Chapter 3

Professional continuity in transitions from early childhood education and care to primary school

How do countries ensure that early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and primary school teachers are prepared and supported enough to help children transition smoothly to primary education? What systems are in place to help them co-operate with each other and who leads these processes? This chapter explores these key questions for professional continuity in transitions. It provides an overview of policies and practices concerning professional continuity across OECD and partner countries, focusing on staff working conditions, staff pre-service education and professional development, teacher support, and leadership and co-ordination. It describes three main challenges highlighted by participating countries that are contributing to continued gaps in professional continuity, along with a wealth of practical strategies for tackling them. Finally it lists some pointers for policy development as food for thought for countries seeking to improve professional continuity for 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

Professional continuity is improving, but gaps remain. Research tells us that:

- **Qualifications matter, but key transition-related competencies make the difference.** These include the ability to create a high-quality pedagogic environment, a good understanding of child development and an ability to praise, comfort and be responsive to children.

- **The use of transition practices is less affected by the qualification level of teaching staff, than the content of the credential or degree.** Teachers specialised in early childhood development, or with greater experience of transitions, are more likely to use a higher number and a wider variety of transition practices.

- **Professional development improves pedagogical and transition practices regardless of teachers' educational background.** It is particularly beneficial when conducted jointly for pre-primary and primary teachers. Its effectiveness is also greater when trainings are specific and coherent, and when staff from the same centre participate together.

- **Professional continuity requires staff support and an enabling environment** – good leadership is the key to providing this.

International comparisons reveal some clear trends

- **Teacher training in transitions is not yet universal,** but many preschool and primary teachers are 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).

- **Qualification levels required for preschool and primary teachers are becoming more equal** in almost two-thirds of countries. In 17 countries both pre-primary and primary teachers require a bachelor's degree, and in 6 countries a master's degree is required at both levels. Qualification requirements still differ in 8 countries.

- **Salaries for pre-primary and primary teachers are generally more aligned,** though in more than one-quarter of countries, statutory salaries at pre-primary level are on average at least 4% less than those of primary school teachers.

- **Pre-primary teachers often have less time for non-teaching tasks** – such as planning transitions – than their primary school peers (11 out of 19 jurisdictions). Six countries (Chile, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Scotland and England) already ensure the same time for teaching and non-teaching tasks at both levels.

- **Many countries provide additional transition support,** but mainly in the form of guidelines, websites or books. Additional staff, such as assistants or advisers, to help facilitate transitions are scarce in all but a few countries (e.g. Austria, Colombia and Japan).

Countries have developed a wealth of strategies to address the professional continuity challenges affecting transitions

Challenge 1. Discrepancies between status and perspectives of ECEC and primary school teachers

- Strategy: Equalise pay for qualified pre-primary and primary school teachers, e.g. Belgium, Korea and the Netherlands.

- Strategy: Align levels and content of initial training, e.g. Sweden provides a common core curriculum for the pre-service education of all teachers of children from ages 1 to 16.

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

- Strategy: Offer more – and more relevant – transition-specific training, e.g. Victoria's (Australia) project to build teacher and staff capacity for helping indigenous children's school transition.

- Strategy: Meet teacher and staff support needs, e.g. Slovenia's counselling service, which operates directly in kindergartens or schools.

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Key policy messages (continued)

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

- Strategy: Make legal provisions for the exchange of information, e.g. Austria's recent change to the school law, which obliges children's parents and guardians to share kindergarten reports with the primary school at the time of enrolment

- Strategy: Ensure adequate time and physical conditions for co-operation, e.g. Italy's reorganisation of state schools into comprehensive institutes covering children from 3 to 14 years old.

Several policy pointers arise from this research

- Match demands on staff with resources: ensure that the increased policy attention on transitions not only yields new guidelines and requirements, but also tangible support and relevant training.

- Embrace and support the role of leaders in ECEC and primary schools: leaders' roles are crucial for inter-institutional co-operation and staff professional development in the context of transitions, especially in systems with broad local and setting-level autonomy.

- Ensure that ECEC staff and primary school teachers learn together and from each other: a better mutual understanding of the approaches and goals of both levels, for instance through joint training, can facilitate co-operation and smooth transitions for children.

- Strengthen the evidence base for transition-related training and guidance: research on professional continuity is still limited, but the diversity of approaches developed locally and nationally can yield many lessons.

Introduction

Professional continuity ensures a smooth transition from early childhood education and care to primary school through coherent pedagogical and child development practices. Professional continuity requires that centre leaders, primary school principals, early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff and primary school teachers are prepared for collaboration and transitions in their pre-service and professional training (see Box 3.1), and that they receive relevant and sufficient support (Neuman, 2007). Thus, while professional continuity is crucially dependent on staff training and development, it is also framed by the structural and procedural environment in which they operate. Professional continuity can be seen as a facilitating factor for ensuring continuity of pedagogical practices across transitions, discussed in Chapter 4, and continuity from a child development perspective, as discussed in Chapter 5.

This chapter begins with an overview of the research on professional continuity. It then draws on a literature review, in-depth country reports by 8 OECD countries[1] and 1 partner country (Kazakhstan), a questionnaire completed by 27 OECD countries and 3 partner countries (Colombia, Croatia and Kazakhstan) in 2015 and 2016, as well as the OECD's *Education at a Glance* report (OECD, 2016a), to explore what countries are doing to promote professional continuity (see Annex A at the report for details on the methodology).[2] It analyses trends in staff working conditions, pre-service training and professional development, teacher support, and leadership and co-ordination. The chapter then identifies three key challenges highlighted by countries and strategies they have developed to address them. It concludes with a selection of policy pointers to inform future policy discussions.

Box 3.1 **Key definitions**

Throughout this chapter 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.

The term "teacher" is used in this report to refer to the person taking the lead in the classroom or playroom in both pre-primary and primary settings, although a variety of other names – such as educators, pedagogues or childcare practitioners – are used in different countries. The literal English translations of the national terms are only used when discussing the specific country. Professional development refers here to any activity, e.g. training courses or workshops designed to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise of ECEC or primary school staff. Pre-service or initial education or training refer to any formal or informal education or training that occurs before ECEC staff or primary school teachers begin working with children.

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.

What does the literature tell us about the importance of professional continuity?

Research shows that staff qualifications, pre-service education, professional development, working conditions and leadership characteristics matter for transitions in three ways. First, they affect staff and teachers' pedagogical practices, instructional approaches and expectations, and therefore have an impact on the overall quality of ECEC. Second, their alignment across levels ensures coherence and allows children who transfer from ECEC settings to primary school to experience a less disruptive transition. Third, these factors are associated with a rise in the use of specific transitions practices, which are the intentional attempts to help ensure smoother transitions by creating support and familiarity (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008). In these three ways, they influence the quality of transitions and foster children's development, well-being and learning outcomes (OECD, 2012).

This section summarises the most recent evidence on the importance of supporting and developing ECEC and primary school staff and leaders for ensuring children's successful transitions, suggesting policy implications for what types of professional continuity matter and how they can be encouraged. It explores how ECEC and primary school quality, as well as the quality of transitions, are affected by staff and teachers' qualifications, support for staff, and leaders' characteristics. It builds on evidence from previous Starting Strong publications and recent literature findings to compare the respective roles of ECEC and primary school staff in preparing children during this period.

Staff pre-service education is key for supporting children's development

Staff critically influence the process and content quality of ECEC (Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson, 2011; Sheridan, 2009). "[W]ell-educated, well-trained professionals are the key factor in providing high-quality ECEC with the most favourable cognitive and social outcomes for children. Research shows that the behaviour of those who work in ECEC matters and that this is related to their education and training" (OECD, 2012: 144). At primary level too there is a wide consensus in the literature about the importance of teachers' qualifications as a predictor for student's performance

over and above school and student factors (Betts, Rueben and Dannenberg, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, 1991; Hawk, Coble and Swanson, 1985; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 1998; Strauss and Sawyer, 1986).

According to a comprehensive German research project, key transition-specific competencies for pre-primary staff and primary education teachers include basic transition-related pedagogical competencies; transition-related observations, documentation, analysis and diagnostics; knowledge of the context of transition, with regard to laws, regulation and frameworks at different levels; and assisting children during transitions (Neuss et al., 2014). A good understanding of child development and an ability to praise, comfort and be responsive to children are also key for high quality ECEC services (OECD, 2012). Neuss et al., (2014) also stress the importance of co-operation with parents; across ECEC centres and primary school, and by social institutions with children and families; attitudes, reflection and professional self-image with regard to transitions; transition-related evaluation supervision and quality assurance; and competencies acquired through independent research or practice. Specialised education and training may also foster process quality dimensions, such as stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions; and staff ability to create stimulating learning environments (Katz, 1983; OECD, 2012; Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson, 2011; Shonkoff and Philips, 2000).

Building on a review of existing literature, Neuss et al. (2014) created a competency-based model of qualifications related to transitions for ECEC staff and primary school teachers. It distinguishes three levels of competency: 1) basic pedagogical competencies (basis); 2) basic pedagogical competencies with regard to transitions (width); and 3) specific transition-related competencies (depth). They argue that without the acquisition of basic pedagogical competencies, it is impossible to understand the issue of transitions and acquire wider competencies that are somewhat related to transitions, or in-depth transition-specific competencies. For instance, the ability to co-operate with parents would be seen as a basic competency, the ability to discuss children's developmental processes with regard to school entry with parents would be perceived as "width", while "depth" would describe the ability to discuss with parents the concrete and impending transition of a child to primary school, the demands of the school, the design of the transition and individual aspects of the child. This section follows this train of thought, acknowledging the importance of more general pedagogical skills as preconditions for successful transitions and transition-specific practices.

Transitions benefit from continuity in staff and teachers' pre-service education

When ECEC staff and primary teachers' pre-service education is aligned, it is much easier to ensure continuity in the service children receive (Day and Russel, 2010). Differences in qualifications and status of ECEC staff and primary school teachers might create tensions and affect relationships and the quality of co-operation. To ensure the quality of ECEC, staff should have a pre-service education level comparable to that of primary teachers, in order to be similarly prepared, and should also have an equivalent professional status (ILO, 2013). This is not always the case, however. In Ireland, for example, preschool teachers are required to have at least one year of post-secondary non-tertiary level training, while primary teachers receive separate training at university level. Studies suggest that this difference in status is reflected during the transition process into the first year of primary school: teachers of the first year of primary do not feel that preschool teachers are properly preparing children for the transition (INTO, 2008; O'Kane and Hayes, 2010). On the other hand, teachers in primary education may well have different expectations to those of ECEC staff for the developmental abilities of children, have a tendency to focus more on pre academic activities and have a limited understanding of ECEC pedagogies (O'Kane and Hayes, 2010).

A study in the United States found that ECEC staff and primary teachers who have an early childhood credential or a specialised ECEC degree make greater use of transition practices than those whose degrees are not specialised in ECEC (Rous et al., 2008). Another study also showed that primary

school teachers who received training in ECEC during their pre-service education are more effective in the early grades and are better equipped with the knowledge of developmentally-appropriate teaching and learning (Britto and Limlingan, 2012). The content of the programme, therefore, seems to have a strong impact on the quality of transitions (Bohan-Baker and Little, 2002; Rous et al., 2008; 2010). In contrast, holding a bachelor's degree or higher did not affect the use of these practices. ECEC teachers with a diploma which focuses on early childhood development or with transition-specific training were more likely to use more transition practices (i.e. communication with parents; open houses; making written records available; facilitating contacts between parents) as well as different types of practices (e.g. individual, group, co-ordination) (Rous et al., 2010).

