

Chapter 1

Overview: Towards smooth transitions from early childhood education and care to primary school

The transition from early childhood education and care to primary school is a big step for most children. A supportive and stress-free experience at this stage is likely to influence whether or not they can develop their full potential at school, academically and socially. Political and social attention on early learning and its transitions has increased over the past decade in many countries, but comprehensive knowledge of what policies and practices are needed for successful transitions is lacking. This chapter provides an overview of the key findings of OECD research to take stock of transition policies across OECD and partner countries. It summarises the main messages from the four thematic chapters of this report, which explore the organisation and governance of transitions, as well as how countries are ensuring professional, pedagogical and developmental continuity from early childhood education and care to primary school. It begins with six “cross-cutting” policy pointers for future policy development on transitions.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

The data collected through the OECD questionnaire on transitions for Italy is published here under the responsibility of the National Institute of Evaluation of the Educational and Training System (INVALSI, Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione).

Key policy messages

This study outlines how OECD countries and partner countries are working to improve children's transition from early childhood education and care (ECEC) to primary school. It includes a wide range of strategies, policies and practices to ensure “continuity” between and across various aspects, including governance and organisation (Chapter 2), professional continuity (Chapter 3), curriculum and pedagogical continuity (Chapter 4), and developmental continuity (Chapter 5). Each chapter concludes with a selection of policy pointers which summarise the key policy-relevant lessons learned from the study. From these we have distilled six “cross-cutting” policy pointers for future policy development on transitions (described in more detail in Chapter 6):

1. Focus on making schools ready for children, not children ready for school

Transitions are often linked to the term “readiness”, which in many countries refers to a child's “readiness for school”. To make children “ready”, the approach often taken involves exposing children who are still in ECEC to the culture of primary school. Known as “schoolification”, this can drive ECEC settings to adopt practices that are usually more related to primary school, such as higher staff-pupil ratios, longer hours away from home, more teacher-directed pedagogies, greater attention to academic content and less playtime. However, research is increasingly highlighting that the more age- and child-appropriate the pedagogical practices, the greater the benefits for children's social and cognitive development. This is why some countries – especially the Nordic countries – take a child-centred perspective, adapting the cultures of both ECEC and school to the needs of the child. This implies that it is not just the responsibility of ECEC to prepare children for school; schools also need to be ready for children. These debates merit careful review by both ECEC and the early years of primary schooling to ensure that systems are appropriate to the child's age; to the child's optimal learning progression, continuity and coherence; and to the specific individual needs of the child.

2. Dispel some common myths and misconceptions surrounding transitions

The concept of “transitions” needs to be better understood by those involved. The countries participating in this study have raised some common challenges: fragmented coherence and lack of consistency in goals, curriculum, and pedagogical practices between the two sectors; and lack of co-operation and collaboration among actors. These are rooted in differing perceptions, ideologies, philosophies and expectations of the various actors participating in transitions. Areas of misunderstanding include that a smooth transition is a question of ECEC aligning with primary education, when in fact the process is multi-directional; that it is a one-off event, when in fact it is a dynamic change process; that it is an organic and unproblematic process, when in fact many children may not adjust easily to the new learning environment; and that co-operation between ECEC and primary school is enough, when in fact it is the shared responsibility of many stakeholders, including parents, social services, ECEC staff, primary school teachers, and national and local authorities.

3. Overcome structural roadblocks to co-operation and continuity

Countries need to improve the structural conditions to allow ECEC and primary school staff to co-operate. Long working hours can leave little time to prepare and implement transitions and to co-ordinate with other settings. Physical separation of ECEC centres and primary schools hinders liaison and children's familiarisation with the school setting. Discrepancies in ECEC staff and primary school teachers' salaries, working conditions and level of qualifications (see Table 1.5) can raise tensions across sectors and limit co-operation. Legal restrictions can complicate the exchange of information on individual children and child records between ECEC centres and primary schools, rendering individualised transition support and co-operation more complicated. Solving these structural issues is the role of leaders and policy makers. Providing accommodating legal environments, such as Wales' provisions for the exchange of child records, and allowing staff sufficient time to co-operate, can be important steps forward. Where possible, integrating centres and schools on the same campus can be very helpful (e.g. Wales (United Kingdom), Austria and many northern European countries). Low-cost solutions also exist, such as appointing transition co-ordinators or counsellors, or organising catchment-level co-ordination mechanisms (e.g. Slovenia, Sweden and Denmark).

4. Encourage local leadership, backed by a clear national policy framework

There is a need to raise awareness at the national level of the importance of transitions, while fostering local leadership and ownership so that transitions match local needs, diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and (parental) expectations. Transition policies and practices that consider and are adapted to particular contexts and individual needs are more likely to be effective in promoting a smooth start in school. Ensuring national coherence alongside local autonomy can mean taking a combined approach, encouraging both national and local leadership. For example, the Welsh Government has an overarching strategy for breaking the links between poverty and deprivation (Rewriting the Future), while delegating leadership to Regional Education Consortia to support schools to take forward key priorities at the local level. In Norway, municipalities take the responsibility for ECEC and primary school, while the national government makes strategic decisions to ensure effective transitions for all children.

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5. Mainstream transition into existing equity measures

Although strong transitions are important for everyone, they are particularly important for disadvantaged children, who are at greater risk of developmental losses once they start primary school. Such children include those from low socio-economic backgrounds; with immigrant or indigenous backgrounds; living in poor areas or regions; and with special needs. These background factors often overlap, making the process of transitions for the child far more complex as it involves multiple hindering factors, suggesting bigger social, economic and cultural differences between the child's home environment, and ECEC and primary school. This calls for systemic interventions involving not only ECEC and primary schools, but also community and family services, health and social services. Research has shown that children's – especially disadvantaged children's – early school adjustments, social skills and academic competence are enhanced when children and families participate in “comprehensive transition programmes”. These are developed in collaboration with stakeholders and offer children and their families a number of opportunities to get familiar with school in formal and informal settings. It is important that transition challenges for disadvantaged children are properly understood and that transitions are mainstreamed into various equity measures.

6. Support research and monitoring for better policy decisions

There is a general consensus on the scarcity of research on transition and, in particular, on specific factors that are linked to improved child development. It is important to close the current knowledge gap in order to support policy makers to make better-informed decisions. The following questions have been identified in the report as needing more investigation: Should the final year of ECEC be compulsory? Should the number of ECEC hours be increased? Which is preferable – a half-day or full-day of ECEC? What factors positively influence transition processes and outcomes for children and their parents? What factors influence the participation of children and families in transition programmes? What are the effects of transition practices on at-risk or disadvantaged children and parents?

Encouraging more monitoring of transitions can also help to understand whether ECEC settings and schools are delivering good practices, to even out quality across regions and to provide feedback for further development. Jurisdictions, however, report that transitions are not commonly monitored (see Table 1.5).

Introduction

The first years of life lay the foundations for future skills development and learning. Investments in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) and smooth transitions between the various stages of early education are key for children's long-term learning and development.

The political and social attention on early learning and its transitions has increased over the past decade in many countries, with a particular focus on the transit from the last period of early childhood education and care to the start of primary school. This transition – together with the transition from home to an ECEC setting – are the first occasions in which children experience a big cultural change – in the people surrounding them, the ways in which they interact, their number of peers, the types of activities they are engaged in, and their physical surroundings. A successful experience at this stage is likely to influence whether or not they can develop their full potential, and their ability to cope with future transitions.

