 46 childminders, and analysed what effective practices are like. It found that effective pedagogy in the early years involves a balance of both the kind of interaction traditionally associated with the term "teaching", and also the provision of instructive learning environments and routines. Furthermore, it found that the best opportunities for adults to extend children's thinking are often free-chosen play activities. "Excellent" and "good" ECEC settings tended to achieve an equal balance between adult-led and child-initiated interactions; the most effective settings also encouraged "sustained shared thinking". The REPEY study has been used to provide pedagogical guidance for ECEC staff in England, which is one of the few countries that base pedagogical guidance for staff on practices that have been researched in the country itself.

To return to the case-study countries, in Japan, pedagogical approaches are subject to research and surveys taken individually by local public organisations, universities and ECEC settings. Such studies are usually not conducted at national level, or collected and assessed in a comprehensive manner. Japanese research thus offers no conclusions about effective pedagogies and approaches at national level. This is also true of Denmark and Germany, both of which indicated that they had conducted quantitative and qualitative studies on effective pedagogical approaches and practices. In Germany, recent research on effective pedagogical approaches

mainly concerns specific projects or programmes aiming to promote language development, for example the stimulation of language or speech-based interaction. None of the research covers all types of pedagogical approaches in the country, and therefore does not provide input for pedagogical guidance at a national level, although the results are used for ECEC staff working in the specific setting or programme that is the subject of the research.

New Zealand has also not conducted any national research on the most effective practices, but it has explored pedagogical approaches and practices more generally, and identified good practice. These example practices were subsequently published and made available to other teachers on the ERO (Education Review Office) website, as pedagogical guidance to ECEC staff, as is the case in England. France has conducted research in recent years on both statistical and non-statistical/ qualitative research. This research concerns the development of literacy and phonological skills as well as cognitive development. How these studies' findings are used to assist in the implementation of pedagogy is not certain. It is not clear if, and how, the results are used for pedagogical guidance for ECEC staff in stimulating these developmental areas.

The overall conclusions of the available research point in the same direction, suggesting that no one pedagogical approach or practice will suit all staff and children, and that pedagogy needs cultural and social context to be able to meet children's needs. This is line with the pedagogical approaches and curriculum frameworks that countries have adopted. However, further knowledge of which practices or approaches are effective within each country's socio-cultural context can help implement better pedagogy that benefits children's development.

NOTES

[1] Key stage 2 applies to primary school children between the ages of 7 and 11.

[2] The pedagogy of Freinet schools follows a child-centred approach. Children are encouraged to learn by making products, learning from their errors, working with other children and following their own interests. Waldorf's pedagogical approach emphasises the role of the imagination in learning, developing both analytical and creative thinking. It also emphasises learning through practical activities and materials.

[3] Code-focused practices refer to practices that help children decode emergent literacy skills, and includes practices such as naming and writing letters, rhyme words and relating letters to the sound they make.

[4] Meaning-focused practices are practices designed to help children understand words and passages (i.e. give meaning to them), comprehend what is read to them and enhance expressive language skills.

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Chapter 7

Monitoring quality in pedagogy

Process quality, that is, the interactions between ECEC practitioners and children, is a key element of pedagogy. It is indirectly affected by structural quality, since the number of children in a class and the teachers' qualifications can influence practitioners' interactions with children. Both these aspects of quality can be monitored, although structural quality is more frequently monitored at national or state level, while process quality is typically assessed at setting or individual level. Information on monitoring systems and practices regarding quality, and process quality in particular, at the national level, indicates what is regarded as important for a good level of quality and pedagogy in ECEC settings, and can therefore contribute to a better understanding of quality pedagogy.

Quality is monitored consistently in all ECEC settings in England and in most ECEC settings in the case-study countries. The aspects of ECEC settings that are most frequently monitored in the case-study countries can be classified into four key areas: staff quality, service quality, curriculum implementation and child development/outcomes. England and Japan monitor all four areas in all ECEC settings, while New Zealand only considers service quality and curriculum implementation, but does so consistently across all ECEC settings. In England, France and New Zealand, monitoring quality is a legal obligation.

Monitoring process quality is not very common in OECD countries: England is one of the few (with New Zealand and certain Länder in Germany) that monitor process quality (or pedagogical quality). Process quality is monitored either as part of service quality or of staff quality. The focus of monitoring process quality varies; in England, inspectors observe the quality of interactions between adults and children in order to determine the quality of teaching. In Germany, process quality is monitored by focusing on a range of aspects, including the overall quality of instruction and care, relationships and interactions between staff and children, collaboration between staff and parents, between colleagues, and between staff and management, pedagogy, curriculum implementation, and the balance between preparatory and actual instruction time for staff. In New Zealand, most of these aspects are also monitored, except for collaboration between staff (colleagues) and the balance between time spent in preparing materials versus actual time with children.

Pedagogy can have varying and contrasting definitions. In this report, pedagogy is defined as "that set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). In reality, this is not a universal definition, and pedagogy can encompass many different aspects, usually defined and shaped at the setting level or by ECEC practitioners, and rarely at the policy level.

Quality also has different conceptual forms, as noted in the literature, such as structural, orientational, and process quality, as discussed in Chapter 3. Process quality is key in terms of pedagogy because it describes the pedagogical interactions between ECEC practitioners and children. Structural quality also indirectly affects process quality, as the number of children in class or teachers' qualifications can influence the practitioner's interaction with children.

Definitions of, and perspectives on, quality in pedagogy

Sheridan (2001) posits that two dominant perspectives govern discussions of quality: *relative* and *objective* quality. The pedagogical perspective stems from a combination of the two. An explanation of these perspectives and their impact on the interpretation of the term quality are outlined below, as are the most prevalent perspectives in the countries case study.

Relative perspective

The relative approach considers quality as a relative and dynamic concept that can only be understood in a relative context – for example in a particular situation, a particular period of time, and in a specific social and cultural context (Sheridan, 2001). As Sheridan further explains, "some researchers believe that high or low quality in early childhood education is a subjective, contextual and cultural experience and not an objective reality, as definitions of quality must evolve over time". An ecological systems theory framework often forms the basis for a relative approach to quality, where the micro-systems (family), meso-systems (ECEC settings) and macro-systems (economic and social policies) of cultures and societies influence and affect children's development (Sheridan, 2001). To understand how children can learn and develop most effectively, these aspects must all be considered. As a result, relative "definitions of quality reflect the values and beliefs, needs and agendas, influence and empowerment of various 'stakeholder' groups having an interest in these ECEC services" (Moss and Pence, 1994). Because the relative perspective is based on societal, political and philosophical perspectives, it can be regarded as a *democratic-societal* perspective of quality.

Objective perspective

The objective approach, by contrast, holds that quality can be commonly characterised and defined. Arriving at a definition for quality must involve a common understanding of what this entails, as well as of how the aspects of quality are associated with pedagogical processes in early childhood education (Sheridan, 2001). Such an understanding of quality can be achieved through research on theories of learning and their application in ECEC settings, as well as theoretical and practical knowledge of the characteristics of a high-quality environment for children's learning and development (ibid.). This knowledge can subsequently contribute to learning goals and strategies, which can also be evaluated. With its focus on the educational system, the objective approach can be seen as an *educational* perspective of quality. Quality, in the objective sense, can be evaluated by measuring a programme's content, methods and effectiveness, and thus its ability to provide children with the opportunity to learn and develop in line with its overarching goals (ibid.).

Pedagogical perspective

A pedagogical perspective on quality centres on the child and what is best for a child's learning and development (Sheridan, 2001). It is closely associated with an objective perspective, as it is based on research and existing practice. It respects the principles and learning goals set out in the curriculum, modern theories of learning and the perceived existing quality in ECEC settings. It designates certain aspects of quality as influential in a child's learning and development, which can further be defined and evaluated. In incorporating the experience and views of practitioners, children and parents, it is seen as having both an educational and a democratic approach (ibid.).

It is difficult to identify a country's understanding of quality in pedagogy, because most countries do not explicitly state what this is or have a clear definition for it. The OECD has attempted to collect information on this subject (OECD, 2014a; 2014b), but countries were not able to provide a clear national perspective on quality in pedagogy. This is not surprising, given that pedagogy is generally defined and shaped by ECEC practitioners at the setting level, rather than at the level of policy (OECD, 2014a; 2014b). However, an indication of what each country understands to be quality in pedagogy emerges in its broader view of quality in ECEC settings, the pedagogical guidance provided in the curriculum, and the aspects of ECEC settings it monitors, including the elements it monitors for process quality. This information helps align the quality descriptions with a given perspective. It is not always possible to associate the quality descriptions for England and the case-study countries with a single quality perspective, but some elements give an approximate idea.

England

In England, quality is to some degree defined at the national level, and includes the indicators used by Ofsted, the national inspectorate, as well as the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes. These stipulate the required levels of children's progress. Inspectors judge the overall quality and standards of the early years provisions on three key factors:

- how well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend
- the contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being
- the effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision.

Inspectors must apply professional knowledge and experience in evaluating these criteria. They must take account of the context of the provision inspected, in particular the children's ages, stage of development, the time they spend at the setting each week, and the length of time they have attended the setting.

England's view on quality can be classified as the objective perspective. Quality in the objective sense is measured with regard to a programme's content, methods and effectiveness, and thus its ability to provide children with the opportunity to learn and develop in line with its overarching goals. This is the purpose of England's Early Years Foundation Stage and its monitoring system, but it also encompasses a pedagogical perspective. When Ofsted inspects a setting, two of the three key judgements it must consider include how the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children. Furthermore, inspectors must apply their own professional experience and knowledge when judging the setting. The EYFS also provides pedagogical guidance for ECEC settings based on modern theories of learning, such as play-based practice and sustained shared thinking, two effective practices identified in the Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002).

Denmark

In Denmark, the quality assurance system focuses on a facility's physical, intellectual and aesthetic environment. The manager, in co-operation with setting's parental board, assesses the environment from a child-centred perspective (MFCA, 2007). The municipalities further contribute to quality assurance by providing educational and psychological counsel for pedagogues, serving as an intermediary between the national level and ECEC settings. The aim is to promote best practices and ensure a uniform standard of quality in centres around the country (Jensen et al., 2010).

Denmark clearly demonstrates a pedagogical quality perspective, since the views of different stakeholders are considered in defining quality. The system of quality assurance takes a child-centred perspective, and educational and psychological forums exist for pedagogues to share their views and experiences on, for example, best practices. In addition, each ECEC provider has a parent board, to ensure that parents' views are represented.

France

In France, quality in ECEC settings is defined by conditions of structural quality. This includes school size and the level of staff qualifications, but is also stipulated in the mandated Kindergarten Quality Criteria and school curriculum, which provide pedagogical guidance for staff in kindergarten. The criteria and curriculum stipulate a number of learning and development areas. Article L321-2 amended by the Act of July 8, 2013, states that the training in infant classes and kindergarten should promote each child's individual personality, stimulate children's sensory, cognitive and social development, and develop their self-esteem and emotional development. These curricular areas aim to provide pedagogical guidance, and one aspect of pedagogical quality is associated with how well they achieve these aims. New programmes with revised learning areas are currently being developed in accordance with these 2013 guidelines, and were open for consultation in autumn 2014 by early years teachers, to allow for their input into the process.

In France, some aspects of quality reflect an objective perspective, given that quality in ECEC settings is commonly defined by structural quality conditions, Kindergarten Quality Criteria and the school curriculum. But other aspects of quality monitoring also reflect a pedagogical perspective of quality, such as the incorporation of the experiences and views of practitioners.

Germany

One definition of the desired quality of ECEC is provided in the Social Code Book VIII, which is linked closely to German legislation. Federal law stipulates that all young people have the legal right to be supported in their development and encouraged to become independent and socially competent personalities (§ 1 SGB VIII). ECEC providers are obliged to fulfil a number of conditions, including supporting the education, care and upbringing of children in equal measure, since these are considered inseparable elements of pedagogical practice. In particular, children should be supported in line with their age and level of development (e.g. language development), and children's individual interests, needs and their social-emotional background must be taken into account (§ 22a SGB VIII). A national framework, the Common Framework of the Federal States for Early Education in ECEC Centres, was subsequently produced to reinforce these values and promote common guiding principles for *Länder* curriculum. ECEC pedagogy is expected to support children's exploration, self-determined learning processes and teamwork. This is perceived to provide pedagogical guidance to ECEC staff.

The quality of pedagogy in Germany is linked to interactions supporting both care and education, and those satisfying the individual needs of children, especially in view of their age, level of development and ethnic background. Germany's *Nationale Qualitätsinitiative im System*

der Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder (National Quality Initiatives in ECEC) define quality in terms of a set of 21 quality criteria (or quality areas). Other instruments for internal and external evaluation within five sub-programmes have been developed. One includes a tool for ECEC staff to self-evaluate their quality in ECEC settings (IFP, 2003).