Children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds struggle more than their well-off peers during transitions and face greater risk of losing the developmental abilities gained during preschool once they reach primary school (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008; Melhuish et al., 2015). Teachers' practices are crucial to help children adapt during the transition phase, and they are especially beneficial for children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (Schulting et al., 2005). For example, collaborative practices between staff, parents and children can improve equity in education (Melhuish, 2014). Transition practices for diversity are therefore key to help disadvantaged children achieve successful transitions. A case study in Queensland (Australia), found that ECEC and primary teachers who have completed diversity studies as a part of their formal education achieve a higher quality diversity environment (Petriwskyj, Thorpe and Tayler, 2014). These teachers used more complex transition approaches (which recognised diversity, the benefits of a supportive classroom and connectedness) than teachers who had only been exposed to occasional training in diversity (see also Box 3.10 later in the chapter).

Offering joint pre-service education for ECEC and primary school pedagogical staff can help build greater understanding of their respective practices and philosophies, and develop shared knowledge of practices (Neuman, 2005; Woodhead and Moss, 2007). For example, evidence from New Zealand shows that primary school teachers who make links in the classroom between learning in ECEC settings and in primary school are more likely to motivate children and develop their sense of confidence as learners in the new system (Peters, 2010). Such approaches are particularly beneficial for transitions.

Both content and level of teachers' training are important for development, well-being and learning

Pre-service qualifications are a key factor in successful transitions, affecting staff and teachers' pedagogical practices and beliefs and therefore their capacity for preparing and reassuring children during the transition phase. Highly qualified ECEC staff and primary teachers are better placed to foster enriched stimulating environments and deliver the high-quality pedagogy associated with improved learning and well-being (Britto and Limlingan, 2012; Early et al., 2007; Fontaine et al., 2006; Litjens and Taguma, 2010; Phillipsen et al., 1997). Pre-service qualifications may also have a small but significant link with emotional process quality,[3] as a recent study in the Netherlands has shown (Slot et al., 2015).

Research shows that the level of education of ECEC staff matters for children development. Staff qualifications are positively associated with ECEC service quality and have a positive impact on children's language and reasoning; on staff-parent relationships and on the quality of playroom activities, interactions and programme structure (Manning et al., 2017). For instance, Burchinal et al. (2002) have shown evidence that the best predictor of the process and environmental quality of ECEC[4] is that staff hold a bachelor's degree. Faour (2010) also found that in developed countries university degrees are associated with a greater use of child-centred pedagogies and language-stimulation practices.

The level of staff education by itself might be insufficient to explain variation in children's developmental outcomes in ECEC, however (Burchinal et al., 2008; Early et al., 2007; Gialamas et al., 2014). Evidence suggests that the actual impact of staff or teachers' qualifications depends on the training programme's specific characteristics, quality, level, duration, and content (Burchinal et al., 2008; Kagan, Kauerz and Tarrant, 2008; Pardo and Adlerstein, 2015). For instance, there is evidence that among ECEC educators with a four-year university degree, those with a specialised certificate in early childhood development are most likely to improve ECEC classroom quality (Pianta et al., 2005; Sylva et al., 2004; Zaslow et al., 2004). In a ten-country study, Montie, Xiang and Schweinhart (2006) found that the duration of ECEC staff's pre-service education was strongly associated with children's language scores at age seven. Playroom quality also seems to be higher when educators have at least a four-year long university degree (Early et al., 2007; Howes, Phillips and Whitebook, 1992).

Holding credentials in ECEC not only helps staff to have a positive impact on children's future scores in language and cognitive development – it also benefits the quality of the centre (Torquati, Raikes and Huddleston-Casas, 2007). For example, the English Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study found that highly qualified staff have a positive impact on the behaviour of their less-qualified colleagues when working together (Sammons, 2010).

Primary school teachers' effectiveness also seems to be related to certain characteristics of pre-service education (Ehrenberg and Brewer, 1995; Harris and Sass, 2011). While a number of authors found that there is no difference in the effects of holding a Master's degree or a less advanced qualification (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006; Rowan, Correnti, and Miller, 2002), some others show evidence that high qualifications are positively associated with student achievement when they are subject-specific (i.e. in reading and mathematics) (Ballou and Podgursky, 2000; Croninger et al., 2007; Harris and Sass, 2011). Insights from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) in the United States suggest that primary teachers who have a degree specialised in elementary education boost students' reading performance, even compared to teachers who have more advanced degrees (Croninger et al., 2007). The effect of teachers' qualifications is still more pronounced when aggregated at the school level: the higher the share of teachers holding advanced degrees in one school, the higher the impact on students' performance (Croninger et al, 2007).

Specialised professional development has a positive impact on the use of transition practices

As ECEC staff and primary teachers' pre-service education levels (however high) may not be sufficient to ensure high quality interactions and pedagogical practices, ongoing professional development can fill in knowledge and skills gaps or update teachers with new insights in specific areas (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2014a). There are two ways in which professional development is important for transitions. Firstly, research finds that professional development is linked to higher quality skills among ECEC staff regardless of their educational background (Burchinal et al., 2002), and therefore to greater child well-being and development across settings. Research on professional development for primary school teachers yields similar results (Angrist and Lavy, 1998; Bressoux, Kramarz and Prost, 2008). Secondly, professional development is key to ensure that all staff and teachers know which are the best practices for successful transitions and that they have a good understanding of the practices and beliefs in both ECEC and primary.

Targeted professional development helps create the conditions for well-managed transitions

Research finds that professional development is linked to higher quality skills among ECEC staff regardless of their educational background (Burchinal et al., 2002). Professional development is vital to inform practitioners of the latest findings on effective practices and curriculum content (Litjens and Taguma, 2010; Sheridan, 2009). Specialised professional development has greater effects on process quality than pre-service education, particularly on collaborative work; support for play;

and support for early literacy, mathematics and science (Assel, et al., 2007; de Haan et al., 2013; Sylva et al., 2007). Evidence from France suggests that a targeted, well-defined and intensive pedagogical training for pre-primary staff has important effects on children's short- term reading outcomes; while specialised workshops raised language scores (Burchinal, 2002; 2012). Professional development that is focused on early childhood development is linked to higher quality in the provision of care[5] (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003; Zaslow et al., 2004). A solid knowledge of developmental psychology in early childhood is a key requirement for competent transition practices appropriate to children's age (Neuss et al., 2014). Honig and Hirallal (1998) show that this factor is more relevant for children's outcomes than staff education level or years of experience.

At primary school level too, professional development for teachers has a positive impact on student's performance. In Australia, the KidsMatter Primary programme, which provides resources and support to staff and teachers on children's mental health and adjustment risk, has been found to improve student well being and improve student learning during the transition year, as reported by teachers (Hirst et al., 2011). Similarly, larger impacts of professional development have been found by other researchers in France and Israel (Angrist and Lavy, 1998). In a quasi-experimental study on third-grade students in French jurisdictions, Bressoux, Kramarz and Prost (2008) found evidence that professional development had a positive effect on students' scores in mathematics – except for low-achieving students, for whom the effect of class-sizes overshadows the effect of training. They also observed that untrained teachers with subject-specific pre-service education are as effective as those who received professional development.

Professional development opportunities also affect teachers' job satisfaction: the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) data show that classroom practice, as well as training in content and pedagogy, has a small but positive impact on primary school teacher's' abilities, confidence and job satisfaction (OECD, 2014a). Professional development can have a positive impact on teachers' self-efficacy and their ability to boost students' performance. Support from settings managers also affects staff job satisfaction and performance (Ackerman, 2006). In-service training opportunities can decrease teachers' stress and increase self-efficacy and job satisfaction, especially through programmes that are specialised and targeted (Greller, 2006).

In order to be true learning experiences and to enable positive outcomes, professional development has to be targeted to staff needs (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003). The effectiveness of professional development is greater when it is specific and coherent, and when it focuses on practice, monitoring, and implementation of knowledge (Zaslow et al., 2010). It is also more effective when teachers from the same centre participate together – and when the training is aligned for both pre-primary and primary teachers.

Professional development can facilitate building coherence and continuity across levels

Professional development is key for building coherence and continuity across levels and for ensuring smooth transitions. It allows ECEC staff and primary teachers to understand the links between the practices that are implemented at each level and the need for synergy in children's learning and developmental cycle (Stipek et al., 2017). Professional development can also help ensure that all staff and teachers are kept updated on the best practices for successful transitions.

Staff and teachers' qualifications and training also contribute to smoother transitions through their impact on the use of specific transition practices. Training ECEC and school staff on how to work with families also supports better quality transitions given the importance of home-school connections and the complex set of barriers to family involvement (Shartrand et al., 1997). The notion of having teachers trained in child development theory and practice aims to improve child development outcomes, with improved teacher-child processes and interactions. In a study in the United States, using a nationally representative survey of kindergarten teachers, Early et al.,

(2001) were able to link teachers' characteristics with the use of transition practices. They found evidence that teachers who received training in transition facilitation to kindergarten were likely to use more – and more diverse – transition practices. Training in transitions was found to be more important than education level, years of experience or certification. Similarly, another study found a correlation between professional development focused in transitions and the use of transition practices in preschool (Rous et al., 2008).

Professional development programmes that are addressed to pre-primary and primary teachers together are particularly beneficial for transitions. For instance, in a small community in Alabama (United States) a series of joint workshops and training sessions on language development and literacy were held for preschool and primary school teachers. This training intended to smooth the transition process for children by increasing the understanding of the fundamentals of each level (Emfinger, 2012). In the Australian KidsMatter Primary initiative, teachers, parents and children participate in joint training programmes, and each stakeholder has access to a wealth of resources and tools to ease the transition to primary education (KidsMatter, 2016). This type of integrated pre-service training, which is already being implemented by some countries, implies that pedagogical staff and teachers of various education levels attend the same training courses and thereby obtain the same common core knowledge of theory and practice in teaching (Arnold et al., 2006). It is also useful for the harmonisation of preschool and primary teachers' status and their mutual recognition (Neuman, 2005).

Staff require support and an enabling environment

There are several factors that influence retention rates and children's development and outcomes (OECD, 2014). Apart from their education, there are external factors (such as the working environment, salary and work benefits) that matter for ECEC staff's sense of self-efficacy and their ability to meet children's needs (Shonkoff and Philips, 2000). Staff need to believe in their effectiveness, and feel able to organise and execute the courses of action needed to achieve the desired results in the class or playroom (Fives, 2003). At both ECEC and primary level, negative self-efficacy perceptions and a difficult working environment affect job and professional satisfaction and are associated with teacher absenteeism and attrition[6] (Evans, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Klassen and Chiu, 2010; Sargent and Hannum, 2005; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011; Zembylas and Papanastasiou, 2004). Huntsman (2008), for instance, finds that low wages affect staff-child interactions and turnover rates. A lack of staffing stability, in turn, may negatively affect child development (CCl, 2006; and see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 **Why stability matters for transitions**

There is evidence that staff and teachers' years of experience have an impact on transition practices. Preschool teachers with more than eight years of experience working with preschool children were found to be likely to use more – and more individualised – transition practices (Rous et al., 2010).