Despite the importance of well-managed transitions for children's well-being and early development, there is little policy knowledge on how countries design, implement, manage and monitor transitions. Understanding how the transition between ECEC and primary education is organised across OECD countries is important for policy makers to ensure that early years' policies provide continuity of the ECEC benefits into primary education; promote a strong start in primary school; and foster a more equitable early education system.

To build a solid knowledge base on this topic, in 2015 the OECD Education Policy Committee mandated the OECD Secretariat to take stock of transition policies across OECD countries. This report presents the findings. It draws on a literature review, in-depth country reports by 8 OECD countries and 1 partner country,¹ and a questionnaire completed by 27 OECD countries and 3 partner countries

(Colombia, Croatia and Kazakhstan) (details in Annex A). This overview chapter summarises the main findings, lessons and policy orientations. Table 1.5 at the end of the chapter compares the responses of all participating OECD and partner countries.² It uses an indicator approach to compare the weight given to ECEC and primary education in a range of sub-topics within the four key areas discussed in this report. This acts as an “at a glance” tool for comparing the degree of integration and alignment between ECEC and primary.

What are transitions and why do they matter?

Research in neuroscience shows that the brain sensitivity of highly important developmental areas – such as language and numeracy, social skills and emotional control – peaks in the first three years of life (Naudeau et al., 2011). Strong foundations in the early years increase the chances of positive outcomes, while weak foundations are more likely to lead to struggles.

Children will experience a number of transitions over their lifetime (Box 1.1). The rapid growth of and participation in early childhood education and care (OECD, 2016a) means that increasing numbers of young children experience not only a transition from home to school, but also a transition (and sometimes two) between ECEC and school (Dunlop and Fabian, 2006; Woodhead and Moss, 2007). There is a risk that the positive impacts of ECEC can decrease or even disappear during the first years in primary school if these transitions are not well-prepared, or if continuity in quality is not ensured in primary education (Magnuson et al., 2007; Barnett and Hustedt, 1995; Woodhead, 1988). This might be the case if there is little co-ordination and communication between families and other ECEC or child-related services; if there is a lack of collaboration between the ECEC and the primary school sector; or if staff are not trained or prepared to help children through these transitions (AIHW, 2009). To reduce these “fade-out effects”, ECEC needs to be followed up by subsequent quality education throughout school, and particularly during the first years of primary education (Woessmann, 2008).

Box 1.1 Key definitions: Early childhood transitions

Fabian (2007) defines transition as “a change process” that children go through from one stage to another. This can include horizontal and vertical transitions. **Horizontal transitions** involve children’s transitions during their everyday lives between, for instance, a pre-primary education setting (see Glossary) or primary school and an after-school centre. **Vertical transitions** refer to the transitions between *different* educational settings, such as between an ECEC setting and school (Kagan, 1991; Ackesjö, 2013).

Throughout this report the term **early childhood education and care** (ECEC) will be used to refer to regulated arrangements that provide education and care for children from birth to compulsory primary school age in **integrated systems**, or from birth to pre-primary education in **split systems**. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is the reference classification for categorising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields. The latest version (ISCED 2011) has nine levels of education, from level 0 to level 8, where **ISCED 0** refers to early childhood education and **ISCED 1** refers to primary education. Education programmes at ISCED level 0 are sub-classified into two categories depending on age and the level of complexity of the educational content: early childhood educational development (ISCED 01) and pre-primary education (ISCED 02). The latter include ECEC centres that provide services for children to support early development in preparation for participation in school and society, and that accommodate children from age three to the start of primary education. The focus of this publication is on ISCED 02 and the terms pre-primary, preschool and ECEC are used interchangeably.

For more information, see the Glossary and OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015), *ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264228368-en>.

There are three main reasons for ensuring that policy attention is given to well-managed transitions: 1) ensuring that the benefits of ECEC endure; 2) preparing children for school and for life; and 3) improving equity in education outcomes.

Ensuring that the benefits of early childhood education and care endure

A consolidated body of research has shown that participation in high-quality ECEC will benefit children's early development, their subsequent school career, and their labour market success and social integration (Sammons et al., 2008; Sylva et al., 2004). Many countries have increased public spending to expand participation in quality ECEC so as to improve child development, learning and well-being. Expenditure by OECD countries on ECEC (ISCED 0) increased on average 45% between 2000 and 2013, from 0.48% of gross domestic product (GDP) to 0.69% (OECD, 2017a). What is more, in one-third of OECD countries with available data, annual expenditure per child is higher in pre-primary education than in primary education (Table 1.5 at the end of this chapter), reflecting the importance given in some countries to investing in the early years and making it a public responsibility.

Quality transitions that are well-prepared and child-centred, managed by trained staff collaborating with one another, and guided by an appropriate curriculum, enhance the likelihood that the positive impacts of early learning and care will last through primary school and beyond.

Research findings confirm the importance of a good quality transition and a good start in primary school. In a study in the United Kingdom, most positive developmental gains were found for children who had attended high-quality early preschool education, with larger and more lasting benefits for children who subsequently attended high-quality primary schools (Sammons et al., 2008). Creating an overall set of educational experiences that build on one another during the ECEC and early school years can reduce the fade-out effects. This includes aligned staff quality, curriculum and pedagogical approaches (Bogard and Tananishi, 2005; Kagan and Kauerz, 2012; Stipek et al., 2017). Thus, the impact of early educational experiences may be conditioned heavily by the ongoing quality of school learning experiences (Magnuson et al., 2007). In short, good quality in the early years has to be followed up with good quality in subsequent school systems. This suggests that effective transitions cannot be solely designed and implemented by ECEC – it is the shared responsibility of both ECEC and primary school. Quality matters at both levels.

Quality matters at both levels

Preparing children for school and for life

The second policy interest is to prepare children for school and for life. Policy makers, practitioners and parents believe that ECEC provisions should make children “ready for school” (Lillejord et al., 2017; Woodhead and Moss, 2007; see Box 1.2). Research has shown that a positive start at school is associated with long-term positive learning and well-being outcomes both in school and outside of it (Margetts, 2014; Vrinioti et al., 2010).

For the child, the transition from the last year of ECEC to primary school is a period of excitement and pride as well as of insecurity, anxiety and nervousness in the face of the new and unfamiliar (Lillejord et al., 2017). Most children tend to navigate the transition process smoothly, but some children struggle, experiencing problems such as restlessness and anxiety (Lillejord et al., 2017; Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2010). Findings from the United States show that between 13% and 20% of children struggle as they make the transition and adjust to school (Carter et al., 2010; Hausken and Rathbun, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta, 2000). These figures call for a look into how best to support children during the transition period. The cost of school readiness is often contrasted with the cost of inaction or the costs that will be required for expensive interventions at a later stage. It is estimated that the benefit-cost ratio of attending preschool in terms of future earnings ranges between 6:1 and 17:1 (IOM and NRC, 2014). Note that the latter values are likely to underestimate inaction costs (costs of not investing in preschool) as they only account for future earnings and they are likely to vary across countries.

