

FOREWORD

This publication is intended to be a quick reference guide for anyone with a role to play in encouraging quality through Portugal's early childhood education and care (ECEC) curriculum.

There is a growing body of evidence that children starting strong in their learning and well-being will have better outcomes when they grow older. Such evidence has driven policy makers to design an early intervention and re-think their education spending patterns to gain "value for money". At the same time, research emphasises that the benefits from early interventions are conditional on the level of "quality" of ECEC that children experience.

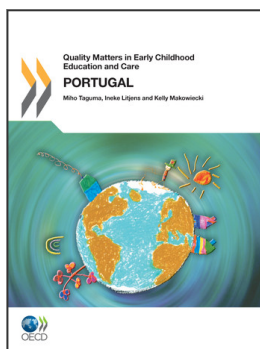
What does "quality" mean? *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care* has identified five policy levers that can encourage quality in ECEC, having positive effects on early child development and learning.

- Policy Lever 1: Setting out quality goals and regulations
- Policy Lever 2: Designing and implementing curriculum and standards
- Policy Lever 3: Improving qualifications, training and working conditions
- Policy Lever 4: Engaging families and communities
- Policy Lever 5: Advancing data collection, research and monitoring

Of the five policy levers, Portugal has selected **Policy Lever 2: Designing and implementing curriculum and standards** for its current policy focus.

This policy profile for Portugal would not have been possible without the support of the national authority and the stakeholders involved. The OECD Secretariat would like to thank the national co-ordinators, Alexandra Marques and Fernando Reis, for their work in providing information. We would also like to thank all those who gave their time to respond to our many questions, provide comments on preliminary drafts and validate the information for accuracy. We would also like to thank consultants Janice Heejin Kim and Matias Egeland who worked on sections of the preliminary drafts as part of the OECD team on Early Childhood Education and Care.

The online version of the quality toolbox can be found at: **www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood/toolbox**. The online toolbox has additional information, such as a country materials page where actual documents from OECD countries are presented, including curricula, regulatory frameworks and data systems information. All information related to the OECD Network on ECEC is available at: **www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood**.



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