Some authors suggest that primary school teachers' experience is positively associated with students' performance (Rockoff, 2004; Leigh, 2010). For example, a study in Australia using panel data finds that years of experience is the most relevant factor to explain primary teachers' effectiveness (Leigh, 2010). For pre-primary level, the effect of experience is less important but it is still present (Bouguen, 2016). There is evidence that the stability of ECEC staff within a school and within a group of children favours confidence and better interactions between staff and children, stimulating children's development, well-being and learning (OECD, 2012).

This means that working conditions can be a facilitating or hindering factor for professional continuity, since co-ordination between the two levels requires stability in the staff in charge. Lack of continuity not only affects transitions, but is also adverse for child development, making staff and teachers' turnover rates of great policy interest (Day and Russel, 2010).

Some other factors also affect job satisfaction directly, including working conditions; leadership; professional development opportunities; mentoring, appraisal and feedback practices; and learning support staff. To varying extents, all these factors are associated with staff and teachers' ability to complete their tasks; interact positively with children; and support and foster children's development (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2014a). These external factors are of great interest because they are adjustable. One of these factors is working conditions (ILO, 2013). Evidence shows that ECEC staff's perception of their working conditions is reflected in their behaviour (Burchinal et al., 2002; Clarke-Stewart et al., 2002; Huntsman, 2008) and has a strong link with primary school teachers' attrition (Borman and Dowling, 2008).

Wages are one of the most relevant factors affecting working conditions, job satisfaction and teachers' effectiveness (Huntsman, 2008; Moon and Burbank, 2004; Murnane and Olsen, 1990). There is evidence that low wages in ECEC affect staff behaviour towards children and increase turnover rates, which has a negative impact on transitions (Huntsman, 2008). Furthermore, low wages prevent skilled professionals from choosing to work as ECEC staff (Manlove and Guzell, 1997) or as primary school teachers (Baugh and Stone, 1982, or Rickman and Parker, 1990). Primary teachers can also be led to change school because of wage variations (Theobald and Gritz, 1996).

Workloads are another factor in job satisfaction. There is evidence that ECEC staff who report having heavy workloads are less effective (De Schipper et al., 2007). At primary level, a heavy workload is also associated with lower effectiveness and self-efficacy (Abel and Sewell, 1999; Betoret, 2006; Kokkinos, 2007; Schwarzer and Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007). Workloads are also one of the most important factors in primary teachers' attrition (Smithers and Robinson, 2003; see also Buchanan, 2010).

Studies find that material support, such as transition guidelines, can improve teachers' effectiveness and decrease their stress. In a multi-case study in Finland, Ahtola et al. (2011) examined the factors affecting the implementation of transition practices between preschool and elementary school in two Finnish towns. Their findings suggest that transition practices were affected by the quality of transition guidelines. They found that schools which used more transition practices were located in a town where the local administration had provided more elaborate, comprehensive and clear guidelines. In the best performing town, the guidelines had been the result of a collaborative process between the local administration, staff and parents, whereas in the lower-performing town the guidelines had been imposed more externally, from the national level.

Another way of improving teachers' working conditions is by hiring teaching assistants (Chartier and Geneix, 2006; Finn and Pannozzo, 2004). Learning support staff can have a positive effect on teachers' effectiveness and children's development and outcomes, provided that they fulfil some conditions. Building on the Tennessee's Project STAR, a longitudinal state-wide project in the United States, Gerber et al. (2001) found that students in regular-size classes with a teaching assistant for two or three years performed better in reading tests than those without, or for only one year. An evaluation of the Danish "School Development" programme showed positive effects of teacher assistants on primary school students' well-being and learning, particularly students with special needs (Rambøll, 2011). The study also found that the educational background of assistants had less effect on outcomes than other characteristics, such as practical experience. The positive link between the use of assistants and teachers' job satisfaction and classroom environment were also confirmed by the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project in the United Kingdom (Blatchford et al., 2012). They also found a positive impact on student's learning and behaviour, although no associations were found with academic progress. This limitation is also confirmed by Mujis and Reynolds (2003) who examined data from the "Numeracy Support Assistants" (NSA) programme, and found no effects of the numeracy assistants on low-achievement students' mathematics scores at primary school level.

Leadership is pivotal for supporting staff and teachers, and making transitions work well for children

ECEC managers and primary school principals who want to ensure smooth transitions need to be knowledgeable about the latest reforms and policies and how they can affect the implementation of transitions. They should also be knowledgeable about the importance of early childhood education (Desimone et al., 2004), particularly since collaboration over transitions with other institutions and decisions on professional development are often their responsibility (see the section below on "To what extent are countries ensuring professional continuity?"). Since little research has been done on the direct effects of leadership on transitions, this section outlines the impacts of good leadership on working conditions and children's outcomes.

Several studies show that ECEC centre quality[7] is affected by leadership factors (Bloom and Bella, 2005; Grey, 2004; Rodd, 2001; Siraj-Bratchford and Manni, 2007; Vannebo and Gotvassli, 2014). For instance, the evaluation of the EPPE project in the UK found that leaders' characteristics have an impact on child development and well-being (Siraj-Bratchford et al, 2003; Sylva et al., 1999), as did the Effective Leadership in Early Years (ELEY) study (Siraj-Bratchford and Manni, 2007). A growing body of evidence in the United States suggests that the level of formal education of the heads of ECEC centres is a strong predictor of overall centre quality (Bloom, 1992). The leadership development programme Taking Charge of Change (TCC), a 10-month training for ECEC leaders, was found to be effective in reducing staff turnover and improving communication with families – key elements of developmental continuity during transitions (Talan et al., 2014). Likewise, in an evaluation of the National Head Start/Public School Early Childhood Transition Demonstration Project, Ramey et al. (2000) found that leadership quality was an important factor to explain the variation in the performance of different local programmes. In the most successful ones, leaders were competent, committed and strong; whereas in the less successful, they were less experienced, less able to train and monitor supervising programme staff, and less effective in working with the school and community personnel.

Leaders also affect centre quality through staff composition (hiring and firing staff) and, as mentioned above, through staff professional development opportunities (Branch et al., 2009). In many cases leaders may be involved in determining to what extent an ECEC centre provides support to and stimulates professional development, and whether it covers some or all costs (Ackerman, 2006). Leadership can also foster a high level of staff quality by motivating and encouraging team work and the sharing of information (OECD, 2006; 2012). There is broad evidence that staff job satisfaction is influenced by management practices (Aubrey et al., 2013; Mujis et al., 2004; Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000; Wagner and French, 2010); and that leaders' decisions have an impact on the levels of staff turnover (Bloom, 1997; Hayden, 1997; Whelan, 1993).

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) on primary school teachers and principals in six countries highlights the important role of leadership, too. It finds that a stronger engagement in instructional leadership is related to a stronger focus on teacher collaboration in schools, and that instructional leadership is positively related to the reflective dialogue of teachers. In primary schools in which principals are engaged in instructional leadership, teachers more often collaborate and engage in reflective dialogue, as well as in practices where teachers observe other teachers' classes, and have a shared sense of purpose. Principals who strongly engage with distributed leadership initiatives tend to work with teachers who feel a greater shared responsibility for their school's issues because they work at a school in which people are willing to support each other (OECD, 2016b).

Leaders also seem to have an influence on primary school students' achievement. For instance, Dhuey and Smith (2014) estimated the effectiveness of principals in raising maths and reading scores between grades four and seven. Using longitudinal administrative data from British Columbia, they

found that principals' fixed effects were as important as or even slightly more important than teachers' effects on student achievements. Even if some studies show no effect or even a negative correlation between leaders' education and school performance (Ballou and Podgursky, 1993; Clark et al., 2009), there is important evidence that the effectiveness of preschool and primary leaders is dependent on their education level and professional development (Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2008; Sylva et al., 2010), as well as on their experience (Ballou and Podgursky, 1993; Kontos and Fine, 1989; Philips et al., 1987).

Regarding leader's experience in primary school, Branch et al. (2009) found that tenure slightly increases principal effectiveness with regard to school quality. They measured principal effectiveness by differences in students' mathematic performance and found that length of service is one of the factors explaining principal effectiveness variation. They also found an association between principal quality and changes in the quality of teachers, and that principal effectiveness variation is larger in high poverty and low achieving schools. Likewise, Clark et al. (2009) found in a study in New York City that principals' tenure and primary students' scores in mathematics were positively associated. However, in another study, Dhuey and Smith (2010) showed that leaders' tenure does not seem to affect students' performance when isolated from school, teachers and students factors, although it leads to slight improvements in tests scores when experience is longer than five years at the same school.

Research gaps and avenues for future research

While it is clear from this literature review that a minimum level of staff quality is needed for the development of transition-specific skills and practices, the link to the quality of transitions is often implicit rather than explicit in the literature. There is also little empirical evidence on how these factors influence the use of transition practices. More research is needed into the impact of various qualifications, training approaches, support and leadership on the learning and well-being environment for children, as well as their development around the time they transition to primary school and beyond. Some of this effect may take place through the proxies of pedagogical and developmental continuity, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

To what extent are countries ensuring professional continuity?

This section shows how professional continuity is organised in participating jurisdictions. It provides information on the characteristics, working conditions, pre-service training and professional development of ECEC staff and primary school teachers; the role leaders and principals play; the support staff receive; and how different institutions co-operate to support them. The data stem from (1) the OECD's *Education at a Glance* report (OECD, 2016a), covering all OECD countries and key partners; (2) country responses to the OECD's survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education; and (3) information provided in detailed Country Background Reports by nine countries.[8] For further details on the scope and methodology, please refer to Annex A at the end of the report.

Staff characteristics and working conditions vary greatly

As we have seen above, working conditions have an influence on transition quality and continuity. This first section of the international comparisons therefore provides an overview of the workforce and working conditions in the later years of the ECEC system and at primary school.

A greater range of professionals work in ECEC than at primary school

Staff who can work with both ECEC and primary school-age children may facilitate a mutual understanding of pedagogical and instructional practices and may help cater for children's needs in

a more continuous manner, within and outside primary school. Across countries there is a variety of staff types working in ECEC and primary school systems. These include pre-primary and primary school teachers, pedagogues (see Glossary), care workers, educators and counsellors (Table 3.A.1). Broadly speaking, the following categories can be distinguished:

- **Teachers and comparable practitioners:** Pre-primary and primary education teachers have the most responsibility for a group of children in the classroom or playroom. In pre-primary education they may also be called pedagogues, educators, childcare practitioners or pedagogical staff, while the term teacher is almost universally used in primary schools. Data sourced from the OECD's *Education at a Glance* report (OECD, 2016a) exclusively cover this category.

- **Assistants:** Assistants support the "teacher" in a group of children or class. Assistants are more common in pre-primary education than in primary education. They usually have lower qualification requirements than teachers, which may range from no formal requirements to, for instance, vocational education and training.

- **Staff for individual children:** These staff members work with some children only, for example children with special educational needs or those who do not speak the language of the centre or school. They may be in the setting or playroom/classroom every day, or only for selected time slots or lessons.