Quality in Germany is defined in the Social Code Book VIII, and a national curriculum, the Common Framework, helps enforce these principles. These suggest that German pedagogy is guided by an objective perspective of quality. However, one important condition of quality specified in Germany is that children's learning and development should be supported in ECEC settings according to their individual needs and ability. As in Denmark, each ECEC provider has a parent board so that providers can factor in parents' views on practices. This also indicates a pedagogical perspective.

Japan

At the national level, no clear definition of quality in ECEC settings is set, and this is left to the responsibility of the local governments. The national level, however, sets out curricular content for ECEC settings in the Course of Study for Kindergartens (2008). This is divided into five learning areas: health (physical and mental), human relationships, environment, language and expression (feelings) (MEXT, 2008). The Guidelines for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries also list seven topics to be addressed in the development of curriculum. The educational activities of each kindergarten must be conform with the Kindergarten School Appraisal Guidelines (2011) set by the government. ECEC content and process quality is broadly controlled at the national level, and is thus of relative importance in the quality of ECEC settings in Japan. One aspect of pedagogical quality thus links to how well pedagogies adhere to and to satisfy these content areas.

In Japan, quality in some respects reflects a pedagogical perspective. Both the Course of Study for Kindergarten and the National Curriculum of Day-Care Centres are infused by a strong child-centred perspective. The monitoring of quality incorporates the experiences and views of practitioners and parents. ECEC providers, for example, may hold meetings where the entire staff observes and discusses a practitioner at work. In addition, providers will also survey parents in the course of quality monitoring.

New Zealand

New Zealand does not have an agreed definition of quality for ECEC, but emphasises the Curriculum Standard, which early childhood services must meet if they are to receive a licence. The Standard includes the requirement to implement a curriculum consistent with the prescribed early childhood curriculum framework, Te Whāriki. How the curriculum is implemented, however, depends on stakeholders, for example teachers, parents and *whānau*, the extended family that in Māori culture is considered to play a crucial role in a child's life (Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, 2007). The evaluation and assessment of programmes is monitored by the Education Review Office (ERO) through inspections every few years, as well by self-evaluations conducted by the ECEC settings themselves. As in Germany, France, and Japan, adherence to and application of the curriculum is the key means of ensuring quality in an ECEC setting.

The view of quality in New Zealand reflects elements of all three quality perspectives. New Zealand is the only country in the case-study group to consider cultural values and languages as a key aspect of quality. Furthermore each ECEC setting in New Zealand is advised to consider the nature of the community in which it operates, and how it needs to adjust its operations accordingly. How a provider implements the curriculum, for example, depends on stakeholders in the community. As Smith (2012) observes, "quality is culturally specific, and its meaning varies according to different stakeholders" (p. 22). This reflects a relative approach. New Zealand's Good Practice guide (ERO, 2013), however, outlines how pedagogical processes are related to quality, and presents examples of effective pedagogical practice from actual ECEC settings in

New Zealand. Quality also reflects a pedagogical perspective, because, as Smith (2012) has noted, certain aspects of quality, such as process and structural quality, have greater influence on pedagogical practice than others.

Though aspects of quality in each country can be linked to one or more of the three perspectives, the evidence is insufficient to link quality perspectives to particular pedagogical outcomes or practices.

Monitoring quality in ECEC settings

As a result of the different notions of pedagogy and quality, and because this is rarely explicitly defined at national or state level, little information is available on what countries regard as good pedagogy and good quality. Monitoring practices and in particular, what countries monitor for quality (and hence process quality) can partially fill this gap, because this provides information on what aspects within (process) quality are deemed important or, at least, most important to assess.

This section reviews how quality in pedagogy in ECEC settings is monitored in England (United Kingdom) in comparison with France, Germany, Japan and New Zealand. The section starts with a general view of which ECEC settings are monitored in each country and by whom, and consequently, what is monitored. It then looks at the reasons for monitoring.

Who monitors?

Table 7.1 provides an overview of the ECEC settings in each of the case-study countries (OECD, 2014a). In England, France and New Zealand, monitoring quality is legally mandated, as it is in Japan, but only for nursery centres (OECD, 2014a). Only in England and France are all ECEC settings monitored by the government or a government-related agency. In England, this is the task of an independent agency, Ofsted, while in France, the responsibility is divided between different government agencies. *Crèches collectives* are monitored by mother and child protection services (known as the PMI in French) at the department level of the General Council, but the director of the crèche also has some responsibility for monitoring. *Assistants maternels* are also monitored by the PMI. *Ecole maternelles* (preschools), classified under the education sector, are monitored by Ministry of Education inspections (ibid.).

In New Zealand, both the Education Review Office (ERO), the designated government agency, and the ECEC settings themselves conduct the monitoring. In Japan, monitoring of ECEC settings is carried out by both local government and ECEC staff and management in public kindergartens, but not in all private ones. In kindergartens, monitoring is undertaken by parents, local stakeholders and specially trained staff from each administrative district. Nursery centres are also subject to monitoring, which is conducted by administrative district staff and prefectures (local authorities). Prefectures check compliance with child welfare facility standards, and the administration of the childcare/nursery centres under their jurisdiction, and then undertake an onsite investigation in order to provide the required advice and guidance or corrective measures. This is mandated under the Child Welfare Act of 1947. In Germany, day-care centres use self-assessment tools, while family day-care centres are only monitored to the extent that the Local Youth Welfare Offices control the operating licences given to childminders.

Table 7.1 Quality monitoring in country ECEC settings

Country	ECEC Setting	Who monitors quality of settings?
France	Assistantes maternelles	Government or government-related agency/ECEC setting
	Crèches collectives (EAJE)	Government or government-related agency
	Ecole maternelle	Government or government-related agency
Germany	Kindertageseinrichtungen (child day care centres)	ECEC setting
	Kindertagespflege (family day care)	Government or government-related agency
Japan	Nursery centres	Local government/ECEC setting
	Kindergarten)	Local government/ECEC setting
New Zealand	Education and care	ECEC Setting
	Home-based	
	Kindergarten	
	Kōhanga Reo	
	Playcentre	
UK	Childminders	Government or government-related agency
	Full Day care	
	Nursery Schools	
	Primary schools without nursery classes	
	Primary schools with nursery classes	
	Sessional	

Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

What is monitored?

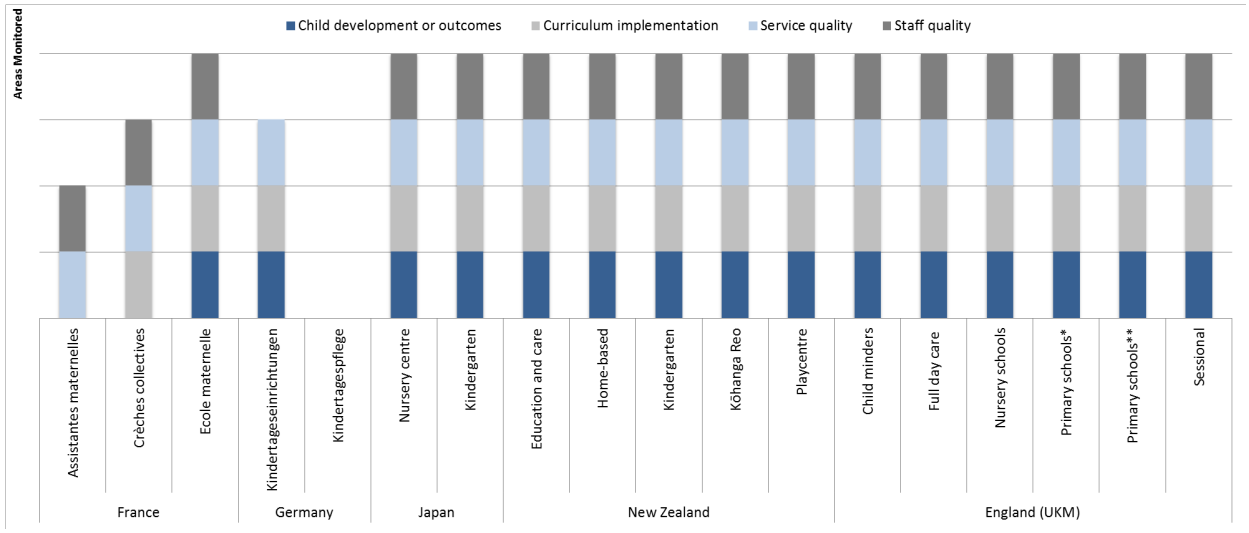
Figure 7.1 provides an overview of four key areas that are most frequently monitored across the ECEC settings worldwide (OECD, 2014a). England, Japan and New Zealand monitor all four areas: staff quality, service quality, curriculum implementation and child development/outcomes in all ECEC settings. In France, all four areas are monitored only for preschools.

Germany does not monitor its family care settings (*Kindertagespflege*), but child day-care settings are assessed regarding service quality, curriculum implementation and child development/outcomes but not staff quality. Staff quality is monitored in both settings only on a general and aggregated level through the Child and Youth Welfare Statistics. In child day-care settings, staff quality may be monitored within the scope of assessing the process quality of an ECEC service (OECD, 2014a).

Monitoring areas in France differ between settings (see Figure 7.1). Monitoring requirements are defined at the national level by the Health Code, Code of Social Action and the Education Code. For *assistantes maternelles*, only staff quality and service quality are monitored, while in *crèches collectives*, service quality, curriculum implementation and child development/outcomes

are monitored. In *ecole maternelles*, monitoring is more comprehensive, incorporating all four key areas.

Figure 7.1 Focus of monitoring in ECEC



Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

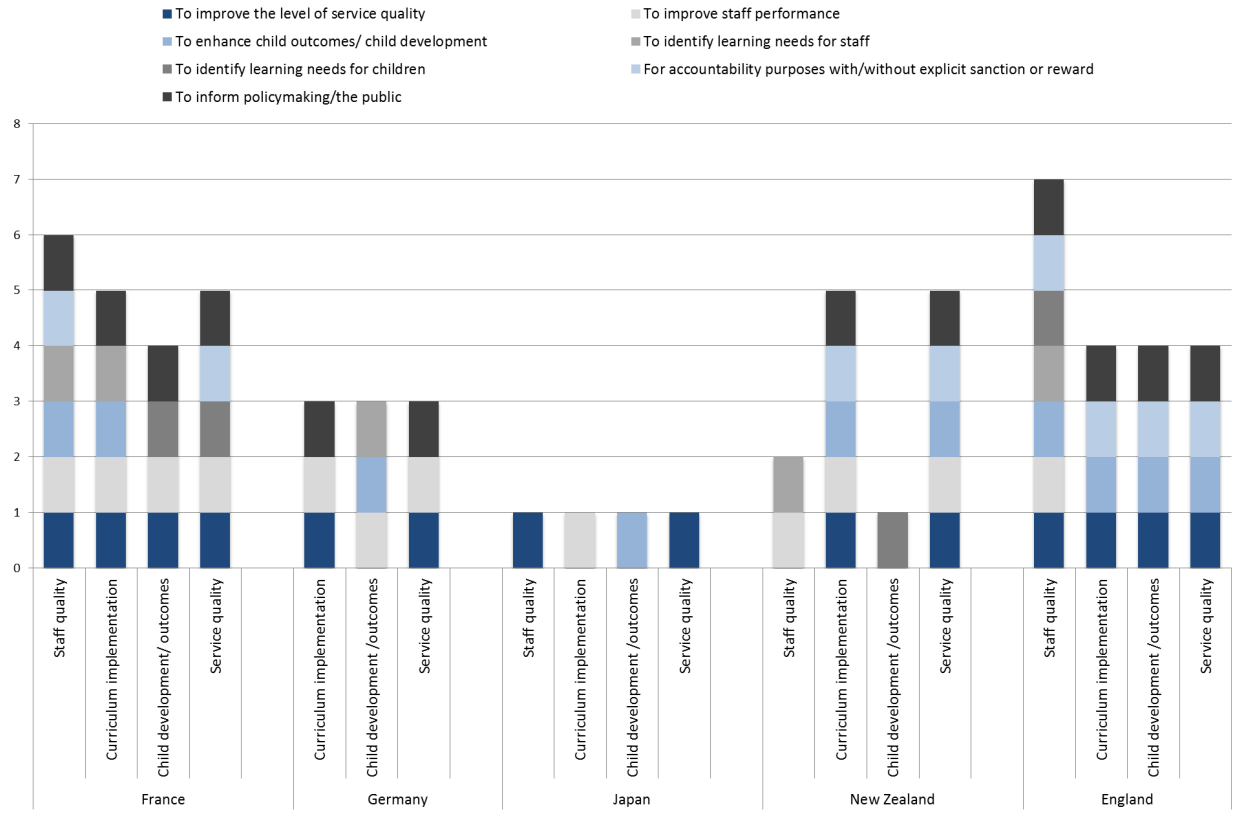
Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

Purposes of monitoring

Figure 7.2 outlines the reasons (or purposes) for monitoring the four monitoring areas: staff quality, service quality, child development/outcomes and curriculum implementation. It suggests that:

- Each of the countries except Japan monitors all four areas in order to inform the public and/or policy making.
- Most areas are monitored in order to improve the level of service quality, including in England.
- Only England, France and New Zealand monitor in order to identify the learning needs of children through monitoring child development or staff quality.
- England, France, Germany and New Zealand monitor to identify staff learning needs. This is done in France by monitoring curriculum implementation and staff quality, in Germany by monitoring child development, and in England and New Zealand by monitoring staff quality.
- All case-study countries undertake monitoring to improve staff performance, principally through monitoring curriculum implementation and service quality, but also through child development in France and Germany or through staff quality in New Zealand and England.
- Only France, New Zealand and England monitor for accountability purposes. In New Zealand, these do not come with sanctions, as they do in England;

Figure 7.2. Purposes of monitoring quality



Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

In Germany, service quality is mainly monitored to promote internal quality development. Curriculum implementation is only monitored in one Land, Berlin, in a systematic evaluation process. Monitoring child development continuously and systematically is considered part of good pedagogical practice and recommended or defined as an obligation in the ECEC curriculum. Considerable emphasis is placed on a child's language development and, as a result, 14 of the 16 Länder have introduced language assessments for children between 6-24 months before school entry. Macro-level monitoring by the Child and Youth Welfare Statistics provides an aggregated (local/regional/national) level of core information on aspects of structural quality, such as the level of staff qualification, group size or child-staff ratios, which have an indirect impact upon pedagogy, as previously noted (OECD, 2014a).