Box 1.2 School readiness and schoolification

The research on children’s transitions often raises concerns surrounding the increased “schoolification” of early childhood settings. Schoolification refers to when ECEC settings adopt practices that are usually more related to primary school in order to prepare children for the transition. But these practices might occur before children are ready developmentally to cope with them, including higher staff-pupil ratios, more hours spent away from home, more teacher-directed pedagogies, greater attention to academic content and less playtime. Research highlights the importance of developmentally appropriate practices based on children’s age and developmental stage. The more age- and child-appropriate the pedagogical practices are, the greater the effect is on children’s social and cognitive development (Litjens and Taguma, 2010; OECD, 2012).

Transitions are often linked to the term “readiness”, which in many countries refers to a child’s “readiness for school”. In other countries, “readiness” refers to “readiness for life” or “readiness for lifelong learning”. In recent years, the “readiness” rhetoric is changing. It is no longer for ECEC alone to prepare children for school; today, there is a growing perception that schools also need to be ready for children coming from the age-appropriate ECEC environments. Indeed, some countries have started to regard “readiness” as not only “readiness for school/ life” but also “a school’s readiness for the child”. In the Nordic countries, this has been the main approach for some time. A successful transition not only ensures that a child is ready to leave the ECEC setting and start primary school, but also makes sure that the ECEC setting the child is leaving and the school the child will join are both prepared for the transition. This suggests the need for primary schools to also collaborate with ECEC for better “readiness” for children.

Transition to primary school is considered a foundation for lifelong learning. Participation in ECEC is viewed as the first step in a person’s development, and gains made should be carried upward into primary school. Pedagogical thinking in the Nordic countries, for instance, holds that early childhood pedagogy, with its emphasis on the natural learning strategies of the child, should be respected and reflected in the early classes of primary school (Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson, 2011). In Sweden, for example, when preschools were brought into the education system in 1996, the then Prime Minister Göran Persson talked of ECEC as “the first step towards realising a lifelong vision of lifelong learning”, adding that “the preschool should influence at least the early years of compulsory schooling” (cited in Korpi, 2005). Similarly, Japan’s philosophy of education is based on continuity and coherence. The objective of early childhood education and care is to cultivate foundations for the lifelong formation of one’s character. The tradition is that ECEC is regarded as a “period of awakening learning”, while school is a “period of self-conscious learning”, and that these flow seamlessly into one another.

Improving equity in education outcomes

Transitions are of particular importance for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children enter school with a wide variety of skills and abilities that significantly contribute to their later school success or difficulties. Evidence from the United States shows a positive and continuous association between socio-economic status and children’s skills distribution in the last year of preschool, with children from better-off backgrounds performing significantly better than their less well-off peers across a wide range of cognitive and social and emotional skills (García, 2015).

Findings from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)³ also show that the probability of low performance in mathematics is largely the result of cumulative social and economic disadvantages (OECD, 2016b). Missing out on attending pre-primary education affects disadvantaged children more than it affects advantaged children. On average across OECD countries, a socio-economically advantaged student who did not attend pre-primary has an 8% probability of low performance in mathematics, whereas a disadvantaged student who did not attend has a 25% probability of low performance. This gap increases when other risk factors are also present, such as an immigrant background, speaking a different language at home, and living in a single-parent family (OECD, 2016b).

Transitions are harder for disadvantaged children as they are exposed to the interaction of multiple risk factors, including a low-quality home learning environment; low teacher expectations for their competence; and different expectations for parent-teacher interactions (Peters, 2010). The socio-economic-based skills gap in the last year of preschool makes the transition period a critical one. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attend low-quality ECEC settings and schools and hence are more likely to experience low-quality transitions (Currie and Thomas, 2000; Zhai, Raver and Jones, 2012). They are therefore at greater risk of developmental losses (Melhuish et al., 2015) and of fade-out effects (Currie and Thomas, 2000; Zhai, Raver and Jones, 2012). Currie and Thomas (1995) found, for instance, that the gains of participation in the United States' Head Start ECEC programme faded out for African-American children over the early years, while white children's educational gains of ECEC participation persisted into adolescence as they attended better quality schools than their African-American peers. Therefore, children and families with socio-economic risk factors are most likely to benefit from good transition activities (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008).

Good quality transitions include numerous activities that involve personal contact with parents and children. These occur both before and after the child transits to primary school, for example preschoolers spending time in their future classrooms; parents and children visiting school prior to the start of the school year; parents attending orientation sessions prior to the school year; shortened school days at the beginning of the school year; and teachers visiting children's homes at the beginning of the school year (Schulting et al., 2005). It has been found that strong transitions involving collaboration and support among staff, parents and children before, during and after the transition period can improve equity in education (Melhuish, 2014).

Strong transitions can improve equity in education

What does the literature say about the ingredients of successful transitions?

An emerging body of research highlights certain traits of effective transition policies, programmes and practices. Alignment of ECEC and primary school curricula, pedagogical continuity, and transition practices between ECEC and primary school has a positive impact on children's literacy and numeracy skills as well as on their later experiences and development (Ahtola et al., 2011; Margetts, 2007). Other research suggests that greater continuity at staff, practice and pedagogical level where settings, parents, the community and child development agencies collaborate, can result in better support for the child in the transition phase (Arndt et al., 2013; Ahtola et al., 2010; Lillejord et al., 2017; Peters, 2010).

Existing research suggests the following traits to be elements of successful transition programmes (Lillejord et al., 2017; Ackesjö, 2013; Dobbin, 2013; Dockett et al., 2011; Hirst et al., 2011; Peters, 2010; Dockett and Perry, 2006; Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, 2003):

- shared views between ECEC settings and schools on transitioning
- alignment and balance between what and how children learn in ECEC and primary school (i.e. curriculum and pedagogical practices)
- shared understandings on individual differences and how each child learns differently
- collaborative practices between preschool and primary school teachers, such as sharing written information on child development and children's experiences
- alignment of pedagogical understanding of preschool and primary school teachers through training
- alignment of working conditions of preschool and primary school teachers
- flexibility and responsiveness to individual communities, families and children
- collaboration among staff, managers, parents and the community based on reciprocal communication, inclusivity, mutual trust and respect.

What are OECD countries doing to improve transitions?

The research underpinning this report finds that OECD countries have introduced a wide range of strategies, policies and practices to ensure continuity in transitions. This report categorises these into four key areas, which in reality are all interdependent:

- 1) organisation and governance (the subject of Chapter 2)
- 2) professional continuity (Chapter 3)
- 3) curriculum and pedagogical continuity (Chapter 4)
- 4) developmental continuity (Chapter 5).