- **Advisors or counsellors:** Professionals who work across classes and/or playgroups, providing additional guidance and support to teachers, other staff or children, generally or specific to transitions. This category only appears in a few countries.

In the majority of countries, there are at least some staff entitled to work with children of both pre-primary and primary education age. As illustrated in Table 3.A.1, 40% of responding countries (12 out of 30) have teachers (staff leading a class or playroom) who are entitled to work across pre-primary and primary education settings around the time of transition: Canada (with variations between provinces and territories), Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Staff in this first group could, for instance, be pre-primary and primary teachers with overlapping roles for the end of ECEC or the beginning of primary schooling.

In another 43% of responding countries (13 out of 30) there are staff members working across the ECEC and primary school age group who do not have the lead pedagogical role in class or playrooms and who tend to hold a more care-oriented or child development-focused qualification, such as social pedagogues, child and youth workers, or language specialists. In some cases they may be the lead pedagogical staff in ECEC settings, but can only be involved in auxiliary functions or out-of-school care for school-aged children. Some of these countries overlap with the ones mentioned previously: Austria, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Wales (United Kingdom). In Slovenia, for instance, preschool teachers can work as "second teachers" in the first year of primary schooling. In other cases, there may be a category of professionals holding an advisory or co-ordination role, such as in Colombia or Slovenia.

Working conditions still *differ across education levels*

As indicated in the literature review, working conditions matter for transitions as they can play an important role in retaining qualified staff and ensuring high-quality learning and environments for children. They also affect the relative status of professionals across ECEC and primary schools, and the enabling conditions for co-operation, such as the time available for co-operation and professional development. This means that working conditions can be a facilitating or hindering factor for professional continuity.

While the average statutory annual salaries of pre-primary teachers are only around USD 1 000 (in purchasing power parity), or 4%, below those of primary school teachers across the OECD, there are sharp differences between countries.[9] In 10 of the 28 countries providing data on this topic,[10] pre-primary teachers earn less than primary school teachers, by more than 30% in Scotland (United Kingdom) and Finland, while they earn slightly more in Australia and Israel (see Figure 3.4).[11] In 16 countries salaries are the same. In Israel, one reason for the higher salaries at pre-primary level is that pre-primary salaries increased by more than 40% between 2005 and 2014 as a result of the gradual implementation of the *New Horizon* reform from 2008. This includes higher teacher pay in exchange for longer working hours. This compares to an increase of 27% at the primary level. In most of the countries with a lower salary at pre-primary level, this is linked to the fact that pre-primary teachers' pre-service education is shorter than for primary school teachers (OECD, 2016a).

In most countries (3 out of 14, 21%), primary teacher[12] salary costs per child exceed the salary costs of pre-primary teachers, despite higher child-teacher ratios on average in primary schools (Figure 3.1). Teachers' salary cost per child is calculated based on teachers' salaries, the number of hours of instruction for children, their number of hours of teaching, and the estimated group size (OECD, 2016a). Even though expenditure per child is slightly higher on average at pre-primary level, the salary cost is lower for pre-primary than for primary in most countries, indicating that teacher salaries make up a smaller share of costs in pre-primary. This can partly be explained by the fact that other staff, such as assistants, play a greater role in ECEC than in primary school.

Figure 3.1 **In almost all countries salary costs of primary teachers are higher than those of pre-primary teachers (2014)**

Salary costs of teachers (% GDP per capita) per child, and child-teaching staff ratios
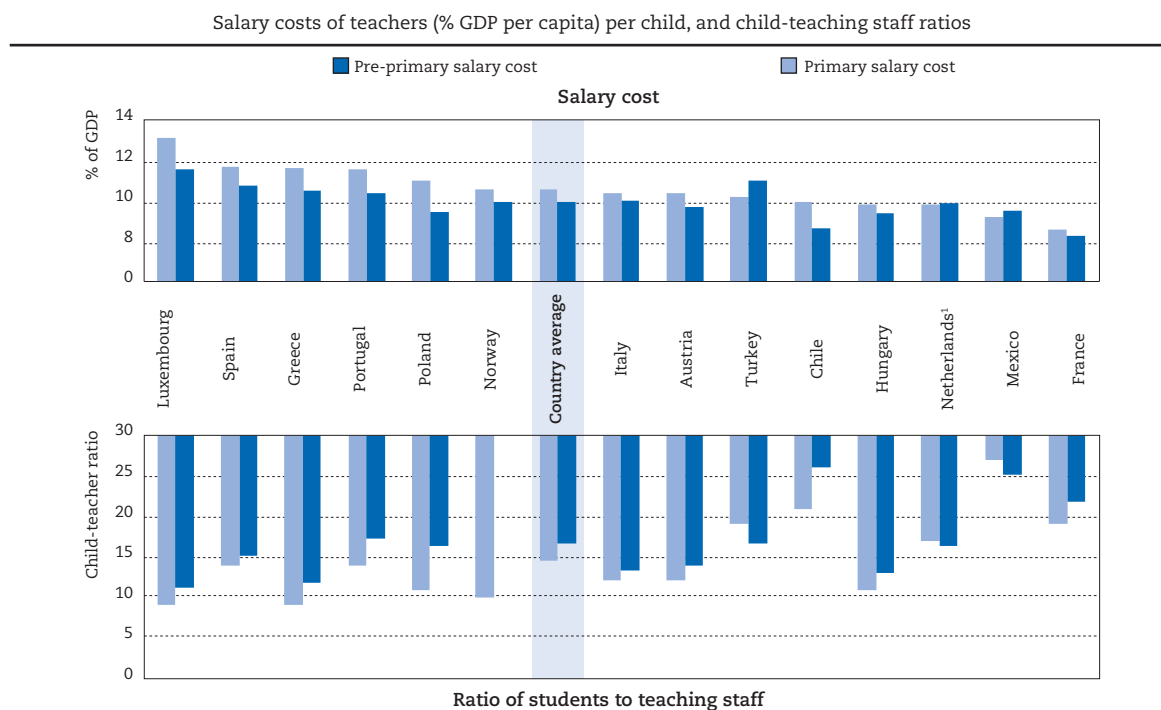
Note: Countries are ranked in descending order according to salary cost of teachers per child for primary education. Teacher-child rations only refer to public institutions and are calculated using full-time equivalents for enrolments (see Glossary).
1. Public institutions only for ratios.
Source: OECD (2016a). *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en.
StatLink ᴬᴵˢᴾ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495529

While primary school teachers' salaries and working conditions are used as a benchmark here, it should be highlighted that among school teachers across different levels of education, primary school teachers also often have less favourable conditions than their colleagues in secondary education.

For instance, in 2014, primary school teachers with 15 years of experience and typical qualifications earned on average USD 1 732 less per year (PPP) than those in lower secondary education (OECD, 2016a).

There is little difference in the total number of working hours between pre-primary education and primary school teachers (Figure 3.2). There are important differences, however, in how they spend their time – and how much time is available for activities other than direct contact with children, for instance to co-operate with other institutions on transitions. Across countries, pre-primary teachers spend more time than primary school teachers (229 hours a year on average) in direct contact with children. In 58% of jurisdictions (11 out of 19), pre-primary teachers spend more time directly with children than in primary education. The difference between both levels may range from as little as 13 hours in Australia to more than 600 hours in countries like Germany, Norway, Denmark, Slovenia and Estonia. Only in four jurisdictions – Colombia, Mexico, the Flemish Community (Belgium) and Korea – do pre-primary teachers have less contact time than primary school teachers. The time is the same in six countries: Chile, the Netherlands, France, Spain, England and Scotland (United Kingdom). In these countries too, pre-primary and primary school teachers have the same length of initial training.

Figure 3.2 **Most pre-primary teachers in the OECD spend more hours in direct contact with children than primary teachers (2014)**
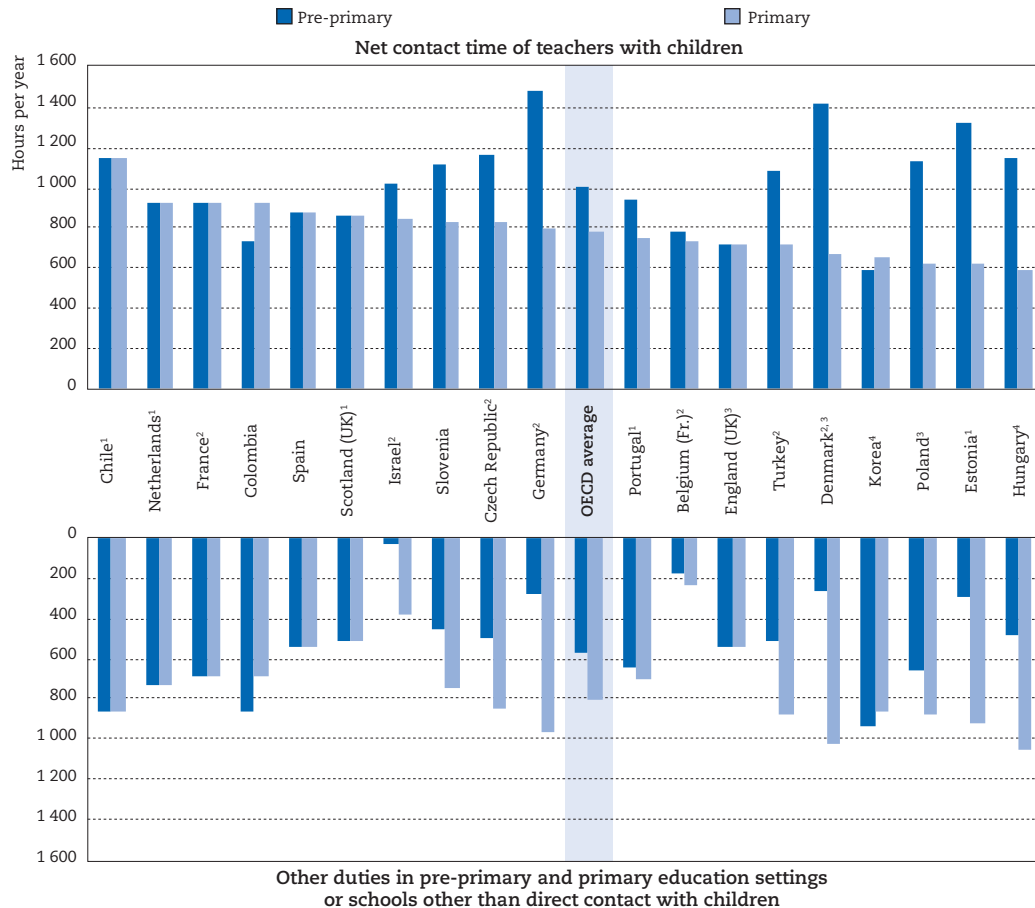
Notes:
1. Maximum teaching time.
2. Typical teaching time (in Denmark, for pre-primary level only).
3. Actual teaching time (in Denmark except for pre-primary level).
4. Minimum teaching time.
Countries are ranked in descending order according to the net teaching time in hours for teachers in primary 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.
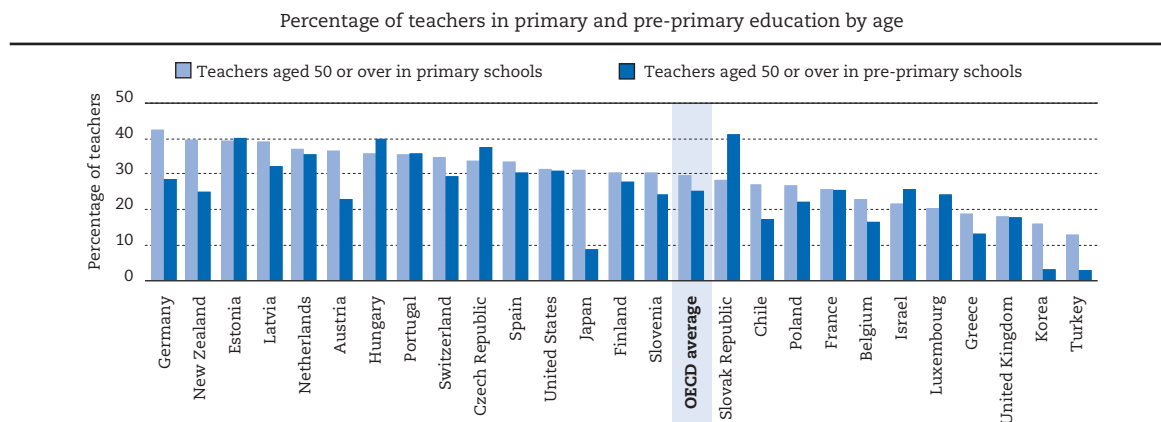*Source:* OECD (2017a) Online Education Database, www.oecd.org/education/database.htm.
StatLink 🔗 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495539