To ensure the quality of staff and to operate quality-control structures in ECEC settings in France, the quality of management and staff, and the objectives of ECEC activities are defined in different codes at the national level. The councils, with the help of expertise of the PMI (*Protection maternelle et infantile*), mother and child protection services and family welfare, specify these conditions at setting level to ensure children's well-being and child development (OECD, 2014a).

Japan, as shown in Figure 7.2, has fewer objectives for ECEC monitoring than other countries. Monitoring in kindergartens is undertaken through self-evaluation, and the results must be disclosed. Third-party evaluations by district administrative staff are also encouraged, but not

required. Kindergartens also evaluate their staff based on the third-party evaluation results, but do not have to disclose these results. Nursery centres are also encouraged to conduct self-evaluations, but these are not mandatory. Third-party independent appraisal and disclosure of results is encouraged but not required.

Monitoring process quality/ pedagogical practices

Process quality is monitored either as part of service quality or of staff quality; however, few countries monitor process quality as a separate category (see Table 7.2). In France, this is done in childcare and preschool settings, Germany monitors it for childcare centres, and New Zealand and England monitor process quality in all their settings. In England, inspectors observe interactions between adults and children to determine the quality of teaching in a setting. Inspectors judge the quality of adults' interaction with children of different ages, and whether, for example, the adults simply supervise and care, or whether they motivate children and encourage them to be independent. The inspector also evaluates practitioners' skill, observing how and when adults intervene in children's play (Ofsted, 2014). In Germany, process quality is monitored by focusing on the overall quality of instruction and care, relationships and interactions between staff and children, collaboration between staff and parents, between colleagues, pedagogy, and curriculum implementation. In New Zealand, most of these aspects are also monitored except for collaboration between staff (colleagues). France and England both monitor all these areas, as shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Areas/aspects monitored as part of process quality

Country and type of settings	France - crèches and pre-primary education (preschools)	Germany - kindertagesein-richtungen (child day care centres)	New Zealand - all ECEC settings	England - all ECEC settings
The overall quality of teaching	X	X	X	X
Interactions between staff and children	X	X	X	X
Collaboration between staff and parents	X	X	X	X
Collaboration between colleagues (staff)	X	X	X	X
Pedagogy	X	X	X	X
Implementation of curriculum by staff	X	X	X	X
Sensitivity (warmth etc).	X			X
Responsiveness to children's needs	X			X
Age-appropriateness of practices	X			X

Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), Combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

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Chapter 8

Policies influencing pedagogical approach and practice

Policies impact pedagogical practice, including the organisation of ECEC, the curriculum in place, the minimum regulated quality standards, staff qualifications and education, as well as how ECEC is monitored. At policy level, the way ECEC is organised – whether ECEC is aligned as is the case in England, or even integrated with primary school – influences its pedagogy. Preschool settings in primary schools usually have a more classically pedagogical approach (e.g. France). A number of curricular aspects influence pedagogy: firstly, how prescriptive the curriculum is. England revised its rather prescriptive curriculum so staff could better adapt the document to the needs of the individual child. France, by contrast, still uses a rather descriptive and prescriptive curriculum. Secondly, pedagogy is influenced by whether curricula are integrated and/or aligned with primary school. England has a curriculum for ECEC, as do most other OECD countries, although this has been brought more in line with the school curriculum. France's preschool and school curriculum are fully aligned. New Zealand refers to how the learning areas in ECEC can be used to help the transition between ECEC and elementary school, although it does so from an ECEC perspective. Lastly, whether ECEC settings are obliged to implement the national (or regional) curriculum has an influence on pedagogy. In several countries, including England and France, all ECEC settings have to follow the national framework. In others, it functions as a guiding document.

The minimum regulatory standards for quality affect not only pedagogy, but also a staff's ability to implement pedagogical practices. A higher number of children per staff member means less individual attention and fewer opportunities for high-quality one-on-one interactions. For the youngest children in ECEC, up until the age of 3, England and Finland have the most advantageous regulated ratios in place. England's staff-child ratio for older children in ECEC is below that of the OECD average, but higher than that of New Zealand, for example. Staff knowledge and skills about pedagogy and the curriculum are formed in their initial education and training. Since this is where the basis of their pedagogical knowledge is developed, their qualifications thus influence pedagogy. In England, teaching qualifications for early education have been very much aligned with school teaching qualifications, which may result in implementation of ECEC pedagogies that more closely resemble school. Lastly, monitoring and quality assurance systems particularly influence pedagogy if consequences are attached to monitoring results. England is one of the few countries that monitor process quality and observe staff practices. Such results provide insights into whether a curriculum is well implemented, and also on staff pedagogy and appropriate practices

ECEC organisation of settings

How the provision of ECEC is organised can greatly influence pedagogy. Such factors include whether settings serve all children in the ECEC age range, or are split between different age groups, and the type of ECEC provided (care, after-school care, early education, playgroups), all of which influences the pedagogy of ECEC staff. This is usually also reflected in the curriculum, as well in separate curricula for different age groups and/or settings, if a split system is in place. The organisation of ECEC at national level and the different types of settings were explained in Chapter 4. This section will focus more on whether ECEC is aligned, or even integrated, with primary school. This also influences pedagogy, since preschool settings in primary schools can have a pedagogical approach that more closely resembles school, meaning that the pedagogy in these countries is focused on academic education rather than playing and simple childcare.

In sum, France is the only one of the case-study countries where early years pedagogy is explicitly aligned with the formal school system, though this applies only to the education sector of the French ECEC system. The close alignment between the two settings has been criticised because it is argued that it discourages appropriate pedagogical practice in the preschool setting and encourages practices used in primary schools. One advantage, however, is that teachers and administrators meet regularly to discuss children's learning and development. This helps to identify difficulties and smoothes the children's transition from the *école maternelle* to the primary school. In other countries, including England and Japan, ECEC and primary education are aligned with each other, whereas in Denmark, Germany and New Zealand, a strict division is made between ECEC and primary schooling. However, measures in these countries have eased the transition from ECEC to elementary education by interposing a transition year, or implicitly linking certain aspects of the curriculum framework with primary education.

England

In England, early years education is becoming increasingly aligned with formal school settings. This is not only in view of the Early Years Professional Programme (EYPP) and Early Years Teachers Programme (EYTP), but also through changes in the early years curriculum. In 2012, the EYFS reshaped its learning areas and goals in accordance, where possible, with the baseline for the national curriculum (DfE, 2012). These changes have been preserved in the newest version of EYFS (2014), which directly specifies 17 early learning goals in its seven learning areas. How far these goals have been met is assessed in the EYFS profile of each child. Early years practitioners are asked to indicate whether or not the child is meeting the expected levels of development, and to describe the child's abilities in relation to the three prime learning areas. The profile is then given to the child's Year 1 teacher, to allow activities to be tailored to the child's needs in a formal school environment.

Denmark

In Denmark, ECEC settings and primary school are differentiated both in their pedagogical and educational approach and expectations. The legislation promotes child well-being in both institutions. Day-care facilities are encouraged by the Day-Care Facilities Act (MFCA, 2007) to help ease the transition from day care to primary school by nurturing children's basic competences and general motivation for learning. As a result, ECEC for children from birth to 6 years focuses on holistic child development, rather than using ECEC as a means to merely prepare children for primary school and stimulate cognitive development only. Denmark aims at providing children with early development opportunities through play, addressing holistic development subjects that are cognitive and socio-emotional, and stimulate well-being. Denmark implements different measures to ensure that children transition well between ECEC and primary education. Since 2008, a previously optional year of preschool class (at International Standard of Classification of

Education, or ISCED, Level 0) has been compulsory for Danish children aged 6, to ease this transition. Teaching at this level is based on play and helps children gain some insight into the daily routines of school life. In 2013, the Danish Evaluation Institute also developed a dialogue tool, "Working Together for a Good Start in School", designed to encourage discussion between educators in day care and after-school centres, preschool class managers and first-grade teachers from local institutions, about the transition from ECEC to primary school, and to promote a smoother transition between them (EVA, 2013).

France

The Law of Education 1989 put both *écoles maternelles* (preschools) and elementary school under the umbrella of primary school, specifying that an educational institution should include them both (Rayna, 2007), although, according to a law which was revised in 2013, *école maternelle* should be regarded as a specific (separate) cycle of education. Because preschool in France is regarded as a separate cycle, a separate part, from primary schooling since 2013, this opens a route to a more differentiated pedagogy. As a result, a revised curriculum for the *école maternelle* as a separate cycle form primary education will be introduced in autumn 2015: '*L'école maternelle* : un cycle unique, fondamental pour la réussite de tous'. While the current preschool curriculum led to little differentiation in appropriate pedagogy between preschool and primary school, the new curriculum (in line with the 2013 law) is expected to put more emphasis on the differentiated character of preschool and focus more on play-based learning. The *écoles maternelles* and elementary schools in France are based on the same principles, and have the same opening hours and administration; they are located in the same building or in buildings adjacent to each other. The curricula of the two institutions are linked, although they are separate documents (Francis, 2007; OECD 2006). Teachers in an *école maternelle* and primary school share the same qualifications (Francis, 2007; OECD 2006). Teachers and administrators from the two institutions also meet regularly to discuss children's learning and identify difficulties, to smooth the transition from one stage to another (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2014a). The close alignment between the two institutions is considered, to have led to less differentiation in appropriate pedagogy between preschool and primary school (OECD, 2006), although the revised curriculum that will be implemented in autumn 2015 makes a clearer distinction between preschool and primary school.

Germany

In Germany, early childhood education and its pedagogical approach is not explicitly aligned with schooling, even though curricula may cover different levels of education. Each framework has a separate section or curriculum for ECEC specifically. A key difference between ECEC settings and primary school are the different qualifications and training of the staff. However, because the transition between the two different settings is an important topic of public, scientific and political debate in Germany (Anders, 2015), ECEC settings are encouraged to develop collaborative relationships with primary schools.

The ECEC curricular frameworks in all federal states of Germany define preparation for school enrolment as a learning area or educational goal. Furthermore, preschool centres are asked to build collaborative relationships with primary schools in the neighbourhood, for example by visiting and making use of primary school libraries, and simultaneously acquainting the children with the primary school environment. Some states have tried to achieve better alignment and continuity of the learning process by implementing a curriculum covering a broader age range. Brandenburg's curriculum covers birth to 10 years, for example, and Saxonia-Anhalt's from birth to 15 years. However, for school-aged children, these curricula refer only to child and youth welfare institutions (e.g. after-school services) and not to primary schools, since they have separate curricula.

Japan

The Course of Study for Kindergarten and the Course of Study for Elementary Schools are both based on the Basic Act on Education, and designed systematically and with continuity. It has been argued that the Course of Study for Kindergarten should include and improve awareness of the transition to elementary school (Anders, 2015). It stipulates that consideration be given to the fact that kindergarten education helps to develop a foundation for life and learning *in* and *after* elementary school. Furthermore, it states that consideration should be given to developing positive co-operation with elementary schools. This would include exchanges between day-care centre children and elementary school children and between teachers. It would also entail sharing information and promoting mutual understanding in preparation for elementary school, as well as developing effective childcare techniques, all based on the continuity of daily lives and development of children. This suggests that Japan is creating more alignment between ECEC and formal settings.