The governance and organisation of early childhood transitions are receiving greater attention

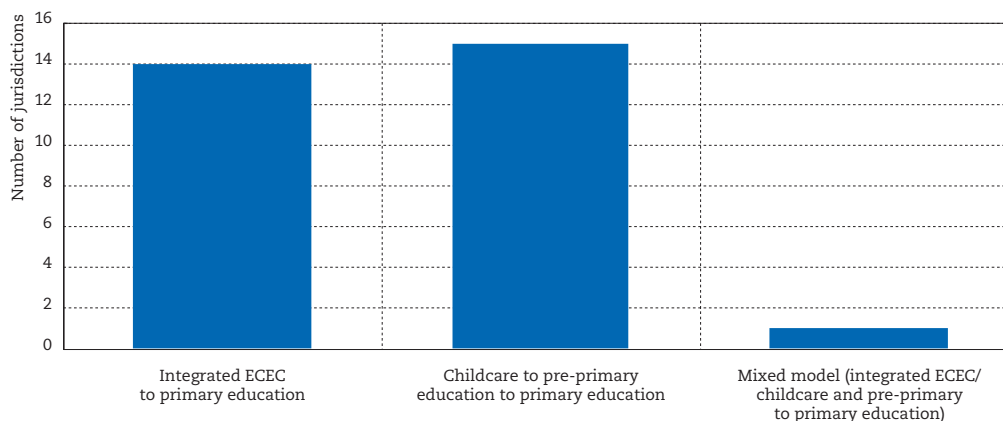
Understanding how the transition between early childhood education and care (ECEC) and primary education is organised and governed across the OECD is important to help policy makers ensure that the foundations laid in ECEC endure into primary education; promote a strong start in primary school; and foster a more equitable early education system. Comparisons across the countries participating in the study reveal some clear trends.

Trends in governance

- **Policy documents**, including education acts and curriculum frameworks, are placing greater emphasis on the need for smooth transitions. This is obliging local authorities, ECEC settings and schools to implement appropriate policies and practices.
- **Responsibilities for ECEC are increasingly integrated** within the ministry of education, which facilitates collaboration between education levels and can strengthen coherence between ECEC and schools.
- **Transition policies and practices differ widely within countries**, being mostly designed by ECEC settings and schools.
- **Transitions are not commonly monitored separately**; they are often included in broader quality monitoring. Parental surveys are the most common tool, followed by child monitoring methods (e.g., portfolios, child development reports or development assessments).
- **Annual expenditure per child is lower for pre-primary education** than primary education in two-thirds of participating countries (see Table 1.5).

Trends in organisation

- **A large share of children experience more than one transition before they start primary school** (in 50% of participating countries). Many children transition from childcare to pre-primary education and then to primary school (Figure 1.1).
- **Compulsory education can start as early as age three**, though most children start compulsory education at six. The age range of compulsory education is broad: from three (Hungary and Mexico) to seven years old (Sweden). Most children start compulsory education with the start of primary school. In 40% of countries, compulsory education starts with preschool. Children's starting age at primary school is rarely delayed, and is usually done so for health or developmental reasons.
- **A separate transition class, year or group** is available for children in their last year of ECEC in over half of the participating countries. In almost half of these, this phase is compulsory.

Figure 1.1 **Half of all children experience two transitions before they reach primary school (2016)**

Note: Information on transition year is based on data from 30 countries and jurisdictions: Austria, Flemish Community of Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Wales (United Kingdom). Data by country can be found in the annex to Chapter 2 (Annex 2A, Table 2A.1).

Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495365>

Challenges

While the topic of transitions is gaining political attention, and progress has been made, governance and organisational challenges remain. Table 1.1 summarises the most common challenges put forward by the OECD countries participating in this study. It also highlights some good practice policy strategies developed by the various countries to tackle these challenges. The details of these challenges and strategies can be found in the Chapter 2, along with a wealth of practical and good practice examples.

Table 1.1 **Governance and organisational challenges and policy strategies**

Challenges	Key policy strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coherence across regions in transition approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national plan or strategy to improve coherence • Develop guides or guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in engaging all actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the state of transitions • Include transitions in laws or mandatory curriculum frameworks • Inform local governments and settings of example transition initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak collaboration among stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review collaboration frequently • Discuss transitions with key stakeholders regularly • Provide counselling and guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequity in transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide language support • Set up financial support programmes • Prioritise participation in ECEC for target groups • Provide additional financial or human resources for ECEC settings

Challenge 1: Lack of coherence across regions in transitions approaches

Where settings have autonomy in deciding how transitions are taken care of, the result can be a wide range of practices with little alignment between them. This can be the case in federal states, where systems are decentralised, for example. Decentralisation of transition responsibilities results in variations among municipalities in how transitions are handled, and thus, in varying levels of transition quality. Strategies developed to tackle this include developing a national plan or strategy to improve coherence (Austria), and developing guides or guidelines (Denmark and Norway).

Challenge 2: Difficulty in engaging all actors

While national or federal authorities, or research findings, may emphasise the importance of good transitions, it is important that the authorities and settings involved in implementation (i.e. local authorities, ECECs and schools) share the enthusiasm and implement them correctly. Countries have come up with a range of strategies for dealing with this, such as monitoring the state of transitions (Japan), including transitions in laws or mandatory curriculum frameworks (Denmark, Finland and Norway), and informing local governments and settings of example transition initiatives (Japan).

Challenge 3. Weak collaboration among stakeholders

The need for involvement and collaboration of the various stakeholders involved in transitions is essential to ensure a strong start at school. Countries outline many obstacles to such collaborations, driven by multiple factors that include physical location, legal restrictions, professional misconceptions and jealousies, and lack of resources and time. To improve and strengthen collaboration at the governance level, some countries regularly monitor the quality of their collaboration (Japan and Sweden), while others discuss the topic of transitions with different stakeholders on a regular basis (Slovenia and Sweden), or provide guidance to stakeholders (the Netherlands and Slovenia). The other chapters in the report all include strategies for improving collaboration for their specific goals – see the sections below and the individual chapters.

Challenge 4. Inequity in transitions

Transitions are of critical importance for children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are more likely to struggle when starting school. While countries have implemented a wide range of policies and programmes to improve equity in the early years, these programmes do not necessarily focus on the transition to primary school. Initiatives to fill these gaps include providing language support to ensure that all children have an adequate level of language and literacy skills when starting school (Denmark, Slovenia); setting up financial support programmes, prioritising participation in ECEC for certain target groups and providing additional financial or human resources for ECEC settings (Japan, Denmark, Norway, Slovenia and Wales (United Kingdom)); prioritising participation in ECEC for certain target groups (Denmark, Norway and Slovenia); and providing additional financial or human resources for ECEC settings (Finland, Slovenia and Sweden).

Professional continuity is improving, but gaps remain

Professional continuity requires that ECEC centre leaders, primary school principals, ECEC staff and primary school teachers are prepared for collaboration and transitions through professional development and initial training, and that they receive relevant and sufficient support to facilitate children's transition to primary education (Neuman, 2007). Thus, while professional continuity is crucially dependent on training and development, it is also framed by the structural and procedural environment in which teachers operate (Chapter 3). This includes the working environment, salary and work benefits, and the degree to which levels of status and recognition vary between ECEC and primary school professionals. For instance, to align working conditions across sectors, the International Labour Organization (ILO), recommends setting salaries in pre-primary education at the “same level as the equivalent job in primary education with similar qualifications and competency requirements” (see Table 1.5) (ILO, 2013). Professional continuity can be seen as a facilitating factor for ensuring continuity in pedagogical practices, discussed in Chapter 4, and continuity from a child development perspective, as discussed in Chapter 5.