These differences across levels can partly be explained by the fact that primary teachers' statutory working time includes tasks other than teaching or direct contact with children to a greater extent than preschool practitioners: more than 800 hours of non-contact time for primary school teachers is the OECD average, compared to less than 600 hours at the pre-primary level. Broadly speaking, similar salary and qualification levels in pre-primary and primary education are also reflected in similar working time arrangements (OECD, 2016a).

As highlighted by the literature review, the years of experience of ECEC staff and teachers matter for how they work with children (Box 3.2). At the same time, an ageing workforce requires additional recruitment and training efforts to replace staff and teachers approaching retirement. The age distribution of pre-primary and primary school teachers is influenced by factors such as the age distribution of the population, the duration of pre-service education, and salary levels and working conditions (OECD, 2016a). It may also be linked to the creation of additional, new positions.

Major differences in the age distribution of pre-primary and primary education teachers are observed across countries, yet differences within countries are often minor (Figure 3.3). On average across countries, primary school teachers are older than pre-primary teachers. In some countries – like Japan, Turkey and Korea – pre-primary teachers are markedly younger than primary school teachers, with more than 40% under the age of 30. These countries have seen strong increases in children's participation in pre-primary education over the past decade (OECD, 2016a). This age group is much smaller in primary education; only in the United Kingdom are more than one quarter of primary education teachers younger than 30 years old. The Slovak Republic stands out for its older pre-primary teachers, with more than 40% above the age of 50. In Germany and Italy many primary school teachers are in this age group (42% and 58% respectively; OECD, 2016a).

Figure 3.3 **Pre-primary teachers tend to be younger than primary teachers across the OECD (2014)**

Percentage of teachers in primary and pre-primary education by age

Note: Countries are ranked in descending order by percentage of teachers aged 50 or over in primary schools. Only countries with data for both levels are included.
Source: OECD (2017a) Online Education Database, www.oecd.org/education/database.htm.
StatLink ᘊᕻᆓ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495544

Staff training in transitions is common, but not yet universal

To support children's transitions successfully, staff and teachers require basic pedagogical and co-operation skills, among others, on which to build their transition-related competencies (see the literature review above). The differences in qualification levels also influence the extent to which they perceive each other as equals. It is therefore important to consider both general and transition-specific initial training and professional development. As we shall see below, more than half the jurisdictions provide transition-specific training, though this is more common in initial training

than in professional development, and more common for ECEC and pre-primary staff than for primary school teachers working with the relevant age group. At the same time, a large number of countries have also aligned the qualification levels of pre-primary and primary education teachers. The sections which follow expand on these findings.

Pre-service education levels are increasingly aligned, but do not necessarily include transition modules

Content and level of pre-service education are both key for ECEC and primary school staff's acquisition of the knowledge and skills required to work successfully with children during the transition period and beyond. Aligned qualifications across pre-primary and primary education levels can facilitate mutual understanding and co-ordination and put staff on an equal footing. This does not mean that the content of pre-service education should be the same at both levels. Teachers working with children aged 0-6 and those working with older children require different competencies, but bridges across their programmes are needed to ensure continuity for children.

Comparing the general level of education required for teachers in both sectors, OECD data show an alignment in the majority of countries, with more and more countries requiring their pre-primary teachers (i.e. the pedagogical ECEC staff taking the lead in the classroom or playroom) to now acquire a bachelor or even master's degree, just like their primary school peers (Table 3.1; Table 3.A.2, on the web only). This is also reflected in a convergence in the duration of pre-service education for both levels (Figure 3.4).

Table 3.1 **In most countries both pre-primary and primary pedagogical staff require a similar level of qualifications (2013)**

Both pre-primary and primary education teachers complete education with a **Bachelor's degree (N=17)**	Both pre-primary and primary education teachers complete education with a **Master degree (N=6)**	Pre-primary and primary education teachers complete education with **different degree levels (n=8)**
Australia, Chile, Greece, Hungary[1], Israel, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United States	England (United Kingdom), France, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Portugal	Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden

Notes: Countries with missing data were omitted from this table. A more comprehensive overview of teacher education can be found in Table 3.A.2 on the web.
1. Year of reference 2014.
2. Year of reference 2015.
Source: OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance 2014*. See Education at a Glance Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm). For duration and level of pre-service education in Portugal: Ministry of Education, for duration of pre-service education of primary teachers in Austria: Ministry of Education. For level of pre-service education of primary teachers in Korea and Japan: OECD (2017b), Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD indicators on early childhood education and care.

The duration of pre-service education is also becoming more aligned (Figure 3.4). While this can help engender mutual understanding and respect between settings, budget constraints mean some governments may hesitate to raise qualification levels for ECEC teachers as higher wages will follow, raising the costs of ECEC services (OECD, 2012; Siraj and Kingston, 2015; see also Figure 3.1). Of the 16 countries where salaries are aligned, all but 3 also have the same duration of pre-service training at both levels. Only in two countries where training duration is aligned, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Iceland, do primary school teachers earn over 5% more than pre-primary teachers (OECD, 2015).

As shown in Table 3.A.1 in the annex to this chapter, the ECEC workforce tends to be more diverse and include some less qualified staff categories than the workforce of primary schools (OECD, 2012). The table for instance shows that in Austria, Colombia and Slovenia, additional auxiliary staff such as assistants are involved at the ECEC-level, while this is not the case for primary school. The diversity of the sector may also raise equity issues related to staff qualifications. Wales (United Kingdom), for instance, reports that often the most deprived areas struggle to attract qualified and skilled professionals.

Figure 3.4 **Countries are increasingly aligned in their salaries and years of education for pre-primary and primary teachers (2013)**

Salary gap (%, left-hand axis) and number of years of education (right-hand axis)
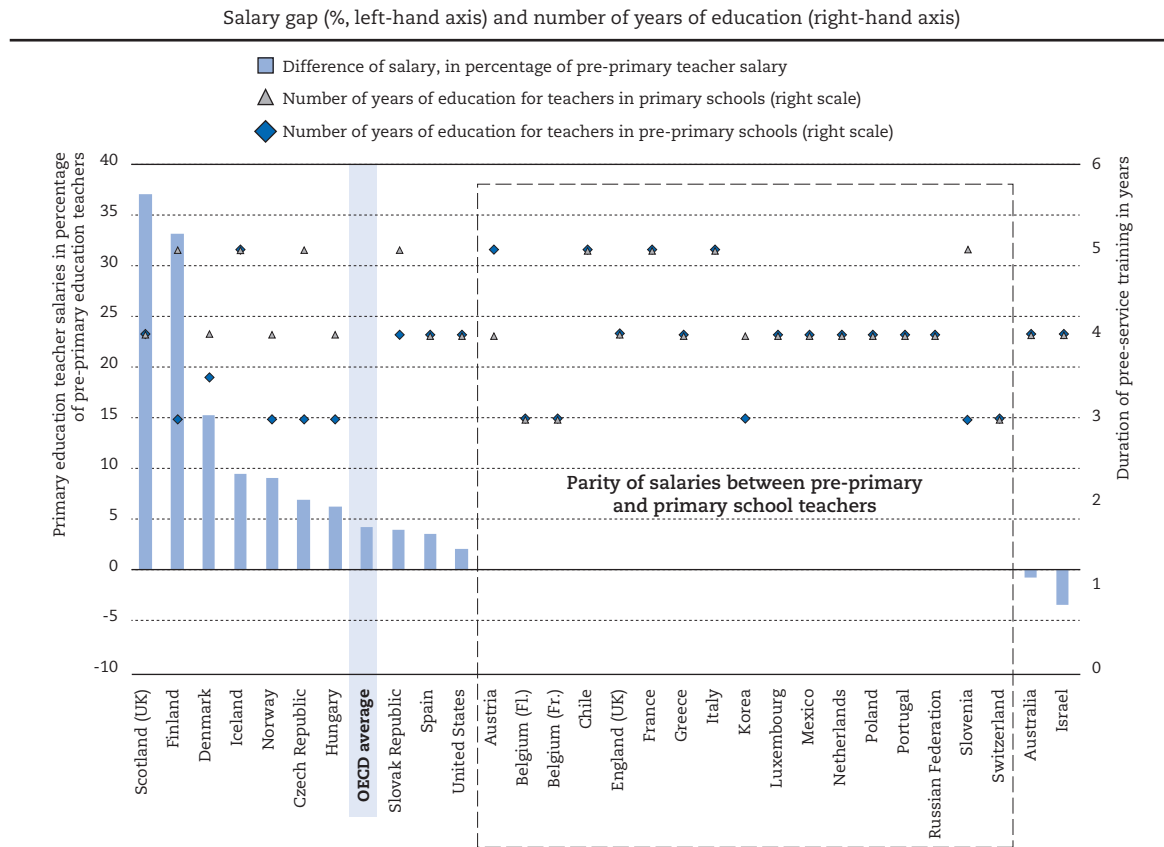
Note: Countries are ranked in descending order by the gap in statutory salary between pre-primary and primary school teachers, i.e. primary school teachers in countries on the left hand side earn more than pre-primary teachers.
Source: Table D3.1a, OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en; Tables D6.1a and b, OECD (2014b), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en; for duration of pre-service education in Portugal: Ministry of Education; for duration of pre-service education of primary teachers in Austria: Ministry of Education.
StatLink ⧉ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495550

There are also major overlaps in the content of pre-service education of both pre-primary and primary teachers (Figure 3.5). At both levels, teacher training institutions have more discretion over whether they offer child or adolescent development studies and research skills than they do over, for instance, pedagogical studies and teaching practicum. As discussed in the literature review, training future teachers in child development studies has been found to be beneficial for transition practices and the learning and well-being environment provided to children. Thus, the fact that teaching this subject is not mandatory across the board is of concern. Out of 38 OECD member and partner countries and economies surveyed, 33 require a mandatory teaching practicum for primary teachers, as compared to 31 in pre-primary education. Pedagogical studies and didactics are also commonplace, being mandatory in 30 countries for primary and 29 for pre-primary education teachers. This is followed by education science studies (study of education), which is mandatory in 29 (primary) and 28 (pre-primary) countries, respectively. Academic subjects are mandatory in fewer countries and also more widely offered to primary school teachers (23 countries) than in the pre-primary field (20 countries). The same is true for the area of research skill development (16 versus 14 countries).[13] When interpreting such system-level data it is important to consider that even the pre-service training of ECEC staff can be decentralised, complicating the task of assessing the importance of transitions in pre-service training for all countries (OECD, 2014b). Germany is a good example (Box 3.3).