New Zealand

New Zealand's ECEC and formal primary education schools are independent settings but are aligned in terms of key competences and development strands as set out in the curricula. The key competences described in *Te Whāriki* refer to how these link to competences expected in primary school. However, the ECEC curriculum is a stand-alone document that is not integrated with primary education, although the *Te Whāriki* curriculum explicitly strives to "provide a smooth transition to school" (New Zealand Ministry of Education 1996, pp. 26).

Curriculum, frameworks and learning standards

The curriculum, curriculum framework or learning standards a country or jurisdiction has in place sets out what children are expected to learn in ECEC and which developmental areas staff are expected to contribute to. These documents can set out the objectives and views of ECEC, the learning subjects/areas for ECEC (divided into age or development groups, or not), and also include recommended or examples of pedagogical approaches or practices to provide guidance for staff. Guidance can also be provided in separate documents. Most OECD jurisdictions have at least one curriculum in place for ECEC settings (see Figure 8.1). In just less than half of these countries, all ECEC settings (public or private) are legally obliged to use the principal curriculum or curricula (OECD, 2014a; 2014b). For most of the remaining countries, the principal curriculum applies in all public ECEC settings, as well as private settings receiving public funding. Only Chile, Finland, Mexico, and the Slovak Republic declare they will not legally impose the curriculum in any setting.

A number of aspects regarding curricula influences pedagogy. First, how descriptive a curriculum is can influence pedagogy. The principal curriculum in almost all OECD member countries can be adapted to cater to the needs of the settings or children. Nordic curricula provide little detail, and implementation mostly relies on staff knowledge and skills, leaving considerable leeway for interpretation and choice of pedagogy. In other countries, such as Luxembourg, curricula are very prescriptive, leaving little flexibility to staff on how to implement the curriculum. In England, the EYFS was found to be too prescriptive and has been adapted to leave more room for interpretation and implementation for staff. As far as flexibility for staff is concerned, England's curriculum falls at the midpoint. While learning areas are prescribed, practitioners now have much more room for discretion. However, while England's curriculum is more detailed than that of Denmark and other Nordic curricula, and is comparable to the framework in New Zealand, it is far less prescriptive than the French curriculum framework.

Second, whether curricula are integrated and/or aligned for different age groups influences pedagogy. Where separate curricula exist for different age groups in ECEC (Japan), different

pedagogical approaches are implemented. In countries with an integrated curriculum (England, Denmark, New Zealand and several German states), pedagogy is better aligned, which can contribute to a smoother transition from one age group to another. In addition, alignment with primary schooling (as is the case with the French preschool and primary school curriculum) can further smooth transition but also results in pedagogy that is more focused on school readiness and aligned with primary school pedagogy.

Lastly, whether ECEC settings are obliged to implement the national (or regional) curriculum can also influence pedagogy. In several countries, including Portugal, Luxembourg and France, the curriculum was not obligatory in day-care settings, for example, but is for preschool education. Providers that are free to choose their curriculum also have more freedom and flexibility regarding the pedagogy implemented, as opposed to countries where the curriculum is a mandatory document, since pedagogy is often based or relies (partly) on the curriculum – which is the case in England and for France's preschools. However, this also largely depends on how descriptive the curriculum is, as noted above.

Figure 8.1. Curriculum frameworks in place for ECEC

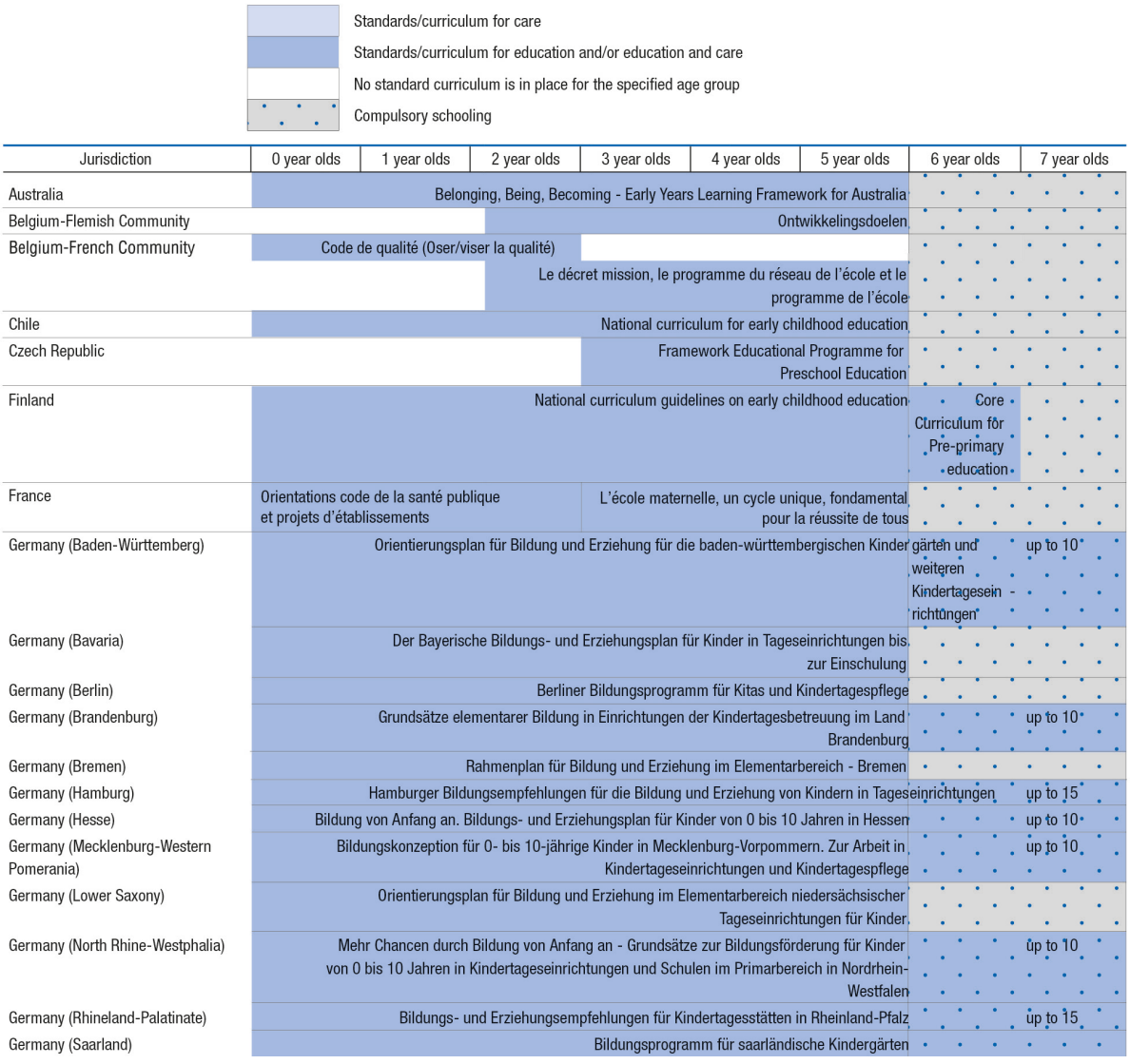
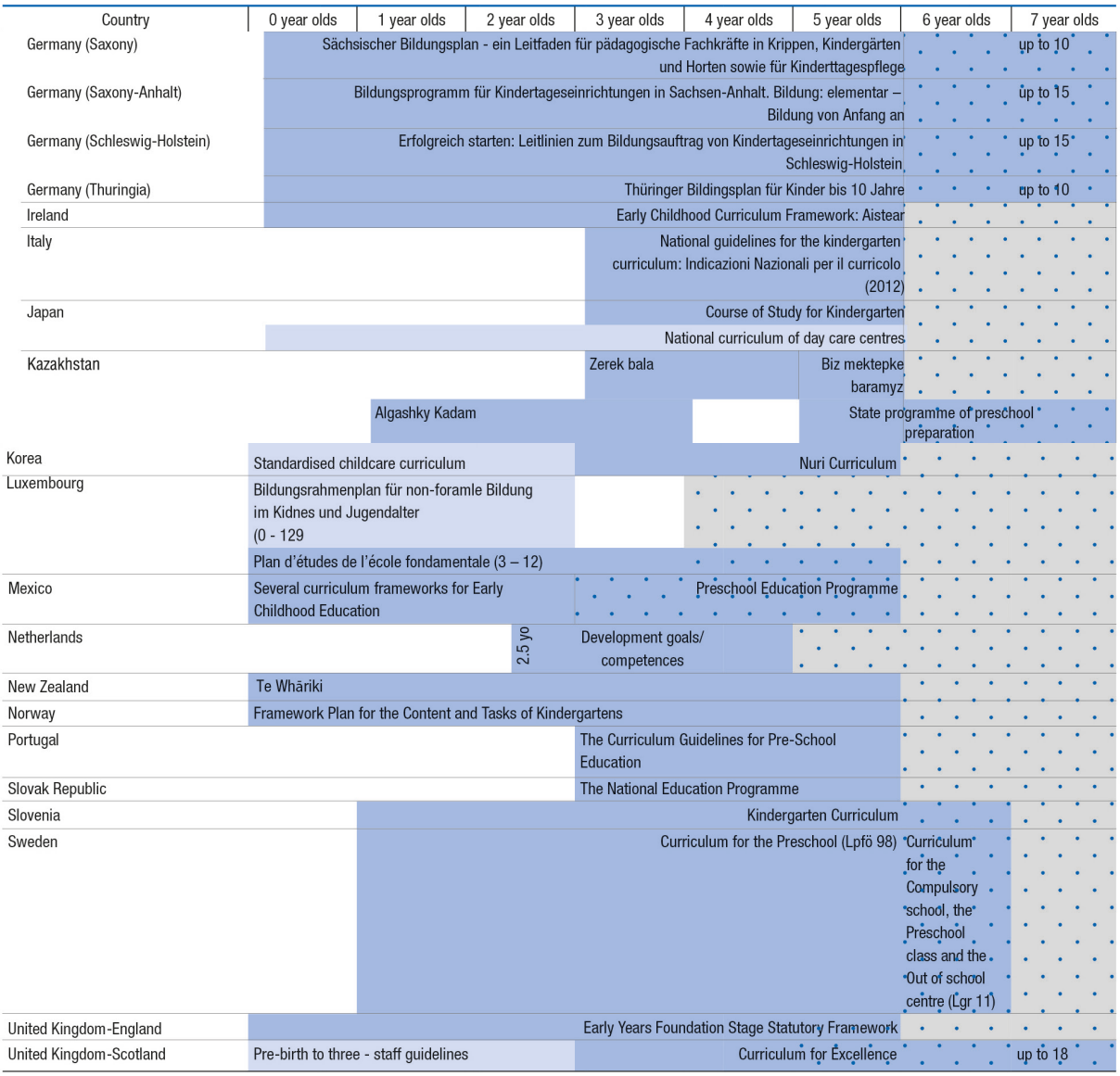


Figure 8.1. Curriculum frameworks in place for ECEC (continued)



Note: Information for Denmark is missing since Denmark did not participate in the monitoring quality survey of the OECD.

Source: OECD (2014), combined country responses to the online survey on monitoring quality in early learning and development, OECD, Paris.

England

In England the "Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage" (EYFS) represents the national curriculum, a mandatory framework for ECEC in England for children between birth and compulsory schooling age. The Department of Education is responsible for the development and implementation of the EYFS. The EYFS took effect in 2008, after the consolidation of previous frameworks. The newest and latest version took effect as of 1 September 2014, and has become less prescriptive than previous versions, leaving more flexibility for staff in implementation and interpretation. As a result, staff are better able to adapt it to the setting's or to the children's needs. The main principles of the existing EYFS have been retained

throughout its revisions but have been made more succinctly, while the partnerships between parents and professionals have been strengthened and assessments of children's development simplified. The EYFS reshaped its learning areas and goals in accordance, where possible, with the baseline for the national curriculum, aligning it more closely with primary education. This puts settings under more pressure to collaborate with schools to ease the transition (DfE, 2012).

EYFS has seven learning domains, under three overarching ones: communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. It also designates four specific areas: literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design (DfE, 2014). Goals are defined in each area, and children are assessed on these goals at age 2 and before making the transition to primary school, resulting in an individual EYFS profile for every child, which is passed onto the parents and primary school teachers (DfE, 2014). In addition to EYFS, there are non-statutory guidelines for practitioners and inspectors, titled "Development Matters" and "Early Years Outcomes". These are intended to help professionals implement the EYFS statutory guidelines and inform them about child development and developmental outcomes through the early years.