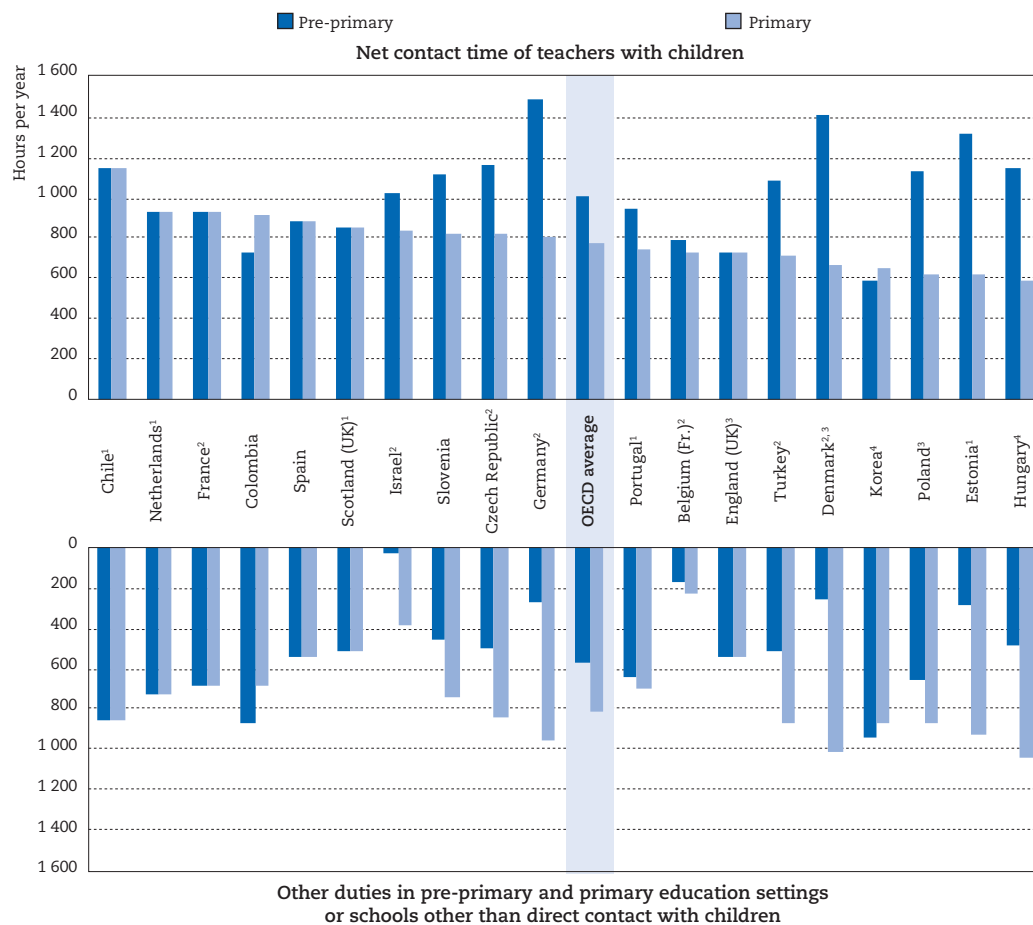
Professional continuity is framed by the structural and procedural environment

Trends in professional continuity

Insights from this study (see Chapter 3) suggest that:

- **Preschool and primary teachers are commonly being taught about transitions** in their pre-service training (17 out of 22 countries for ECEC staff, 15 out of 22 for primary teachers) and in professional development (13 out of 22 countries for ECEC staff, 13 out of 22 for primary teachers) (see Table 1.5).
- **Qualification levels required for preschool and primary teachers are being brought into line** in almost two-thirds of countries.
- **Pre-primary teachers often have less working time than their primary school peers** for non-teaching tasks or tasks other than being in contact with children (11 out of 19 countries). Six countries (Chile, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Scotland and England (United Kingdom)) already ensure the same time for teaching and non-teaching tasks at both levels (Figure 1.2 and Table 1.5).

Figure 1.2 **Most pre-primary teachers in the OECD spend more hours in direct contact with children than primary teachers (2014)**



Notes:

1. Maximum teaching time.
2. Typical teaching time (in Denmark, for pre-primary level only).
3. Actual teaching time (in Denmark except for pre-primary level).
4. Minimum teaching time.

Countries are ranked by descending order according to the net teaching time in hours for teachers in primary schools.

Only countries with available data for both pre-primary and primary level were included. Contact time refers to statutory teaching or contact time in public institutions. Non-contact or non-teaching time covers tasks such as assessing students, preparing lessons, correcting students' work, professional development and staff meetings.

Source: OECD (2017), Online Education Database, www.oecd.org/education/database.htm.

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Challenges

Table 1.2 summarises the most common professional continuity challenges put forward by the OECD and partner countries participating in this study. It also highlights some good practice policy strategies developed by the various countries to tackle these challenges. The details of these challenges and strategies can be found in Chapter 3, along with a wealth of practical and good practice examples.

Table 1.2 **Challenges and strategies in strengthening professional continuity**

Challenges	Key policy strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrepancies between status and perspectives of ECEC staff and primary school teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal pay for qualified ECEC staff and primary school teachers • Align the level and bridge the content of pre-service training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of relevant training in and support for transitions at both levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more and relevant transition-specific training • Meet teachers' and staff support needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural hurdles to co-operation and co-ordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make legal provisions for the exchange of information • Ensure time and physical conditions to co-operate

Challenge 1: Discrepancies between status and perspectives of early childhood education and care staff and primary school teachers

Several countries highlight that ECEC and primary school staff do not necessarily see eye to eye and may not always “speak the same language”, which is explained by discrepancies in their status and educational background. In the United Kingdom, the ECEC sector is poorly paid, making it challenging to ensure a sufficiently skilled workforce. In Germany, ECEC professionals and primary teachers know very little about each other’s work and pedagogical practices. To overcome these challenges, measures to align the working conditions, content and level of qualifications can be useful (as in Japan, where efforts are being made to align the training of pre-primary and primary school teachers).

Challenge 2: Lack of relevant training in and support for transitions at both levels

While the majority of countries reported that training on transitions is available as part of pre-service training or professional development, gaps persist. Staff and teachers may also not always receive the support they need to help all children in the transition process. To overcome these challenges, more – and more relevant – training on transitions could be helpful, as could gaining a better understanding of teachers’ and staff’s actual needs to target support. Several countries have developed measures to meet teachers’ and staff support needs, including Austria, Japan and Slovenia.

Challenge 3: Structural hurdles to co-operation and co-ordination

Even where guidelines and training on transitions are available, structural impediments may render co-operation and co-ordination across levels challenging in practice, potentially undermining other efforts to foster professional continuity. Longer on-site hours for kindergarten teachers mean less time for planning, and are a constraint to practices seeking to facilitate transitions. The separate locations of ECEC settings and primary schools can be a physical hurdle to continuity, making co-ordination time consuming. Child confidentiality regulations can also complicate the sharing of child development information across settings. Providing accommodating legal environments (Wales, United Kingdom) and allowing staff sufficient time to co-operate can help, as can bringing ECEC setting and primary schools together in the same premises (Austria, Italy and many northern European countries). Additional staff and support can also help teachers at both levels with their efforts to facilitate transitions (as in Slovenia where a counselling service provides professional support to children, parents and ECEC staff).