Figure 3.5 **The content of pre-service training is well-aligned across pre-primary and primary, 2013**
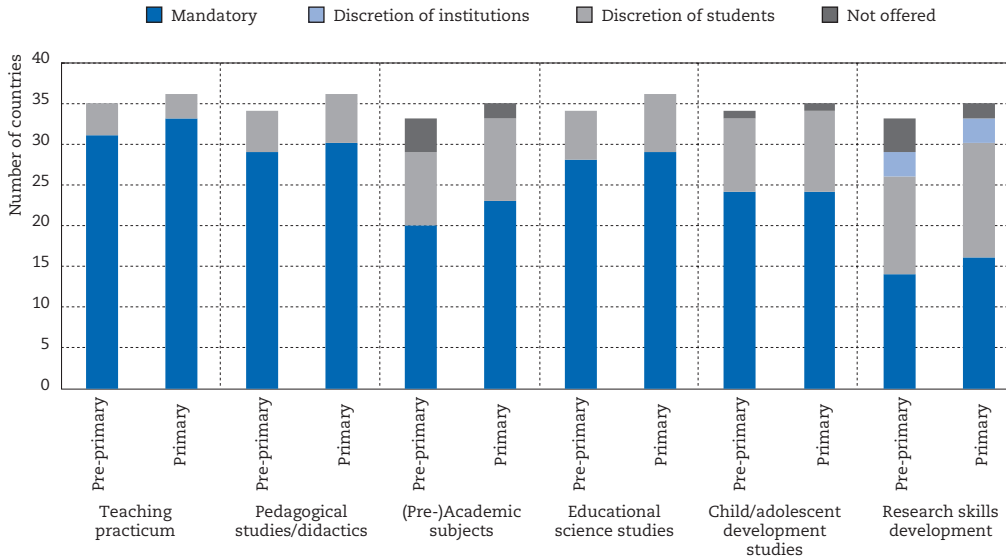
Note: Content areas are ranked in descending order of the number of countries reporting these areas as mandatory. Information on content of pre-service education is based on 38 countries. See Table 3.A.4 on the web only for information by country.
Source: OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance 2014*, Tables D6.3a and b. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120252.
StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495561

In the majority of countries and jurisdictions, it is common to include transition issues in pre-service education for pre-primary teachers, other pedagogical pre-primary staff or primary school teachers (e.g. in Colombia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey). This training is more common for ECEC and pre-primary staff (in 17 jurisdictions out of 22) than for primary school teachers (in 15 jurisdictions out of 22) (Figure 3.6). The decision on whether to offer such pre-service education on transitions is up to the training institutions in three jurisdictions: the Flemish Community of Belgium, Finland and Ireland, where it is common for primary teachers, but within the hands of training institutions for childcare practitioners.

Figure 3.6 **Training on transitions during pre-service education is common (2014)**
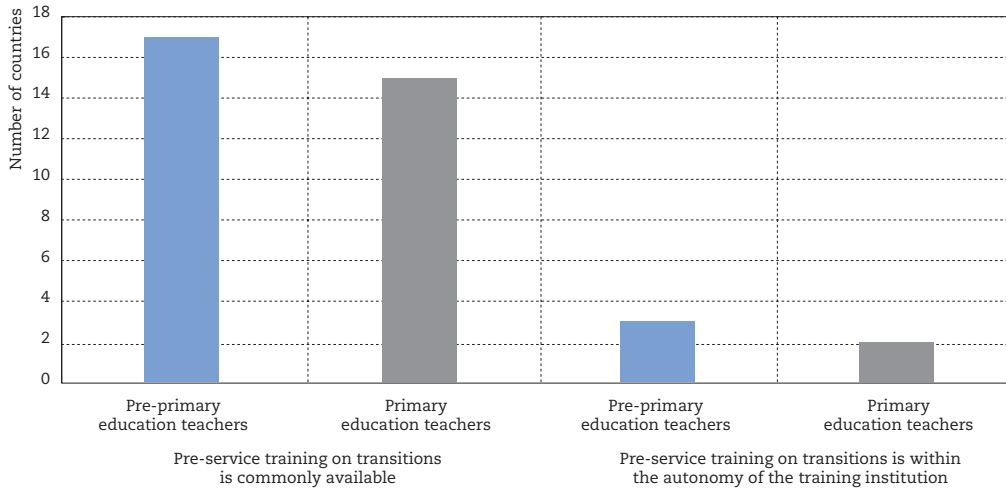
Note: Information on pre-service training in transitions is based on 23 countries.
Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.
StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495578

There are some examples that indicate that in terms of pre-service education of staff and teachers, transitions tend to be seen more as the responsibility of the pre-primary sector than the primary school sector. For example, this training is only provided to pre-primary teachers in Kazakhstan, to Early Childhood Educators (*Educadora de Párvulos*) in Chile, and various types of ECEC staff in Japan. The literature also reflects this trend for Germany (Neuss et al., 2014).

Box 3.3 **Case study: Decentralised transitions training in Germany**

Pre-service education and professional development in Germany are decentralised, reflecting the general governance and provision of education, and particularly ECEC, in the country. In the multiple programmes of pre-service education available for early childhood professionals and primary teachers in the 16 German Länder (there are 601 certified programmes), only a small number of mandatory courses concern the transition to school (Neuss et al., 2014). A survey of ECEC educators (*ErzieherInnen*), ECEC pedagogues (*KindheitspädagogInnen*) and primary school teachers in Germany suggests that almost 80% have dealt with transitions in one way or another during their initial training. However, this number is much lower (63%) for primary school teachers than for their colleagues in pre-primary (83-92%; Neuss et al., 2014). In the vast majority of modules analysed which refer to transitions (96%), transition is not the main topic, but rather embedded in modules on wider issues (Neuss et al., 2014).

The provision of professional development is also decentralised. Government-dependent private ECEC providers (or *freie Träger*) and public ECEC providers (*öffentliche Träger*) are responsible for the further voluntary training of staff in transition. The providers decide on the amount and the kind of training to offer. It is up to the management of ECEC centres and the members of staff to decide if they want to take up these offers. On-site training for an entire ECEC centre is an exception. Standardising professional development and enhancing quality and accessibility have been on the agenda of stakeholders, policy makers and providers for a decade. The 8th Children and Youth Report (*Kinder- und Jugendbericht*) stipulates that co-operative working structures should be built in this area. The transition theme is embedded in seminars, courses, workshops, tutorials on themes like observation/diagnostics, cultural techniques and competences, didactics, methods and planning of every-day life, theories about education and learning, continuity, and concepts and models of collaboration.

Source: Neuss, N., J. Henkel, J. Pradel and F. Westerhold (2014), *Übergang Kita-Grundschule auf dem Prüfstand – Bestandsaufnahme der Qualifikation pädagogischer Fachkräfte* in Deutschland [Bringing transitions from ECEC centres to primary school to the test – an inventory of the qualifications of pedagogical staff in Germany]; OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.

Professional development is widespread and may include transitions

As mentioned in the literature review, relevant professional development (also referred to as in-service training) can improve staff and teacher practices and foster children's development. Specific training is also associated with more diverse transition practices. There are various ways of providing in-service or ongoing education and training to ECEC and primary school professionals. It can take place "on the job" (i.e. in the workplace) or through external providers like training institutes or colleges. The training might take the form of staff meetings, workshops, conferences, on-site consultations, supervised practices and mentoring (OECD, 2012).

General professional development is mandatory in 57% of jurisdictions (15 out of 26) for staff working in the final year of ECEC, and in 62% of jurisdictions (16) for primary school teachers (Figure 3.7). In three jurisdictions the ECEC setting decides whether or not professional development is mandatory; this is true for two jurisdictions at primary level. Few countries regulate the minimum duration of professional development per year. In some countries, primary and pre-primary teachers alike are required to participate in the same number of hours of training a year (e.g. 120 hours in Turkey, 40 hours in Mexico and Slovenia, and 8 hours in Luxembourg). In Hungary it is 120 hours over 7 years for both groups. While not mandatory, a collective agreement in Sweden provides an entitlement of 104 hours of professional development to preschool and primary school teachers. In Wales (United Kingdom) there is an entitlement of 37 hours for primary school teachers and learning support staff within schools (see Table 3.A.5 on the web only). An example of training for less qualified staff in Wales is provided in Box 3.4.

Figure 3.7 **Professional development requirements vary little for pre-primary and primary teachers (2014)**
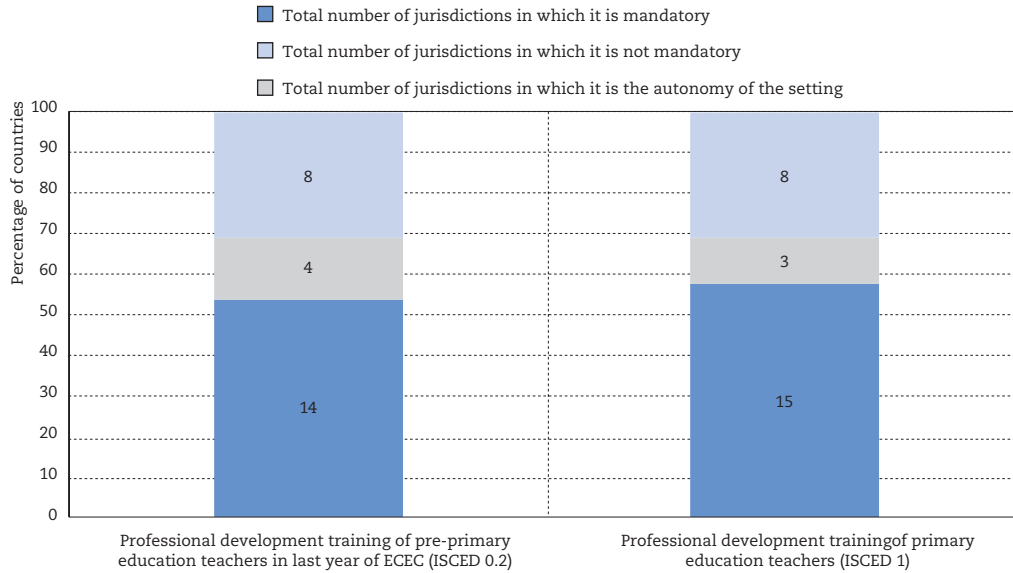
Note: Information on general professional development is based on 26 countries.
Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.
StatLink ᘯᔈᕟ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495583