France

France's *écoles maternelles* also have a competency-based curriculum, which stems from 2008. It lists five areas in which children are supposed to gain competence before transitioning to school: developing oral language and an introduction to writing; learning how to work together; acting and expressing emotions and thoughts with one's body; discovering the world; and imagining, feeling, and creating (OECD, 2004; Cochran, 2011). In the autumn of 2015, a new curriculum for preschools will be introduced focusing on language development; physical development; artistic development; critical thinking; and exploring the world. This new curriculum will have a stronger focus on the importance of play and learning through play then its 2008 version. The French preschool curriculum is more prescriptive than the curriculum in its comparative countries, and all preschools use the same framework in their pedagogical approach although what pedagogical activities are conducted, can be chosen by the staff. The French preschool curriculum is also closely aligned to the separate curriculum for primary schools.

There is a guidebook for assessment of children in the last year of preschool which covers areas of language, mathematics, and social and civic competences (Department of Education, 2010). Teachers are not required to conduct the assessment according to the guidebook, but they are required to produce an "acquisition report" for each child, which has to be shared with the parents of the child and can be used to smoothen the transition from preschool to primary school (Eurydice, 2014). The report usually includes information on how the child has developed and the most relevant information for the primary school to take into account regarding that child's particular development. Assessments can be included in the acquisition report as well. What is specifically included in the report differs between settings as the staff of preschools discuss and decide about the content of their preschool's report.

The care sector does not have a national curriculum, but a regulation from 2000 emphasises the responsibilities of institutions to promote children's well-being and development (Rayna, 2007; Vitali, 2007). Each institution must develop an educational plan setting out the objectives and resources that will be used to ensure care, development, early learning, well-being; stimulate individualised relationships and meet the psychological, physiological and emotional needs of children (Vitali, 2007). The plan must include a "pedagogical project" outlining daily activities to promote these goals, and a "social project" situating the facility in the local social and economic context (Vitali, 2007).

New Zealand

In New Zealand, the early years curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, is set at the national level and expected to be followed in all ECEC settings. However, it leaves teachers to weave their own *Whāriki* (mat) i.e. adapt it to the children's needs (Alvestad et al., 2009). This is in line with the expectations of the English framework. Both frameworks also emphasise collaboration with parents. The New Zealand curriculum is written in two languages, English and Māori, whose messages complement one another. It provides general instructions and also specific instructions for distinctive contexts, including the Māori immersion and Pasefika programmes, which are targeted to specific cultural groups with the goal of cultural preservation.

The curriculum is based on four principles: empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships with people, places and things. From the four principles, five strands are developed, each with distinctive goals that guide the framework of the curriculum. These are well-being, belonging, contribution, communication and exploration (Ministry of Education, 1996). Each ECEC service is required to develop its own programme following the framework of the national curriculum framework. How the curriculum is implemented depends on teachers, parents and *whānau*, the extended family, which in Māori culture is considered to play a crucial role in a child's life (Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, 2007). Assessment of how well the programmes implement the curriculum is also left to the services themselves. Thus, less emphasis is placed on the development of school readiness and an explicit alignment with primary school than in England or France.

Germany

Germany, a federal state, has a decentralised system. Three levels of policy can be distinguished: federal (national), *Länder* (federal states) and municipal. Between 2003 and 2007, official curricular guidelines were introduced in, and for, all 16 federal states of Germany. These promoted in particular the cognitive and (pre-)academic skills of children in preschools, whereas before the official guidelines were revised and introduced, they followed a socio-pedagogic tradition and stronger emphasis was placed on socio-emotional skills. These guidelines are meant to be further elaborated and adapted for the individual curricular frameworks of the federal states, but in reality only Bavaria, Berlin, Saxony and Thuringia have achieved this. In these *Länder*, ECEC centres are obliged by law to include the main aims, principles and areas of learning in their own centre-specific programmes. Other *Länder* have greater flexibility on pedagogical approaches and practices.

Denmark

Denmark sets a broad general curriculum at the national level, but otherwise, decisions on the pedagogical framework or quality monitoring, are the responsibility of the municipalities and ECEC settings. In Denmark, the Day Care Act defines the core areas of learning and development, and settings are obliged to teach these. Since 2004, each day-care facility and all childminders in Denmark must offer separate educational curricula for age groups from birth to 3 years and 3 years to school age. The curricula need to address six topics: comprehensive personal development of the child, social competences, language, body and motion, nature and natural phenomena, and cultural expressions and values (PLA Copenhagen, 2013). However, it is up to each individual centre to decide on the exact goals and how these are implemented. In comparison to the other countries, Denmark's framework provides the greatest flexibility and is least aligned with primary education.

Japan

In Japan, all kindergartens and nurseries are required to organise their daily routine according to the Course of Study for Kindergartens, focusing on five areas: health (physical and mental),

human relationships, environment, language and expression (feelings) (MEXT, 2008). Day nurseries have separate Guidelines for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries, listing seven topics to be addressed in the curriculum development: general provisions, child development, nursery education content, planning and evaluating care, health and safety, supporting parents and staff training (OECD, 2012). In ECEC centres, both the guidelines and the Course of Study are to be followed. Both are flexible in implementation and emphasise providing an appropriate environment and support for children – as is the case in England. The focus is on play and creating a co-operative atmosphere between the teacher and the children, as well as with parents and the community, somewhat like the frameworks in England and New Zealand (RCCADE, 2011).

Staff qualifications, education and training

Among the effects of structural quality, which, as noted, has an important influence on pedagogy, is staff qualification. It is assumed that ECEC practitioners need a number of professional competences and skills to offer high-quality learning opportunities for young children. Theoretical frameworks describing practitioners' professional competences prioritise different dimensions, but generally include: professional knowledge, pedagogical beliefs and orientations, emotional attitudes as well as motivational aspects (cf. Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). It is important to emphasise that specialised professional knowledge of ECEC is necessary, given the significant differences between this stage and future stages of education. Children in ECEC have different knowledge representations, and much of their learning takes place in play. A demanding set of professional competences is required to perform adequately in ECEC, and the assumption is that an adequate formal qualification is required (Kelley and Camilli, 2007; Whitebook, 2003).

Staff acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills in the curriculum through their initial education and training. Professional development programmes can enhance and update these skills, but they are often short-term and less rigorous. It is nevertheless important to keep staff abreast of the latest developments. In most OECD countries, ECEC staff in preschool settings are trained at ISCED Level 5, including England (Germany being an exception, requiring ISCED Level 4) and support staff are usually trained at ISCED Level 3. In Germany, France and Denmark, childcare practitioners have a vocational training at ISCED Level 4. Childminding staff often have fewer qualifications. Research suggests that it is not qualification level *per se* that most influences child development and pedagogy, but the staff's capacity to provide a stimulating environment. However, better-qualified staff were found to be more capable of providing such environments and experiences, indicating that higher levels of education for ECEC staff prepare staff better to provide quality pedagogical environments (OECD, 2012).

England

In group care facilities in England, 50% of the caregivers in charge of children under 3 years of age are required to have a relevant ISCED Level 2 qualification, while at least one practitioner must have a qualification at Level 3. For children under 2, at least half of the staff has to have relevant training and experience in caring for infants (DfE, 2014). For children over 3, at least one practitioner has to have a Level 5 qualification, corresponding to the "Early Years Professional Status", and another staff member a Level 3 qualification (DfE, 2014). On-the-job training is mandatory for all ECEC professionals. In particular, for children over 3, initial education is at a high level (as is in most other OECD countries), since one practitioner per group needs an ISCED Level 5 qualification. Qualifications for working with younger children are less demanding, a trend also observed in other OECD countries (OECD, 2012).

In England, EYFS principles are also those required of qualifying early years professionals. Considerable effort has been made to increase the education and training, as well as knowledge

and skills, of ECEC practitioners. The Early Years Professional Programme (EYPP) was introduced in 2007 to raise qualification standards of ECEC settings in England. The aim was to require at least one professional with the status of Early Years Professional in all early years children's centres in England by 2010. This status is broadly equivalent to a qualified teacher status. Following up on the EYPP, the Early Years Teacher Programmes (EYTP) was introduced in 2013. Trainees in this programme are trained as specialists in early childhood development and to work with children starting from birth. These initiatives are intended to match the teaching standards for Early Years Professionals with those of classroom teachers. Moreover, the government is aiming to place more school teachers in preschool settings. The recent strategy to align qualifications of early years teachers and school teachers, and to place school teachers in early years settings, may lead to greater pedagogical alignment of preschool and school settings. It is not yet known, however, whether this is the case. However, since young children develop differently from older children, pedagogies should take this into account.

Denmark

In Denmark, about 60% of staff in day-care facilities are pedagogues with a professional bachelor degree in social education (ISCED Level 5B). Pedagogical assistants have no formal education requirement, but secondary-level vocational training (ISCED Level 4) is offered for 18 months. All day-care facilities, except childminders, have a manager and deputy manager, both of whom are typically qualified social educators. All pedagogues have completed the study programme for social educator,, which has a duration of three and a half years. The programme involves a number of theoretical modules, including a number of culture-related and activity-based subjects, as well as practical experience. Some assistants have no formal qualifications, but are often young people typically aged 18 to 25 years old, who wish to work before enrolling in a programme like child and youth education (OECD, 2001; 2012). The training programmes for early years focus on general pedagogy, which includes playing, learning and socialising based on a child-centred perspective of day care (Petersen, 2011 in Kornbeck, 2014, p.167). Since education for day-care staff and primary school teachers are independent, and those for day care focus on early childhood development, pedagogies in day care and primary school remain separate and differ from one another.

Germany

In Germany, the vast majority of preschool teachers (educators) have completed a three-year post-secondary vocational training programme (ISCED Level 4). Since 2003, a growing number of higher education degree-level courses in early childhood pedagogy have become available. Currently, the proportion of the workforce with a college or university degree is still under 5% (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013).

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK, 2010) proposes shared principles of early childhood education, as indicated in the training curriculum of vocational schools. These shared principles promote co-constructive, child-centred and play-based pedagogical approaches. Primary school teachers in comparison are trained at university level (ISCED Level 5), resulting in different pedagogical approaches. Hence, pedagogy in preschool and primary schools is not aligned.

France

In France, the division between care and education is also reflected in teacher qualifications. In the care sector, staff are typically trained as paediatric nurses, nursing assistants, early childhood educators, paediatricians or psychologists at ISCED Level 7. The qualification profiles reflect the orientation of the care sector towards promoting the health and well-being of children (Rayna, 2004). Teachers in an *école maternelle* require a five-year university training at ISCED

Level 7. The study programme qualifies them to work both in an *école maternelle* and in elementary school, and as a consequence, teachers share the same pedagogical training experiences, pedagogical beliefs and approaches. Teacher training does not specifically train teachers to work with very young children. It is therefore debated whether the teachers in an *école maternelle* have the ability to offer age-appropriate learning opportunities (Cochran, 2011; Rayna, 2004). For the position of educator assistant in a French *école maternelle,* an ISCED Level 4 certificate in Early Childhood Studies is specifically required. Such staff thus have knowledge on early child development specifically (Naumann et al., 2013). Concerns have been raised as the teachers in *école maternelle* are not specifically trained for working with very young children. As a result, a qualification for 'nursery school specialist' is being created. This is an additional training programme for 'maîtres-formateurs' and they are required to take an exam, the CAFIPEMF ('certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions d'instituteur, professeur d'école, maître-formateur') during which they have to demonstrate their teaching and instruction skills. Next, they are in charge of training new teachers working with very young children in preschools to provide them with more development- and age- appropriate skills to work in preschools.

Japan

In ECEC centres in Japan, employees in charge of zero to 2-year-olds must have a nursery teacher qualification at ISCED Level 5, and those in charge of 3- to 5 year-olds need both a kindergarten teacher licence as well as a nursery teacher qualification (ISCED Level 5), although they are permitted to work with only one of them (Numano, 2010). The qualifications can be obtained on three different levels: as a Junior College Associate Degree, a bachelor's or a master's degree (all ISCED Level 5). Employees with different levels of qualification are, however, treated similarly in terms of payment and work requirements (ibid.). To promote co-operation between the facilities, most of the college credits are aligned, and teachers are encouraged to obtain both qualifications, which about 80% of them do (OECD, 2012). In private institutions, the qualification requirements are somewhat more lenient than in public ones, so there is more variety in degrees of staff training (RCCADE, 2011). Teacher training schools, including universities, junior colleges and vocational schools, besides providing teaching skills, also focus on developing practical pedagogical methodologies to be used in ECEC settings (RCCADE, 2011). This practice of qualifying staff helps to ensure that teachers working with young children under the age of 3 years old are trained in pedagogy and pedagogical practices suitable for ISCED Levels 0.1 and 0.2.