Pedagogy is becoming more aligned between pre-primary and primary levels

Pedagogy is the set of instructional techniques and strategies that enable children's learning to take place in educational settings (OECD, 2012). Continuity between ECEC and primary school in terms of curriculum and pedagogical transition practices has been found to have a positive impact on children's later experiences and development (e.g., Ahtola et al., 2011; Margetts, 2007). Research, for instance, has shown that aligning ECEC and primary school curricula can improve children's literacy and maths skills (Ahtola et al., 2011). The key ingredients of successful pedagogical continuity practices include high-quality and child-centred staff-child interactions; the joint creation of pedagogical transition practices by staff at both levels; informative curricula or guidelines for pedagogical transitions; a balanced curriculum with roughly equal emphasis on play, self-regulation and pre-academic activities; and similar structural features (e.g. group size and intensity of participation) in ECEC and primary school (Chapter 4).

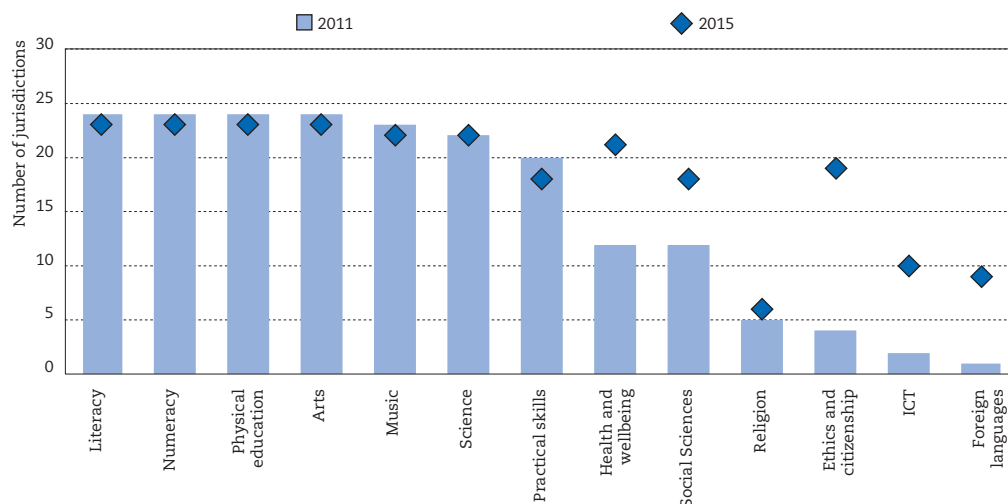
Aligning ECEC and primary school curricula can improve children's literacy and maths skills

Trends in pedagogical continuity


Insights from international comparisons suggest that:

- **In 78% of participating jurisdictions, there is continuity in curricula between ECEC and primary school:** 54% explicitly align the curricula for the two levels (e.g. Chile, the German Landers and Finland); while 24% have fully integrated curricula (e.g. Italy and Switzerland) (see Table 1.5).
- **Many jurisdictions have included new subjects in their pre-primary curricula to reflect today's society:** these include health and well-being, ethics and citizenship values, social sciences, ICT skills and foreign languages. These additions bring the pre-primary curriculum more into line with primary education (Figure 1.3).
- **In 69% of the jurisdictions, children have a less favourable staff-child ratio during their first year of the primary school than during their final year of ECEC.** In some jurisdictions, such as Chile, the Czech Republic, most German Länders, Mexico and Turkey, there can be up to 15 more children per staff member after transitioning to primary school (see Table 1.5).

Figure 1.3 Jurisdictions are broadening their pre-primary curricula to include emerging learning areas (2011 and 2015)



Note: Information on content areas of the curriculum is drawn from 24 countries and jurisdictions that responded to a survey in both 2011 and 2015. Learning areas are ranked in descending order for the number of jurisdictions declaring that the learning areas were included in their ECEC curriculum framework in 2011. Data by country can be found in the annex to Chapter 4 (Annex 4.A, Table 4.A.2). Source: OECD Network on ECEC "Survey for the Quality Toolbox and ECEC Portal", June 2011 and 2015.

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Challenges

While the topic of transitions is gaining political attention, and progress has been made, challenges to pedagogical continuity remain (Chapter 4). Table 1.3 summarises the most common challenges put forward by the OECD countries participating in this study. It also highlights some good practice policy strategies developed by the various countries to tackle these challenges. The details of these challenges and strategies can be found in Chapter 4, along with a wealth of practical and good practice examples.

Table 1.3 **Challenges and strategies in strengthening pedagogical continuity**

Challenges	Key policy strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences and inconsistencies in curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an integrated curriculum framework and national guidelines • Invest in local knowledge and innovations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of shared pedagogical understanding between the two systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform curricula to ensure better pedagogical continuity • Provide opportunities for staff collaboration • Emphasise the role of primary school in receiving children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent delivery of pedagogy during transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create consistent structures • Create collaborative learning strategies

Challenge 1: Differences and inconsistencies in curricula

Although around two-thirds of jurisdictions have an ECEC curriculum that is either aligned or integrated with that of primary education, jurisdictions report three challenges due to differences between curriculum frameworks. Firstly, attention to transitions can be unbalanced in curricular documents for ECEC and primary education (Norway). Secondly, the goals and focus of education (and care) in curricular documents can be emphasised in different ways in ECEC and in primary education (Slovenia). Thirdly, decentralised responsibility for ECEC and primary education can lead to unaligned pedagogical approaches (Austria and Finland). Strategies to overcome these challenges include developing an integrated national curriculum framework and national guidelines (Austria and Ireland); actively involving preschool teachers and primary education teachers in curriculum development (Slovenia); and investing in local knowledge and innovations (Finland, Japan and Sweden).

Challenge 2: Lack of shared pedagogical understanding between the two systems

Pedagogical boundaries between ECEC and primary education have been recognised as important barriers to pedagogical continuity (Lillejord et al., 2017). Countries noted several ideological or practical boundaries that are hindering collaboration and hence coherence and continuity. For instance, it is difficult for ECEC and primary school teachers to find out about their counterpart's pedagogical practices (Norway). ECEC teachers may have different expectations for how children should be prepared for school and may use different methods and learning approaches than their primary school colleagues (Slovenia). Reluctance to change the working culture, practices and policies of both levels of education is an important continuity challenge in Finland. Innovative solutions developed by countries include reforming curricula to ensure better pedagogical continuity (Finland, Portugal, Scotland and Sweden); providing opportunities for staff collaboration (Austria, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia and Wales); and emphasising the role of primary school in receiving children (Norway's focus on the child-ready school, instead of the school-ready child; Portugal, and Sweden).

Challenge 3: Inconsistent delivery of pedagogy during transitions

Despite efforts to align or integrate the curricula between ECEC and primary schools, inconsistencies in the practice of pedagogy may arise locally (Tarrant and Kagan, 2010). When several types of facilities are involved in the transition phase, and where communication among them is not clear enough, pedagogical practice can be inconsistent. For example, in many Danish municipalities, children graduating from ECEC start in the primary school's after-school programme in the spring, whereas the actual transition to school does not take place until August. This long transition period involves many stakeholders, and there are no requirements for the staff working in the after-school programme to apply the pedagogical curriculum for ECEC, thereby creating a gap between ECEC and primary school curricula. Strategies to tackle these issues include ensuring consistency in structures (Denmark) and creating a collaborative learning strategy (Wales).