Figure 3.8 **The majority of countries studied include transitions in professional development training (2014)**
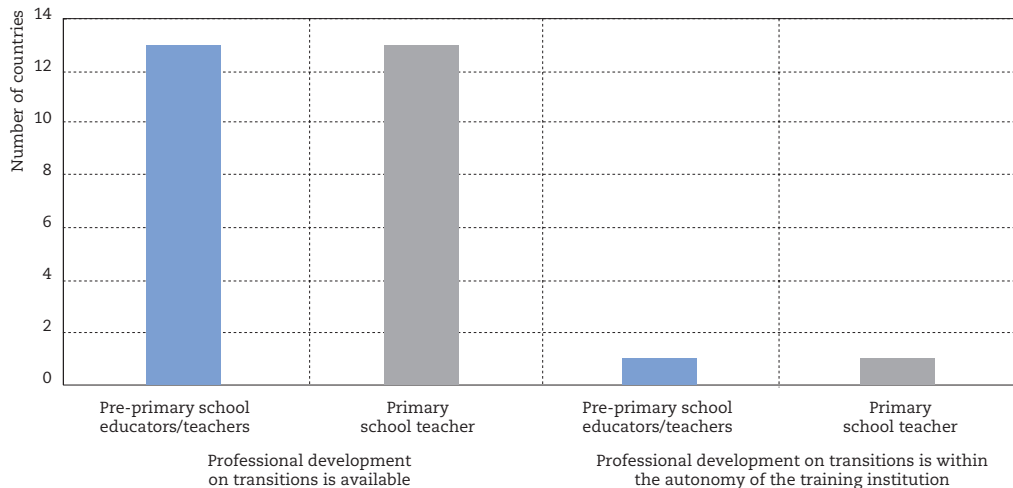
Note: Information on professional development in transitions is based on 22 countries.
Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.
StatLink ᘯᔈᕟ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495597

Professional development training on transitions is slightly less widespread than in pre-service training across jurisdictions. Of the 22 jurisdictions that responded, 13 reported that professional development in transitions is common for pre-primary school teachers or other staff (59%). Thirteen countries also reported that professional development in transitions is common for primary school teachers (Figure 3.8). In one jurisdiction, the Flemish Community in Belgium, this type of professional development is at the discretion of the training institution. Only in a very few

countries (Spain and Turkey) are pre-primary and primary school teachers obliged to participate in professional development on transitions. In Croatia, such training is stipulated by the *Act on Preschool Education*, and organised by the *Education and Teacher Training Agency* and legal entities authorised by the minister. In 15 jurisdictions, transitions training is available and staff may choose to participate in it, while in several other jurisdictions such offers are determined at the local level. Neither Mexico or New Zealand train their pre-primary or primary teachers in transitions as part of their professional development. However in New Zealand, other work is done to develop teachers' practices related to transitions.

Box 3.4 **Case study: Professional development for childminders in Wales (United Kingdom)**

In Wales (United Kingdom), the Association of Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) Cymru strives to raise standards within the sector and provides a range of support to assist with the continuous professional development of individual childcare practitioners. A case study of a registered childminder illustrates the benefits of PACEY Cymru support and guidance. This childminder delivers Flying Start-funded childcare in Cwmbran. They have accessed a range of PACEY Cymru training and support, from initial pre-registration training and guidance to newly registered support, and by regularly attending PACEY Cymru events, such as regional or local meetings, where they have contributed to discussions and shared their experiences with peers. Other sources of information include, for instance, practice guides and "how to" videos, which are also available on the topic of transitions. PACEY Cymru has helped them to work towards a Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development qualification, allowing them to move from an intermediate level (Level 3) to Foundation Level. This is also helping them to progress their knowledge and reflect on practice. As a result, they were able to reflect more deeply on ways to support a specific Flying Start-funded child in their transition into school. Strategies adopted included discussing the transition with the child with the support of books and other resources; visiting the school to familiarise the child with the environment; introducing school uniforms and bags to the "home corner" within the setting, to build familiarity and support role play opportunities on the theme of school; introducing packed lunches as an opportunity to introduce new routines; and working in partnership with the school teacher to increase their understanding of the individual child. Together they discussed the child's development, and completed the Flying Start Baseline Record. This approach led to the development of a transition policy which will benefit all children and families accessing the service. The feedback from the school has been positive and helped with planning in advance of the child starting. It noted that good working relationships between childcare and schools are paramount to a smooth transition for the children involved.

Source: Welsh Government (2017), *Wales Country Background Report on Transitions from ECEC to Primary School*, Welsh Government, Cardiff, www.oecd.org/edu/school/SS5-country-background-report-wales.pdf.

Support to staff is still limited

With much importance attributed to the crucial transition period, some countries provide additional resources to staff to guide and support their work. Support resources and strategies for staff and teachers may be regulated or encouraged nationally, such as in Wales (United Kingdom), but can also be predominantly in the hands of local authorities, as in Denmark. Support can take the form of additional staff and advisers, guidelines and materials, as well as overarching support structures. Such support may specifically target transitions or be broader, while including support to transitions. A strong focus for additional support across countries appears to be related to children with special needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds, i.e. to equity in transitions. This is in line with research pointing to the specific risks and opportunities of transitions for those children (see Chapter 1).

Additional staff and advisors supporting transitions are scarce

While support materials are commonly available, additional human resources, such as auxiliary staff or advisers to help staff and facilitate transitions are scarcer among the participating countries. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, one important exception is the finding that in more than two-thirds of countries (20 out of 27), children receive support from specialists such as psychologists or social care workers during or after transitions. This support mostly focuses on children with

special needs. Examples of this targeted approach can be found in Finland, Japan and Wales (United Kingdom), whereas a more general approach seems to prevail in Austria, Slovenia and Kazakhstan. Targeted and general approaches may also be combined.

There are several national arrangements for additional staff to support the work with disadvantaged children or those with special needs, which can also be drawn on around the time of transition from ECEC to primary school. In Finland, in some cases there might be an assistant for one or more children, and ECEC and school personnel (teachers, principals, heads of day care centres) co-operate with special needs education, social and healthcare personnel to provide the necessary support for each child (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). In Japan, the national government has implemented a programme to help local governments that are putting in place support systems for children with special needs. This includes the provision of information to the children and their parents/guardians, and guidance and advice to schools. For example, one local government has deployed so-called "Early Support Co-ordinators" (personnel specialised in early childhood education and starting school), who collect information, liaise and co-ordinate with local communities and with relevant departments and organisations on such areas as early childhood education and care, welfare, health and medicine (Government of Japan, 2016). In Wales, each primary school has a co-ordinator who helps during transitions for children with special educational needs or additional learning needs. In many larger primary schools there are dedicated staff responsible for working with families experiencing difficulties or with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, often supported by central funding through the Pupil Deprivation Grant (Welsh Government, 2017).

General additional human resources available for transitions may also be provided, but are often integrated in wider efforts. In Japan, with the 2016 budget, the national government plans to implement a programme for training and deploying roaming early childhood education advisors in each setting to provide guidance and advice, which may also include support to transitions. In Wales (United Kingdom), the main support need concerns the small proportion of children who move from a private or voluntary sector nursery to a primary school, since in the year prior to entering the primary school, the majority of children attend a nursery attached to the school. Arrangements vary locally and additional training and support can be provided by local authorities or regional consortia. In Kazakhstan ECEC teachers may seek assistance from specialists to support the optional parts of the curriculum so as to foster child development and ensure continuity.

In Austria, in addition to training and meetings, staff have access to feedback sessions, internal evaluations as well as scientific findings. These often take place in the context of counselling sessions with specialists or in training. The Network Projects are a key example (see Box 2.6, Chapter 2 and Box 5.5, Chapter 5), which seek to develop local approaches for improving the individual support given to each child and allowing each child to develop his or her skills to the full. However, there are hardly any additional personnel available to help staff with this process, with some exceptions at the state level.

An additional counselling service is also available in Slovenia (see Challenge 2 below), and in Sweden, where additional staff may be called on to enable smooth transitions for children in need of special support. Teachers for special needs education may for example serve as transition co-ordinators, supporting and guiding staff in the receiving school. Student healthcare services covering both the preschool class and compulsory school, among other school forms, may also play an important role in handling contacts with medical or social services (NAE, 2014; Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; see Chapter 5).

Support materials and guidelines are widely provided

Almost all countries report that various resources guide staff in how to handle transitions and support children. These include transition guidelines, either provided separately by national or

local authorities or integrated in curricula and other documents, or communication materials (see Table 3.A.6 on the web only). While Norway has been developing a national guide targeted to a variety of stakeholders, other countries – like Slovenia – provide guidance predominantly to staff and via the curriculum.

Other written communication materials such as books, flyers or websites are commonly available in Austria, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain and Turkey. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and in Canada this is at the discretion of schools, settings or providers. In Poland, such materials are made available online by the Center for Education Development (*Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji*). In Ireland the *Aistear/Siolta Practice Guide* contains a pillar of practice on transitions with information to support practice in early years' settings. In Austria additional resources include information exchange, guidelines and a variety of other materials. Such resources vary from institution to institution and are not regulated, but didactic games, professional literature, workbooks, resources and media etc. may be available. Additional guidelines on transition with a special focus on individualisation and differentiation during the school entry have also been recently developed in Austria. They provide practical guidance using tips, examples and questions for staff self-reflection. The guidelines are already in use in primary schools and kindergartens.

Additional guidance is often linked to the curriculum. In Sweden, both the curriculum for the preschool (Lpfö 98), revised in 2010, and the curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the recreation centre (Lgr 11) provide general guidelines on transitions and emphasise the importance of co-operation between ECEC-settings and primary school. In addition, the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2014) has also produced support material containing suggestions on possible local transition action plans, also concerning the preschool class. However, given the decentralised nature of the Swedish education system, it is difficult to indicate any specific common practice (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) (see also Chapter 4). In Portugal, the 2016 curriculum for preschool education also includes a dedicated chapter on transitions. In Germany, less than half of the Länder curricula (*Lehrpläne*) explicitly refer to transitions (Neuss et al., 2014). Slovenia points out that even though the kindergarten curriculum encourages the use of support materials for various activities, including supporting transitions, in practice no special material resources on transitions are available for ECEC staff (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

Specific guidelines on transitions are available, at least partly, in the Flemish Community (Belgium). In Canada, this depends on the school, setting or provider, while in Chile guidelines are also available for Early Childhood Educators (*Educadora de Párvulos*) working at JUNJI or *Fundación Integra* or Municipal Schools, as well as for primary school teachers. More extensive examples can be found in Austria, Japan and Norway (Box 3.5).