Minimum regulatory standards

The minimum standards for quality can affect staff's ability to implement pedagogical practices and therefore pedagogy (Pianta et al., 2009). Staff-child ratios can impact staff performance and process quality and therefore child development (Huntsman, 2008; Love et al., 2003; Sylva et al., 2004). In general, low staff-child ratios are of particular importance in groups for younger children (NICHD, 1996; Sylva et al., 2004). The fewer the number of children a practitioner is responsible for, the better the conditions for child-centred and individualised interaction although other aspects of quality such as staff education, qualifications, training, and teaching and pedagogical skills, influence pedagogy and process quality as well (Clarke-Stewart et al., 1994; NICHD, 1996; ; Rao et al., 2003; de Schipper et al., 2006).The number of children per practitioner is usually lower for younger children, because they need more care and attention and are less independent (OECD, 2012). This is reflected in the regulations for staff-child ratios. On average, in OECD countries, 1 practitioner is assigned to 18 children aged 3 years and older, and 1 to 7 children for children younger than 3 (OECD, 2012)

England has a lower-than-average ratio in place for children 3 years and older (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2), while Japan and France have a higher number of children per staff member for older

children (3 years and above). In the case of younger children, both countries score around the average. Regulations differ in Germany between *Länder*, with the most unfavourable ratios for young children under 3 in Thuringia and in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania for children in preschool, while the best ratios are observed in North Rhine-Westphalia for both age groups. New Zealand has the same ratio regulations in place for both age groups. Data for Denmark is not available, but Finland has better-than-average ratios (Finland) and Norway similar to or above the OECD average.

England

For those working with children of 2, a statutory ratio of 1:4 is applied in England. For younger children (under the age of 2), a regulated ratio of 1:3 is applied. As a result, England, with Finland, has the most advantageous mandated ratio for the youngest children in ECEC. The mandated ratio for children aged 3 to 6 in England stands at 13 children per staff member when there is a qualified teacher or early years practitioner at ISCED Level 6 working in the group. This is better than the OECD average (see Figure 8.3) but higher than in Finland (1:7), New Zealand (1:8) and many German *Länder,* including Berlin (1:11) and North Rhine-Westphalia (1:8). However, England's regulated ratio decreases to eight children per practitioner when there is no qualified teacher or early years professional with a Level 6 qualification working directly with the children. Norway (1:18), France (1:26) and Japan (1:35) all have ratio regulations that are on the high side. Since ECEC groups are becoming more diverse in OECD countries, with many immigrants with different language backgrounds and/or children with low socio-economic backgrounds in England, unfavourable staff-child ratios can hold back their development. More favourable ratios give staff more opportunities for individual and development-appropriate pedagogy. However, staff education and training is important here, since changing ratios can be costly and financially unviable. It is important that staff be well prepared to work with young children from different backgrounds, particularly if they are responsible for large groups of children.

France

In care settings (for children under the age of 3), France applies a regulated ratio similar to the OECD average of 1:7. However, for children in preschool, the ratio is among the highest in the OECD, with 26 children per teacher. This reflects the "schoolification" of preschool in France, with large group sizes and unfavourable staff-child ratios. Only Japanese teachers and instructors are responsible for an even higher number of children in kindergarten (1:35). As a result, the pedagogy is adapted to larger group settings – with more academic and teacher-initiated pedagogical approach and practices.

Germany

Because of the federal system of ECEC in Germany, each *Land* has different regulations for the maximum number of children per ECEC professional. For staff working with young children under 3, North Rhine-Westphalia has the most favourable ratio, of 1:4 children, followed by Baden-Württemberg and Hesse with a ratio of 1:5. Thuringia has the most unfavourable ratio for young children, with 1:8, just above the OECD average. For older children, again North Rhine-Westphalia has a low ratio (1:8), similar to New Zealand's and better than the ratios in the other case-study countries, including England. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has a ratio of 1:17, below the OECD average of 1:18 but higher than in England's. Pedagogies in the different *Länder* are likely to differ in the time spent per child, as well as the differentiation in practices.

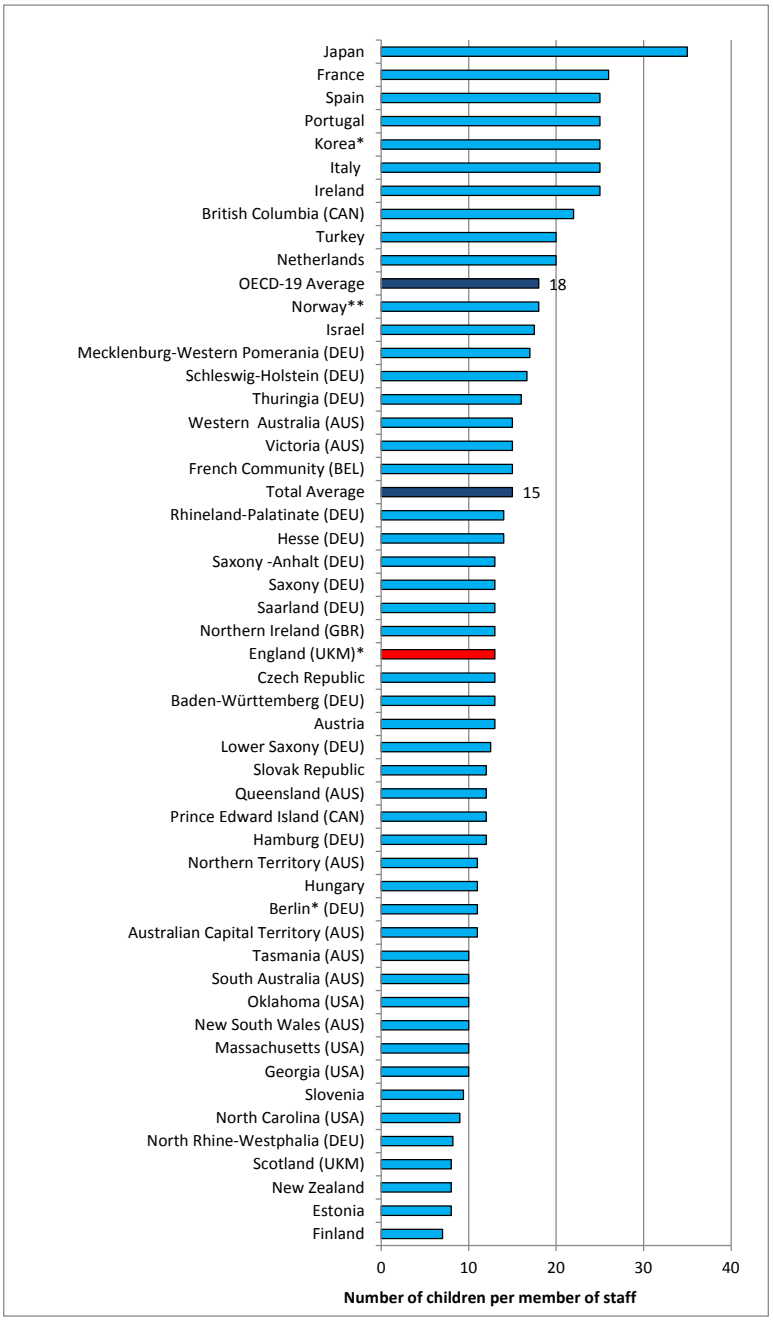
Japan

With a regulated ratio of 1:6 for childcare settings catering to children under the age of 3, Japan has a favourable (and better than the OECD average) ratio in place. This ratio is better than in New Zealand and France. But regulations regarding staff-child ratios for kindergarten teachers are far less favourable. Japan has the highest ratio for this age group, with 35 children per kindergarten teacher. However, as research indicates (Huntsman, 2008; NICHDF, 2006; Sylva et al., 2004), other aspects, such as staff education and training, impact process quality too. Kindergarten teachers in Japan are highly qualified with a university degree and receive continuous training, which can positively affect process quality even when groups are large or when a teacher is responsible for a high number of children.

New Zealand

New Zealand has the same regulated staff-child ratio in place for the whole ECEC age range (1:8). For children below the age of 3, this is just above the OECD average, but for older children, this ratio is more favourable than in many other OECD countries, including England. Since ratios are relatively high for the youngest age group in ECEC, pedagogies and practices may be based less on children's individual needs and are likely to be more generalised than in Japan or Finland, for example.

Figure 8.2 Regulated staff-child ratios from 3 years old to compulsory schooling age, by country

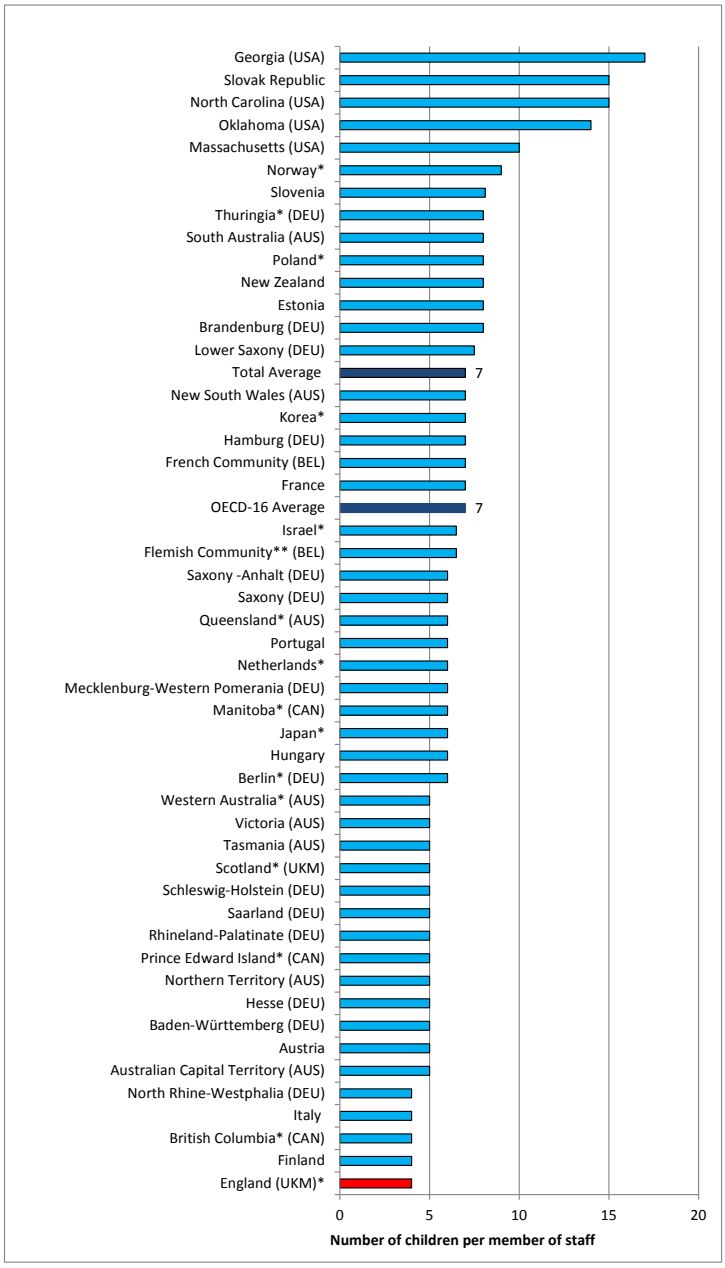


Notes: * Jurisdictions with separate regulations for staff-child ratio for different age groups, the data given is based on: 3-6-year-olds attending for 5-7 hours per day in Berlin and 4-year-olds in Korea. In England (UKM), a regulated staff-child ratio of 1:13 is maintained when a qualified teacher or early years practitioner at Level 6 is working in the group. This ratio changes to 1:8 when there is no qualified teacher or early years practitioner at Level 6 working in the group.

** The figure for Norway applies only to qualified kindergarten teachers, whereas regulations stipulate that if other staff are also present in the kindergarten setting, the number of children per member of staff is effectively lower. The figure for Norway is based on regulation for 3-6-year-olds.

Source: OECD (2012), Starting Strong III, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Figure 8.3 Regulated staff-child ratios for infants to-3-year-olds, by country



Notes: * Jurisdictions with separate regulations for different age groups, the data given is based on: England (UKM) for 2-year-olds. The regulated staff-child ratio for children under the age of 2 is 1:3; Berlin (DEU), 2-3-year-olds (attending 5-7 hours per day); British Columbia (CAN), 0-3-year-olds; Israel, 2-3-year-olds; Japan, 1-2-year-olds (while the country has different ratios in place for different ages: the ratio for age 0 is 1:3; age 1-2, 1:6; age 3, 1:20; and age 4, 1:30 – only data regarding 1-2-year-olds is included in the figure); Korea, 2-year-olds; Manitoba (CAN), 2-3-year-olds; Netherlands, 2-3-year-olds; Norway, 0-3-year-olds; Prince Edward Island (CAN), 2-3-year-olds; Queensland (AUS) 2-3-year-olds; Scotland (UKM), 2-3-year-olds; Thuringia (DEU), 2-3-year-olds; Western Australia (AUS), 2-3-year-olds. For Poland, if there is a disabled child in the playroom, the ratio is set at 1:5.