Developmental continuity is largely promoted through collaboration

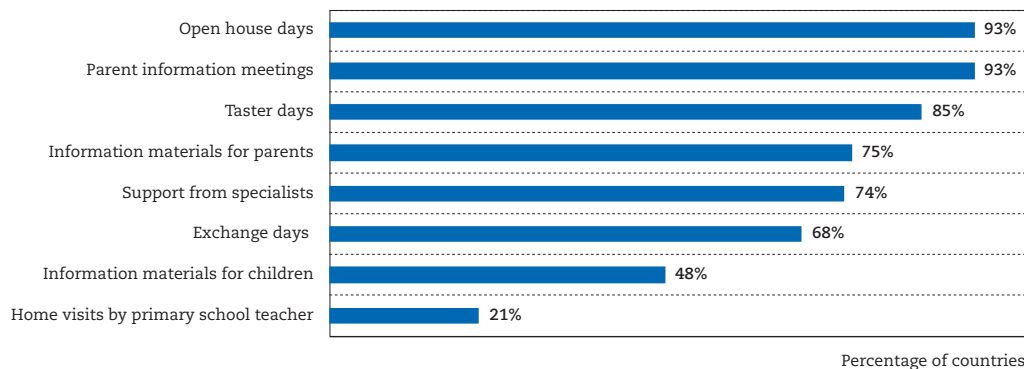
To ensure continuity in young children's development, high-quality ECEC needs to be followed by quality education throughout school, and particularly during the first years of primary education. Collaboration is the watchword for developmental continuity, and is explored here for a range of actors involved in child development, including children themselves, their parents, ECEC and primary school staff, and community services (Chapter 5).

Collaboration is the watchword for developmental continuity

Trends in developmental continuity

Insights from the study's international comparison suggest that:


- **In 93% of jurisdictions, children are being prepared for the transition to primary school** through activities in the final year of ECEC (Figure 1.4). The most common transition activities are visits to the primary school (93%); parent information meetings (93%); and taster days at primary schools (85%).
- **Jurisdictions vary in how they include children's views in transition preparations:** while some jurisdictions recognise the importance of children's participation in their curriculum frameworks and/or education acts (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Wales), in practice children's involvement differs across municipalities, ECEC settings and schools.
- **Most (74%) of jurisdictions offer special needs children specialist support** (e.g. from psychologists or social care workers) during or after transitions. The important role of community services in ensuring developmental continuity in transitions is recognised in the majority of countries.
- **Staff-parent collaboration is likely to be higher in preschool than in primary school.** For example, sharing child development information is much more prevalent in preschool than in primary school (93% and 70%, respectively).
- **Collaboration among teachers takes several forms:** including school and ECEC exchanges, sharing information on child development, and forming collaborative professional learning groups as platforms to exchange ideas and practices across sectors.

Figure 1.4 **Most jurisdictions offer transition practices to prepare children for their transit to school (2016)**

Notes: Information on transition activities is based on 27-28 countries. Complete information differs by question.

Data by country can be found in Annex 5.A, Table 5A.1

Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495393>

Challenges

Table 1.4 summarises the most common challenges mentioned by the OECD countries participating in this study. It also highlights some strategies developed by the various countries to tackle these challenges. The details of these challenges and strategies can be found in Chapter 5, along with a wealth of practical and good practice examples.

Table 1.4 **Challenges and strategies in strengthening collaborations to enhance developmental continuity**

Challenges	Key policy strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's views are not fully accounted for when shaping policies and practices for transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify in education acts or curricula children's right to participate Conduct research involving children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents' lack of awareness about the importance of the transition process hinders their involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and provide support materials for parents on transitions Offer multiple activities to increase parents' awareness of and participation in transitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties engaging parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in the transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt support materials to the needs of immigrant parents and children Develop innovative participatory activities to involve marginalised parents Complement transition activities with parenting programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal relationships and poor understanding between ECEC staff and primary school teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop initiatives to share child development information Organise joint training Create collaborative professional learning groups Integrate both levels of education in the same location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited co-operation with other child development services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish working teams with professionals from different sectors

Challenge 1: Children's views are not fully accounted for when shaping policies and practices for transitions

Participating countries note that children are increasingly viewed as active participants in their own transition and learning. Research shows that transition activities prepared with the participation of children themselves help ensure the child understands and takes ownership of his or her own transition. Listening to children and their experiences helps to better understand

the challenges they face and to improve the support given by parents, preschools and schools. Some countries recognise the importance of children's participation in their curriculum frameworks (Denmark, Norway and Wales (United Kingdom)) and/or in their education acts (Finland, Norway and Sweden). Despite these efforts, children's participation in shaping transition practices is still limited. To foster children's participation, countries have specified the right of children to participate in education acts or curricula or research. In Finland, for example, accounting for children's views in shaping transition practices is taken seriously. Children are not only asked for their perspectives on how they are experiencing the transition, they also help produce knowledge, acting as researchers themselves.

Challenge 2: Parent's lack of awareness about the importance of the transition process hinders their involvement

Despite efforts to involve parents in supporting children's transition to school, countries report that there is still insufficient parental awareness of the importance of preparing children for their transit to school and of the powerful role parents can have during this stage. Attitudes and beliefs combined with this lack of awareness are likely to prevent parents from being active participants in children's transition. For example, parents commonly believe that the transition process is unproblematic and transition activities are hence taken for granted. Parents can benefit from greater awareness of what happens when children transit to primary school; the differences in the new learning environment; and why specific measures or activities are implemented. To tackle this challenge, countries have developed a number of strategies, including developing and providing support materials on transitions for parents (Australia, Austria, France and Wales (United Kingdom)); offering a range of activities to raise awareness of the importance of transitions (Austria, Finland, Slovenia, Sweden); and offering parents multiple opportunities to participate in transition activities (Japan and Germany).

Challenge 3: Difficulties engaging parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in the transition

Parental participation in transitions continues to be limited, especially by parents from disadvantaged groups. These include families with low socio-economic status, families of immigrant origin, indigenous families and families with children with special learning needs. Evidence suggests that opportunities to become familiar with the new learning environment are of particular importance for school adjustment by disadvantaged children (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). Several participating countries report that it is particularly difficult and challenging to engage vulnerable children and their families. Participating countries have implemented a number of strategies to encourage parents from disadvantaged households to be involved in the transition process: adapting support materials to the needs of parents and children (Austria and Norway); developing new participatory activities to involve parents (Wales (United Kingdom) and New Zealand); or complementing transition activities with parenting programmes (Wales (United Kingdom) and Australia).

Challenge 4: Unequal relationships and poor understanding between early childhood education and care staff and primary school teachers

Collaboration between ECEC staff and primary school teachers is key for ensuring continuity in children's learning and development. The majority of countries report that both ECEC staff and primary school teachers collaborate in some way (e.g. sharing information on child development and children's experiences). However, they also report that there is still room for improvement as co-operation requires time and resources and places additional demands on staff (Lillejord et al., 2017). In addition, lack of understanding and awareness of the differences between ECEC and primary education often hamper collaboration between sectors. Strategies developed to foster collaboration across sectors include initiatives to share child development information (Austria, Slovenia, Norway and Wales); organising joint training (Austria and Japan); creating collaborative professional learning

groups (Slovenia and Japan); and integrating both levels of education in the same location (Austria and Scotland (United Kingdom)).