**Subsidised facilities only

Source: OECD (2012), Starting Strong III, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Monitoring and quality assurance

Monitoring and quality assurance systems influence pedagogy, in particular when consequences are attached to monitoring results. Monitoring results provide insights into whether a curriculum is well implemented, the staff's knowledge of subjects, staff practices, and even child development and outcomes (if these are monitored). As a result, monitoring can contribute to strengthening staff's pedagogical skills and knowledge (i.e. monitoring can point to staff learning needs), and through this, affect quality and children's development. Staff who are well prepared and more knowledgeable about pedagogy and curriculum are better able to provide stimulating environments for children and of addressing children's needs. How quality and pedagogy is monitored is described in Chapter 7. This section will only briefly address how countries' monitoring practices may possibly relate to pedagogy.

External evaluations are held in England, New Zealand, France and in the care sector of Japan's ECEC, while Germany, Denmark and the education sector in Japan rely mainly on internal evaluation. Monitoring pedagogy is not frequently conducted in OECD countries, either in England or in case-study countries. Staff self-evaluations take place in some countries, but these do not always have consequences attached to them regarding training requirements and therefore do not always affect pedagogy.

England

In England, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides directives for inspections carried out by Ofsted or inspectorates of independent schools. All registered ECEC services are obliged to follow the EYFS. The non-governmental Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) monitors ECEC providers (public provision, independent for-profit and non-profit provision and home-based childcare) to meet the statutory requirements on learning, assessment, qualifications, ratios and other criteria. Settings must be registered with Ofsted and inspected at least once every four years. Grades are awarded on a four-point scale ranging from outstanding (1) to inadequate (4) and published online, constituting the sole test of quality (Mathers, Singler and Karemaker, 2012). Starting in 2015, providers will be able to request and pay for an early re-inspection if they believe they have improved after a previous Ofsted judgement. Municipalities support the improvement of settings through a variety of training schemes. The Department for Education is responsible for policy and standards related to regulation and inspection of ECEC, ensuring that services are inclusive and quality assured (Lindeboom and Buiskool, 2013).

The EYFS also refers to pedagogy, and because of this, is also indirectly affected by the quality inspection system, since the settings are required to comply with the inspectorate's expectations on pedagogy. Providers do not have to work to a prescribed teaching, but the inspector judges the quality of the provision on its impact on children's learning, development and well-being. Ofsted assesses the quality of pedagogical practices by observing and tracking children, to evaluate the range of activities they take part in, whether solitary, self-initiated or adult-initiated. It also investigates how well adults build upon any learning that children demonstrate.

Denmark

In Denmark, all ECEC settings must be supervised under Section 5 of the Day Care Act. The local council supervises the activities of the ECEC facilities and the manner in which tasks are performed. This includes the quality of pedagogical practices. Section 8 of the Day Care Act refers to self-evaluations of ECEC settings, where the monitoring of ECEC facilities internally is conducted by the settings' managers in co-operation with the parent board. Monitoring and assessment must be conducted from a child-centred perspective and should consider the quality of the facility's physical, intellectual and aesthetic child environment (MFCA, 2007). It may

consider staff practices and pedagogy, but this is not required. Municipalities also provide additional quality assurance measures by providing educational and psychological forums/councils for social educators, who serve as a medium of communication between the political system and the ECEC settings. The objective is to promote best practice and ensure comparable standards for centres throughout the country (Jensen et al., 2010).

Germany

In Germany, ECEC settings focus on achieving structural quality standards (e.g. child/staff ratios, formal qualification level of preschool teachers). These are regulated by laws at the federal state level. As noted earlier, the curricular frameworks also refer to pedagogy, but their implementation is not monitored and no central inspection system exists. Most of the federal states rely on internal quality management and evaluation systems, which are carried out by the preschool centres and funding organisations. To date, only one federal state, Berlin, has implemented an obligatory external quality evaluation that also considers curriculum and pedagogy (Anders, 2015).

France

The national agency *Protection maternelle et infantile* (PMI) is in charge of inspecting childcare services in France. The focus is on structural quality, staff qualifications and parental involvement rather than pedagogical practices, as is the case for preschools. *Écoles maternelles* are supervised by the *Inspecteurs de l'Education Nationale* (IEN, or national education inspectors) and teachers are the focus of evaluation (Naumann et al., 2013). Regional education offices oversee the pedagogical practices of individual teachers through direct inspection, conducted at the beginning of their working career and repeated on average every four to five years (Rayna, 2007). Before an inspection, the teacher completes a preliminary questionnaire, which is followed by an inspector observation of about two hours. The teacher is then interviewed to analyse the practices, assess the professional quality of the teacher, and to give advice and talk about career prospects. This also provides an opportunity to identify where additional training may be required, including providing support for the teacher's professional practice, for example, by working with an academic advisor or observing teachers in other classes (peer learning). As a result, monitoring practices in French preschools highly influence pedagogical approaches and practices, because staff are assessed on this basis.

Japan

In Japan, monitoring is the responsibility of local governments, and practices vary across regions and municipalities. There is no general monitoring system, and although all public kindergartens are monitored, not all private ones are. Some Japanese settings use a supervising system to maintain and develop quality in public and private kindergartens. Supervisors, who are mostly kindergarten teachers themselves, observe pedagogical practice and provide guidance on how care and education should be carried out in the ECEC settings (RCCADE, 2011; OECD, 2014b). These facilities also conduct meetings and briefings where the entire staff observes and discusses practice of one of the teachers, sometimes using video recordings (ibid.). While this is a highly decentralised form of monitoring staff and process/pedagogical quality, if conducted regularly and implemented throughout the country, such internal systems can influence a staff's pedagogical practices.

New Zealand

New Zealand has a government department at the national level, the Education Review Office (ERO), that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services (ERO website, 2014). Early childhood services are reviewed on average once

every three years, although reviews are more frequent if the performance of a school or centre is poor and risks the education and safety of the children. They are, however, less frequent when a setting has a stable reporting history, demonstrates good self-review processes, and when settings make good use of its assessment information (i.e. monitoring results). The education reviews focus on learning and the ways in which the setting's policies, programmes, processes and practices contribute to children's engagement, progress and achievement. With this information, ERO gives recommendations on how to improve certain aspects of early childhood education,. These include the teaching practices, by referring to indicators of good practice provided by teachers' shared experiences, and by referring to academic studies provided principally by the University of Canterbury on the ERO website (ERO website and Education Review Office, 2013). As a result, pedagogical practices are influenced by the monitoring results. New Zealand is the only one of the case-study countries that indicated that practitioners use this research to improve pedagogical practice

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Chapter 9

Conclusion

This chapter brings together the overall findings of this research report and outlines the key findings on pedagogy in general, and for England in particular.

Key findings on pedagogy

The definitions of pedagogy and also of quality in pedagogy are not clearly outlined by any of the case-study countries. In the countries studied, quality in ECEC settings is generally an issue of concern, and each of them monitors quality in ECEC settings. However, what this means takes different forms and is perceived in different ways. England, Germany and New Zealand are the only countries to specifically monitor process quality. The research does not reveal which monitoring aspects most influence pedagogical approaches or how they do so.

Key pedagogical approaches and practices

Table 9.1 provides an overview of the key pedagogical approaches and practices in the case-study countries, the evidence they are based on, and which policies direct or affect them. All the case-study countries emphasise that pedagogical approaches and practices should reflect the individual learning and developmental needs of each child. However, due to the flexibility in implementing pedagogies in practice for settings and staff, countries are not aware which particular practices and approaches are most commonly implemented (OECD, 2014b; 2014c). In all the case-study countries, although pedagogical guidance is often provided in or alongside the national curriculum framework, the actual approach chosen is determined by ECEC providers. Hence, pedagogical practices can vary even within a country.

Table 9.1 shows that countries do not practice a single pedagogical approach, but employ a combination of different approaches based on the work of different theorists. Pedagogical approaches are not mutually exclusive and often have overlapping elements. Common approaches include the child-centred approach typical of not only England and Denmark, but also Germany, and the constructivist/interactive approach, practised in England, France and Germany. Other approaches, for example the "Theory of Three Activities" used in Japan, incorporate elements of another approach – in this case, a play-based approach.

Table 9.1 Key pedagogical approaches and practices in case-study countries

	Key Pedagogical Approaches	Main features	What evidence are pedagogical approaches and practices based on?	Which policies direct or affect pedagogical approaches?
UK	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.	Research Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY - 2002) Early Years Foundation Stage Review (2011)	The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Early Years National Curriculum Staff qualifications Monitoring and Quality Assurance: Ofsted inspections
	Teacher-directed	Teacher initiated, programmed learning approach.		
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning.		
	Play-based	Guided play opportunities are offered to children.		
	Sustained shared thinking	Two individuals work together in an intellectual way to perform activities such as solving a problem or clarifying a concept - both parties must contribute to the thinking and develop and extend it.		
	Scaffolding	Process in which the child is seen as a learner, rather than passive entity,and the adult acts respectfully, allowing the child to enter 'flow' a period of high concentrated play.		
Japan	Guiding Child Care Theory	Children learn best when they feel 'free' and are supported by the teacher in a sympathetic way.	Inspiration drawn from Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Developmentally Appropriate Practice.	Course of Study for Kindergartens/ Guidelines for Nursery Care at Day Nurseries Staff qualifications Monitoring and Quality Assurance: external and internal evaluations
	Theory of three activities in preschool (play-based)	1. Activities comprise of free play and guidance aimed at developing daily life skills. 2. Elements are extracted from child's play and re-constructed to be educational. 3. Directly teach linguistic, mathematical or artistic concepts and skills.		
France	Didactic Pedagogy/ Direct Instruction	Classic method of learning with mainly teacher-initiated activities including repetition.	The theories and ideas of Piaget, Vgotsky and Bruner. Recent research studies on for example effective literacy, numeracy and phonology practices	National Curriculum Staff qualifications Monitoring and Quality Assurance: National and local inspections Alignment with formal schooling
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning. Learning is organised so that it constantly builds on what has already been taught.		
Denmark	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.		Curriculum Staff qualifications Parent Board
	Socio-pedagogic	Emphasis on dialogue between adults and children, as well as creative activities with discussions and reflections.		

Table 9.1 Key pedagogical approaches and practices in case-study countries (continued)

	Key Pedagogical Approaches	Main features	What evidence are pedagogical approaches and practices based on?	Which policies direct or affect pedagogical approaches?
Germany	Situation-orientated	Emphasis on learning in social situations, mainly play-based.	Theoretical ideas from Friere, Robinson,Zimmer. Pedagogical approaches from Humbolt, Fröbel, Montessori, Piaget. Statistical evaluations and qualitiative research on effective practices, particularly language stimulation.	Curriculum Staff qualifications Parent Board
	Constructivist/Interactive Approach	Views learning as an active exchange between the child and environment that progresses in 'stages', with adults and peers providing important stimulus in learning. Learning is organised do that it constantly builds on what has already been taught.		
	Sustained shared thinking	Two individuals work together in an intellectual way to perform activities such as solving a problem or clarifying a concept - both parties must contribute to the thinking and develop and extend it.		
	Child-centred	Adults provide a stimulating yet open-ended environment for children to play within.		
New Zealand	Te Whāriki	Adopts a specific socio-cultural perspective that acknowledges the different culutral and social contexts in New Zealand. A social and interactive way of learning is highly important.	Te Ao Māori (the Maori culture) Pedagogical approaches and theories from Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Rogoff. Priorities for Children's Learning in Early Childhood Services: Good Practice	Curriculum Staff qualifications Monitoring and Quality Assurance: National inspections and internal self-review

Sources: Anders, Y. (2015), *Literature Review on Pedagogy,* OECD, Paris; OECD (2014), *Survey on pedagogy,* internal working document, OECD, Paris.

The approaches used in the different countries have evolved over time in response to emerging theories, cultural heritage and research. England is the only country where the recommended pedagogical approaches and practices have been set out in response to country-specific research, such as the Researching Effective Pedagogy in Early Years (REPEY) project (Siraj-Blatchford, 2002). In other countries, such as France, approaches and practices have been inspired by a combination of theorists and international research.

It is difficult to distinguish the fundamental differences between the pedagogical ideologies and theories subscribed to because they often have overlapping features or are based on one another and so have a few minor differences. Japan, for example, drew inspiration from the Development Appropriate Practice (DAP) approach, but this approach also incorporates child-centred and "scaffolding" approaches. Several countries also cited either Piaget and/or Vygotsky as pedagogical theoretical sources; the theories of these child psychologists are closely related.

Limited information is available on which pedagogical approaches and practices ECEC providers actually use. A more granular analysis of the pedagogical ideologies and theories the ECEC providers subscribe to and the pedagogical practices they subsequently implement would require further data and research, preferably at the international level.

Factors influencing pedagogy

A key policy lever influencing pedagogy is the curriculum designed for ECEC settings. All the case-study countries have some form of curriculum or framework set at the national level, and its prescribed learning areas and goals influence the pedagogical approach and practices ECEC providers espouse. How much influence the curriculum has on pedagogical approach is evident in the fact that all case-study countries conduct monitoring to assess how well a setting implements the curriculum.

Policies determining the qualifications, (initial) education and training of staff also affect the pedagogical approach and practice ECEC settings use. Practitioners need a number of professional competences and skills to be able to offer high-quality learning opportunities for young children. England has only recently put particular emphasis on this issue. Higher staff qualifications are now required, such as the requirement that one educator in an ECEC setting must have Early Years Professional status. France demonstrates the influence of qualifications on pedagogical approach and practice in another way. Teachers in both primary schools and preschool settings in France have the same qualification and training, and similar pedagogical approaches are used in both settings. Questions remain as to how appropriate primary school pedagogy is in preschool settings, in view of children's levels of learning and development – an area of increasing relevance for England, given the recent push to employ primary teachers in ECEC.

Monitoring pedagogical quality (process quality)

Of the case-study countries, only England, Germany and New Zealand monitor process quality. In England, although pedagogical approaches and practices are not specified in the curriculum framework, inspectors assess the impact of pedagogical practice on children's learning, development and well-being. Inspectors judge the quality of adult interactions with children of different ages, and judge whether for example the adults simply supervise and care for the children, or whether they motivate them and encourage them to be independent. The inspector also evaluates the skills of practitioners by observing how and when adults intervene in children's play (Ofsted, 2014).

In New Zealand, process quality is monitored across all ECEC settings. Likewise, Germany monitors process quality in *Kindertageseinrichtungen* (child day-care centres) but not in *Kindertagespflege* (family day care). The scope of process quality includes such aspects as the overall quality of teaching/instruction/caring; relationships and interactions between staff and children; collaborations between staff and parents, management, and between colleagues; pedagogy; and how staff implement the curriculum. Germany monitors all of these aspects, while New Zealand monitors all but the collaboration between colleagues (staff) and the balance of preparatory versus actual classroom work. Hence, while England focuses specifically on child-adult interactions, the scope of process quality in Germany and New Zealand is wider.

Monitoring results and practices thus do influence pedagogical practices. Staff are assessed on their interactions and activities with children and receive feedback on them. However, the current lack of data and information leaves it unclear how monitoring influences pedagogy in practice, and what aspects of monitoring most influence pedagogy.

Research evidence

Little research has been conducted on the effects of a variety of pedagogical approaches and practices on different learning objectives, and their effects on child development. Where such evidence has been gathered, some interesting findings emerge. Research comparing the effects of particular pedagogical approaches on child development (that is, approaches inspired by a specific and distinct pedagogy) and mainstream programmes (which do not follow a specific approach)

indicate that particular pedagogical approaches do not always result in better child outcomes. The research shows mixed results. Some specific approaches have more positive outcomes for children's early academic or socio-emotional development than mainstream ones, and other approaches have no particular benefits. The Developmentally Appropriate Practice has found no direct effects on academic outcomes, although it was found to have positive impacts on children's ability to initiate and maintain interpersonal relations, and, in the long term, on children's motivation and interest in learning. Implementation of the Montessori approach demonstrates greater gains in, for example, reading, mathematics and social problem solving, although the effectiveness is linked to the fidelity of implementation. Alternative educational programmes, such as Steiner and Freinet, were found not to be any more effective in encouraging children's development than mainstream programmes.

While a given pedagogical programme may not always show more benefits than a mainstream approach, some types of pedagogical practices are found to have a greater impact on early learning and development. Firstly, interactions between adults and children are crucial in stimulating early learning. In high-quality interactions, adults are genuinely interested in what the child is doing. Adults are listening, extending children's thoughts and knowledge, and engaging in sustained shared thinking. In settings where sustained shared thinking was more common, children have been noted to make greater developmental progress. Secondly, play-based learning, for example with puzzles and constructional materials, is found to be a highly effective method of enhancing child development. Play partners and sensitive adults can help children reflect in play situations, through scaffolding for example. Scaffolding-focused learning environments demonstrated greater overall positive effects on children's development than children placed in teacher-directed and child-centred environments. This suggests that, thirdly, pedagogy should neither be too staff-directed or staff-focused, with a high share of staff-initiated activities, or too child-centred, letting children decide on activities. While studies on staff-directed approaches have revealed some advantages, such as better letter and reading achievement, this approach negatively affects children's motivation to learn. French pedagogical practices, which are highly teacher-directed, were found to be less effective. In Germany, for example, it was found that a child-centred pedagogy, combined with specific teacher-managed activities and a high level of assistance, stimulates the development of academic skills such as numeracy and literacy. Children also demonstrated higher levels of well-being and motivation to learn. Research in the United States has also shown that mixed teacher- and child-managed activities are associated with alphabet and letter-word growth, and purely child-managed experiences, including play, with vocabulary growth.

In general, research revealed both positive and negative effects of particular pedagogical approaches. However, research evidence and studies considering the same approaches in the same context are extremely limited. On the other hand, specific pedagogical practices are found to enhance child development, including high-quality interactions involving sustained shared thinking methods, play-based learning, scaffolding, and a combination of staff- and child-initiated activities.

Governments in England, France, Germany, Denmark, New Zealand and Japan allow adults in formal early years settings to implement pedagogical approaches and practices of their choice. Often, they do not subsequently assess which approaches and practices are implemented, and little evidence is available to shed light on how adults engage with children on developmental objectives at the practice level. England and New Zealand are, however, making progress on this issue and are ahead of other countries. Both countries have observed best pedagogical practices and published these as guidance for ECEC practitioners. In addition, they both monitor curriculum implementation and process quality, contributing to a better understanding of (effective) pedagogy.

Key findings for England

England is increasingly aware of the importance of pedagogy in enhancing children's development. Research, also within the country, has pointed to the importance of pedagogical interactions and the direction of chosen pedagogical approaches in child outcomes. Such aspects can strongly influence whether ECEC has a positive effect on early brain and socio-emotional development. England chiefly employs a mixed pedagogical approach, merging several pedagogical perspectives, with a variety of child- and teacher-initiated activities. In addition, England emphasises the importance of age-appropriateness in its pedagogical approach and recognises the importance of play in early child development. However, certain issues remain, mostly on the questions of meeting children's individual needs and maintaining a developmentally appropriate approach.

Strengths of England's pedagogy

Promotion of a continuous child development approach throughout the ECEC period

England, like the case-study countries Denmark, Germany and New Zealand, has an integrated ECEC system under one lead ministry. All three countries seek to integrate education and care in order to provide a continuous child development experience. England seeks to lay the foundation for lifelong learning at an early age, and considers ECEC to be a broad preparation for life. The integrated approach is reflected in the English curriculum framework, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This is also the case in the frameworks in New Zealand and in many German *Länder* in the scope of the curriculum covering all children from birth to compulsory schooling, providing continuous child development practices and opportunities. As a result, pedagogies in ECEC are more likely to be continuous than in countries where split systems and different curricula have been developed.

Emphasis on age-appropriateness and play

All the countries studied, including England, emphasise the importance of age-appropriate pedagogy and content. English practitioners are expected to adapt the EYFS to the particular ages and needs of children. The framework does not prescribe how this should be carried out, and gives staff great flexibility in this matter. This was not always the case. Previous versions of the curriculum was found to be too prescriptive, and based on staff needs, the framework has been revised to leave more room for interpretation and adaptation. New Zealand's curriculum also gives staff great flexibility, but the framework gives staff more guidance in this, outlining expected outcomes and experiences for different age groups. The Danish curriculum gives providers even greater leeway to adapt the framework to the needs of different age groups. This fits well with the Scandinavian pedagogical tradition of leaving room for adaptation in the setting. In addition, the EYFS notes that children learn through play and that curriculum approaches and practices at setting level should integrate play into their activities. In Germany and Denmark, play is key in ECEC, but it is not regarded as important in France, where a more academic approach is taken.

Employing different approaches and practices

While some countries tend to either have a more child-centred or teacher-directed approach, England combines both, emphasising the importance of activities initiated by the staff as well as children. The pedagogical approach in England acknowledges the importance of relationships between staff and children and good interactions. This is reflected in the EYFS and the pedagogical guidance document, which list sustained shared thinking and scaffolding as among the recommended best practices for stimulating early child development and learning. Inspections also consider these aspects.

Increased flexibility for staff in implementation of pedagogy

The EYFS was found to be too descriptive in England, leaving insufficient room for innovation and adaptation to children's or a setting's specific needs. In 2014, the framework was simplified, clarified and made less prescriptive, and promotes action for children who are progressing more slowly. Guidance for staff is not as detailed as in past versions of the curriculum. A booklet offering practice guidance includes non-statutory guidance regarding pedagogy, information on the areas of learning and development, and advice to ECEC professionals. Other countries leave implementation and choice of pedagogical practices to the discretion of staff and settings. Only France has a rather descriptive and prescriptive curriculum.

Strong monitoring system in place

England regularly monitors its ECEC settings, and is one of the few countries to monitor process quality (staff interactions). Although pedagogical approaches and practices are not specified in the curriculum framework, pedagogical practice is assessed by inspectors on its impact upon children's learning, development and well-being. Inspectors judge the quality of adult interactions with children of different ages, and whether, for example, the adults simply supervise and care, or whether they motivate children and encourage them to be independent. This offers additional information and knowledge on good pedagogy, contributing to better implementation of the framework and improved staff practices.

Potential areas for reflection

Maintaining the focus on developmental appropriateness of pedagogy

Important developmental areas are included in England's EYFS, which encompasses both academic subjects and socio-emotional development. To smooth the transition between ECEC and primary education, the EYFC curriculum framework is aligned with the school curriculum, and entry classes for children between 5 and 7 years old have been established. These serve as "in between" classes that do not provide pre-primary education and are more closely aligned with primary education. The EYFS focuses on the children in the ECEC age range and emphasises the importance of age and developmental appropriateness of play-based pedagogy. Research suggests (see Chapter 6) that it is important to maintain a strong focus on developmentally appropriate practices, where the child, as well as play, is central to pedagogy. In France, for instance, the preschool curriculum is designed to match the school curriculum. As a result, the pedagogy is highly teacher-centred. The child is no longer central, and staff decide on most pedagogical practices. However, it is important to bear in mind that younger children learn largely through play, and in different ways from older children. Therefore, France will implement a more play-based curriculum in 2015.

Taking into account increased cultural diversity

In the last two decades in almost all OECD countries, the number of foreign-born residents of varying backgrounds has increased. OECD PISA studies have found significant differences in reading performance between 15-year-old native students and first-generation and second-generation immigrant students in many OECD countries. Minority and immigrant groups with different linguistic backgrounds are likely to experience difficulties in language and reading development.

Internationalisation has placed high demands on ECEC settings and their staff, as it has on citizens' capacity to live with cultural diversity. Early education practitioners need to be prepared to work with children of different cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, and pedagogical practices must be adapted to these children's diverse needs. Preschool is a social and cultural meeting place that can reinforce social integration and prepare children for life in

increasingly globalised societies. An awareness of cultural heritage and of the culture of those around them can help children understand and empathise with the circumstances and values of others. This has inherent pedagogical value and can contribute both to better staff quality and to pedagogical practices that meet the diverse needs of all children.

New Zealand's educational framework is exemplary in its attempt to acknowledge the importance of different cultural backgrounds, validate the role of minorities and preserve languages and cultures that might otherwise disappear. Its emphasis on the importance of community has useful lessons for today's complex world.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PEDAGOGY REVIEW

ENGLAND

Pedagogy in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a topic that receives increased policy attention. A majority of children in OECD countries attend some form of provision, whether nurseries, preschools or other early education and care settings. Neurological research has indicated that significant brain and behaviour development occurs during these first years of life, and participation in ECEC has been found to have significant benefits for children's early development, thus influencing their opportunities and outcomes in later life. Experiences of young children in ECEC settings are defined by pedagogy, such as a country's pedagogical approaches and theories, the nature of the pedagogical interactions between ECEC staff and children, as well as interactions between peers, and with their environment. However, there is little knowledge on how pedagogy is defined in different countries, what pedagogical approaches and practices are recommended or practised, and what differences in pedagogy occur between countries.

This report addresses an evidence gap in how England's approach to the promotion of high-quality pedagogy in early years' settings compares to the variety of approaches in a selection of OECD countries. This review describes variations in, and evidence for, pedagogical approaches in formal ECEC settings; how pedagogy is monitored; and which policies affect pedagogical practice in England, Denmark, France, Germany and New Zealand.

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