Challenge 5: Limited co-operation with other child development services

The objective of community service collaboration in transitions is to create coherence, continuity and progression in the development and learning of children. The type of community services involved vary, but can include school psychologists, school physicians, speech therapists, auxiliary teaching staff, native-language teachers, social workers and healthcare professionals. Although few countries signal challenges in this area, this does not mean that this type of co-operation is problem-free. It is likely that it suffers from similar hurdles as those faced by the co-operation between ECEC and primary schools, especially when professionals are housed in different ministries. Some countries have established working teams with professionals from different sectors to ensure parents, ECEC settings and schools receive support to ensure children are prepared for the start of school (Austria, Slovenia and New Zealand).

Table 1.5 An overview of early childhood education and care and primary school alignment indicators for smooth transitions

	Governance		Professional continuity						Pedagogical continuity				Developmental continuity	
	Expenditure per child	Monitoring transitions	Statutory salaries	Total teaching working time	Total other duties working time	Number of years of qualifications to entry the profession	Training transitions: pre-service education	Training transitions: professional development	Curriculum continuity	Regulated staff-child ratio	Regulated maximum group size	Average hours of participation in last year of ECEC and first year of primary education	ECEC staff – primary-school teacher collaboration sharing child development info	Parent-staff collaboration sharing child development info
	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Occurrence ²	Alignment ³	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Occurrence ²
Australia	1.59		1.01	1.02		1.00			aligned					
Austria	0.81	ECEC	1.00			1.25	both	both	not aligned or integrated	1.00	1.00	0.84	both	both
Belgium – Flemish Comm	0.76	none	1.00			1.00			not aligned or integrated				both	both
Canada ⁴		both											both	both
Chile	1.55	none	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	ECEC	none	aligned	0.33	1.00	1.00		ECEC
Colombia				0.80	1.27		both	both	aligned	0.83	0.83	1.00	both	both
Croatia		ECEC							integrated		0.82	0.53	ECEC	ECEC
Czech Republic	0.98	both	0.94	1.41	0.60	0.60	both	ECEC	not aligned or integrated	0.43	0.80			both
Denmark		primary	0.87	2.14	0.26	0.88			not aligned or integrated					
Estonia				2.13	0.31									both
Finland	1.23	none	0.75			0.60		none	aligned			0.97		
France	1.04		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00								
Germany	1.13	none		1.85	0.29		both	primary	aligned				both	both
Greece		none	1.00	1.20		1.00	ECEC	ECEC	aligned	1.00	1.00	1.00	ECEC	ECEC
Hungary	0.93	both	0.94	1.94	0.47	0.75	both	both	not aligned or integrated	0.93	0.93	0.80	both	both
Iceland	1.10		0.91			1.00								
Ireland	0.82	none					primary		not aligned or integrated	0.48		0.68		
Israel			1.04	1.22	0.07	1.00								
Italy	0.74	none	1.00	1.24		1.00	both	none	integrated		1.00	1.06	both	both
Japan	0.71	both						both	aligned		1.00	1.27	ECEC	ECEC
Kazakhstan		none					ECEC	both	not aligned or integrated		1.00	0.89	both	both

References

	Value of preschool above 3 percentage points of primary school
	Value of primary school equal to preschool (+/- 3 percentage points)
	Value of preschool below 3 percentage points of primary school
	missing

Table 1.5 An overview of early childhood education and care and primary school alignment indicators for smooth transitions (continued)

	Governance		Professional continuity						Pedagogical continuity				Developmental continuity	
	Expenditure per child	Monitoring transitions	Statutory salaries	Total teaching working time	Total other duties working time	Number of years of qualifications to enter the profession	Training transitions: pre-service education	Training transitions: professional development	Curriculum continuity	Regulated staff-child ratio	Regulated maximum group size	Average hours of participation in last year of ECEC and first year of primary education	ECEC staff – primary-school teacher collaboration sharing child development info	Parent-staff collaboration sharing child development info
	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Occurrence ²	Alignment ³	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Ratio ¹	Occurrence ²	Occurrence ²
Korea	0.78		1.00	0.89	1.08	0.75								
Luxembourg	1.07	none	1.00	1.09		1.00	none	both	integrated	1.00		1.00	both	both
Mexico		none	1.00	0.67		1.00	none	none	aligned	0.63	0.63	1.00		
Netherlands	0.99	none	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00			not aligned or integrated			1.00		
New Zealand	1.39	none					none	none	aligned			0.81	ECEC	both
Norway	1.11	none	0.92	2.03		0.75	both	none	not aligned or integrated			2.40	both	both
Poland	0.80	primary	1.00	1.83	0.76	1.00	both	both	integrated	1.00	1.00	1.25	both	both
Portugal	0.91	primary	1.00	1.27	0.92	1.00			aligned	0.96	0.96	1.18	both	
Slovak Republic	0.84	ECEC	0.96	1.34	0.62	0.80	both	both	not aligned or integrated	1.00	1.00		both	both
Slovenia	0.89	both	1.00	2.10		0.60	both	both	aligned		0.79		both	both
Spain	0.87	both	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.00	both	both	aligned	1.00	1.00	1.00		both
Sweden	1.20	both					both	both	integrated			0.90	ECEC	ECEC
Switzerland	0.34	both	1.00			1.00	both		integrated			0.89	both	both
Turkey	1.10	none		1.50	0.59		both	both	aligned	0.50	0.50	1.00	both	both
United Kingdom – Wales	0.82	primary							integrated	1.00	1.00	0.33		both
United States	0.91		0.98			1.00								
OECD average	0.98		0.97	1.29	0.71	0.92				0.81	0.90	0.99		

Notes:


1. The ratios presented here represent the value of the corresponding preschool indicator divided by the value of the primary school indicator. Hence, values higher than 1.00 mean that the indicator has a higher value in preschool than in primary school; a value equal to 1.00 means that the indicator has a similar value in both levels of education; and, values lower than 1.00 mean that the indicator has a lower value in preschool than in primary school.

2. The values presented here represent the occurrence of this practice in in both ECEC and primary schools, in ECEC settings only, in primary schools only, or in none.

3. The values represented here indicate the level of alignment of the curriculum: aligned, integrated, or not aligned or integrated.

4. Canada: great variation across provinces.

Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016 and OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en>.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495722>

Notes

1. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Wales (United Kingdom) and Kazakhstan (partner country).
2. Table 1.5 also includes information from OECD countries that did not respond to the transitions questionnaire (Australia, Estonia, France, Iceland, Korea, New Zealand and the United States).
3. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students (for further details, consult www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa).

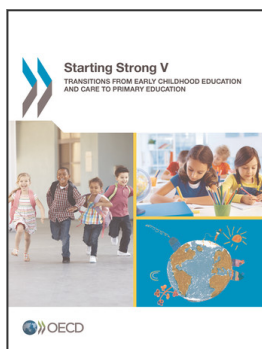
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