Often, no mandatory materials are available, as in Finland, Slovenia and Kazakhstan. While Finland does not mandate staff to use specific materials, ECEC and basic education providers are required to set out practices and co-operation in their local curriculum, in addition to the goals defined in the national core curriculum. A translation of the international "Transition to School Position Statement" is also provided by the National Board of Education (*Opetushallitus*) to help staff create better transition practices (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). In Kazakhstan various materials developed at the local level may be available. This also compares with Slovenia where it is the responsibility of kindergartens and schools to purchase specific support materials for transitions, like didactical material, books or teaching aids. Yet, the guidelines for departmental teaching staff and class community in primary and secondary schools and in student dormitories pay special attention to the first year of schooling and within the context of school experts working groups (*šolski aktivi*) teachers have the possibility to address such issues (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

Box 3.5 **Case study: Guidelines to support staff and inform transition practices**

In **Austria,** guidelines are available for kindergarten teachers (*Kindergartenpädagogen/innen*) and primary school teachers (*Volksschullehrer/innen*). For instance, one set of guidelines encourage differentiated and individualised measures to best support children from diverse backgrounds and pay attention to learning environments that allow children to have extended opportunities for moving, playing and having space for themselves (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016a). Another guideline is available for language assistants and teachers in supporting language development during the transition from ECEC to primary schooling. It attributes a key role to school management for raising awareness of language support across subject areas among school staff. The guideline can also be used by kindergarten teachers to support their work on language development with children prior to transitions (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016b).

In **Japan,** a collection of case examples on transitions has been prepared by the national government and publicised through the prefectures and municipalities for voluntary use. The national government has also encouraged initiatives by local governments and individual schools and facilities, such as by convening a consultative council to prepare a report on seamless transitions from early childhood education to primary education, and by holding meetings of prefectural officials in charge of early childhood education to share best practices in transitions. In 2005, the Japanese National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) compiled teaching material on "Education for Transitioning from Early Childhood to Childhood". In 2015, the NIER produced a reference document to guide primary schools compiling their own starting curriculum. It has since been widely distributed to prefecture and local-level officials as well as ECEC and primary school settings. In some cases individual teachers and schools disseminate research findings, and some local governments prepare their own training materials, model curriculum and collections of case studies (Government of Japan, 2016).

In **Norway,** a national guide entitled "From the Eldest to the Youngest" was published by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2008 to strengthen the coherence between kindergarten and school and ensure smooth transitions. It targets municipalities, kindergartens and schools and highlights the importance of kindergartens' and schools' co-operation and continuity in ECEC. The guide emphasises the importance of informing parents about legal, practical, structural and content matters relating to school and identifies the child as the most important actor, so that the starting point for development and activities should be the child's experiences and perspectives. It lists several possible transition activities, such as a "get-to-know-each other" at school or school visits, a buddy system and opportunities for staff across the institutions to get to know each other (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2008). In practice, a 2010 survey found that this optional guide was used by one-third of kindergartens in their work on transitions (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). The framework plan and the national guide on transitions address coherence for children with special needs, suggesting how to secure continuity through individually adapted learning. The guide also specifies that children with special needs shall have access to special initiatives from the school to provide a stimulating and adapted education (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2008). An additional guide on transitions for children and young people with special needs or with special education assistance was published in 2014 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). While additional resources for staff are not provided nationally, the local level may provide resources and advice related to transitions in Norway, discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

Sources: Charlotte Bühler Institut (2016a), *Individualisierung und differenzierte Förderung in der Schuleingangsphase* [Individualisation and differentiated support in the school entrance phase], www.charlotte-buehler-institut.at/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Individualisierung-BMB-final-2016-.pdf; Charlotte Bühler Institut (2016b), *Leitfaden zur sprachlichen Förderung am Übergang vom Kindergarten in die Grundschule* [Guideline for language support at the transition from kindergarten to elementary school], www.bmb.gv.at/schulen/bw/abs/Broschu_re_sprachl_Fo_rderung_A4_BF.pdf?5s8z0m; Government of Japan (2016), Japan Country Background Report on Transitions, Government of Japan, Tokyo, www.oecd.org/edu/school/SS5-country-background-report-japan.pdf; Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2015), OECD Thematic review of early childhood education and care policy in Norway, background report, www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6372d4f3c219436e990a5b980447192e/oecd_rapport_2015_kd_web.pdf; Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2008), *Veileder. Fra eldst til yngst.* [National guide. From the eldest to the youngest], www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/barnehager/veileder/f-4248-fra-eldst-til-yngst.pdf; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2014), *Veileder: Overganger for barn og unge som får spesialpedagogisk hjelp eller spesialundervisning*, [Guide: Transitions for children and young people who receive special education assistance or special needs education] www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/sarskilte-behov/overganger-spesialpedagogisk-hjelp-spesialundervisning.

Structural support is scarcer

Structural support may inform and foster professional continuity through regulations and support mechanisms. It may take the form of guidelines for the various practitioners involved, or

legal provisions or established processes for targeting and identifying children's individual needs during the transition period. As discussed in Chapter 5 for Norway, structural support, for instance for the exchange of information between settings and schools, may also be established at the local level.

In Finland, two more general support systems can help during transitions phases:

1) A support system for the child's growth and learning, based on the *Act on ECEC* and *Act on Basic Education* and including specific sections in the national core curricula (ECEC, Pre-Primary Education and Basic Education) to set the goals and describe the practices needed. Local practices are developed from this basis.

2) A system to support student welfare based on the *Student Welfare Act 1287/2013*, which sets goals for both pre-primary and basic education. Its main ideas are further specified in the national core curricula and in local curricula (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

In Austria, the 2015 education reform stipulated an enhancement and expansion of the co-operation between ECEC and primary school teachers. It also stipulated the creation of a national basis for the transfer and use of data between ECEC and primary schools for support needs, which should facilitate the holistic assessment of children during the process of enrolment. The documentation of a child's individual development can be incorporated in this process. Financial resources for both training in the school and supervision by the University College of Teacher Education are exclusively available in the context of *Network Projects* (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c).

In Poland, preschool teachers assess a child's readiness at the end of preschool. The teacher's evaluation forms a report which is shared with the parents. The support of counselling and guidance centres can be requested to evaluate whether the child is ready to transit to school. When parents wish to delay their child's start in school, it is mandatory to seek the help of these centres in assessing this decision.

Leadership and co-operation matter for professional continuity and smooth transitions

ECEC centre leaders and primary school principals can play a crucial role in providing guidance and relevant training to help staff to best ensure smooth transitions for children. As discussed in the literature review, leaders also play a key role in creating favourable working environments and containing turnover, which in turn can improve children's experiences and facilitate the co-operation required for professional continuity. Leaders are often in an important position to establish linkages among different institutions and actors (see Chapter 5). Co-operation itself is an important element in ensuring professional continuity, as it allows key staff members and stakeholders to learn together and from each other to form a shared understanding.

An ECEC centre leader is the person with the highest responsibility for the administrative, managerial and/or pedagogical leadership at the centre level. Centre leaders may be responsible for monitoring children, supervising other staff, making contact with parents and guardians, and planning, preparing and carrying out the pedagogical work in the centre. Centre leaders may also spend part of their time working directly with children. A primary school principal is the official head administrator of the school, who may bear a different title across countries and may or may not also be involved in teaching and other direct work with children (see Glossary).

In most countries, leaders are pivotal in transition and co-operation processes

One role for leaders at both levels is guiding and training their staff in transitions, as well as in designing and organising transition processes and procedures (see also Table 3.A.6 on the web only).

Primary school head teachers or ECEC centre managers commonly inform their staff in meetings about how to handle transitions and how to support children in this process. This is the case in 57% of countries (17 out of 30): Austria, Colombia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and Wales (United Kingdom). There may be local differences, as in Finland. There are also differences across staff categories or levels of education, with pre-primary teachers being informed in Croatia, Germany, Greece and Japan, and primary education teachers informed in Wales (United Kingdom). Canada, Denmark, the Flemish Community (Belgium), Sweden and Switzerland report that these matters are decided locally, such as by the school or setting. Under the National Quality Framework in Australia, the educational leader in a child care or early learning service has a defined role that includes establishing systems across the service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children transition to school (Australian Government, 2009).

Norway, Sweden, Japan, Slovenia and Austria highlight leaders' important role in coaching and training staff, which may also be conducted jointly for both ECEC centres and primary schools. In Finland and Slovenia leaders are involved in decisions about the best moment for individual children to move to primary school, and conduct related evaluations. In Slovenia, for instance, primary school heads appoint a committee to evaluate children's school readiness and make the final decision on deferred school entry where necessary. They may also take part in these committees themselves. There is also an important role in the implementation of curricula, planning educational activities and providing pedagogical leadership in Norway, Sweden, Japan, Finland, Slovenia and Kazakhstan.

Almost all countries providing Background Reports highlight that it is the ECEC centre heads and primary school principals who are in charge of the co-operation and exchanges among their institutions and staff. This is the case in Austria, Japan, Kazakhstan, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden. In Slovenia, for instance, this is defined as part of the *Annual Work Plan*. Chapter 5 provides further insights into co-operation.

Beyond these cross-country patterns, the way and extent to which leadership roles are defined differ from one country to another. In Norway, the *Framework Plan* and a national guide on transitions specify the leaders' important role in transition, including the co-operation between kindergartens and primary schools (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017; Rambøll, 2010). Yet, in practice it is the pedagogical rather than the managerial leader (centre head) in ECEC who takes the main responsibility for planning and deciding the content, and for implementing activities in preparation of the entry to primary school (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017; Rambøll, 2010).

In New Zealand, a principal or senior management team typically determines the individual transition policy of a school. In Japan, leaders aim to ensure that staff understand both levels well, and foster continuity and coherence between them (Government of Japan, 2016). In Kazakhstan, heads of ECEC settings develop annual plans of educational activities, which usually include improving transitions between the centre and primary school (JSC IAC, 2017). In Sweden, leaders and principals are in charge of co-operation, but the extent to which transitions are a key element of their leadership and coaching work is less well-known (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2017).

In addition to the roles mentioned above, leaders in Slovenia follow the work of the counselling service and make provisions for co-operation with parents, and in the case of primary school heads, with school health services. For instance, they participate in meetings with parents in the year before children enter school. In practice, heads' role in transitions is largely organisational, including transition activities in the annual kindergarten or school plans and allowing for time for their implementation, while counsellors have the main responsibility for organising transition activities (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017). This is similar to leaders in Finland, who have a key role in providing guidance and taking important decisions, but are not involved in preparing children for transitions themselves (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

In Wales (United Kingdom), as in other countries, primary school head teachers and leaders of nurseries have overall responsibility for ensuring that their staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to support transitions. Head teachers are responsible for bringing together the school development plans which set out what staff training is needed to respond to the school's circumstances and objectives. This includes any specifics for earlier age classes. Leaders and head teachers are responsible for ensuring that the Foundation Phase for children aged three to seven is delivered effectively. Larger primary schools usually have a separate leader for the delivery of this phase, so the extent to which centre heads are personally involved in supporting staff regarding smooth transitions depends on the degree of responsibility of the phase-specific leader. For instance, in the local authority of Denbighshire a nursery manager embeds the importance of the transition process within the inductions of practitioners. They also include them in regular staff newsletters outlining the importance of good transitions for children's outcomes and how strong transitions strengthen confidence and security (Welsh Government, 2017).

Several countries ensure inter-institutional collaboration to support primary school teachers and ECEC staff

Various actors can co-operate – such as staff and teachers at both levels of education, national and sub-national authorities, or academic institutions – to prepare staff for facilitating successful transitions (see Box 3.6 for an example from Austria). In Japan, for instance, a report by the nationally sponsored Consultative Council for Research and Study on Transitions (幼児期の教育と小学校教育の円滑な接続の在り方に関する調査研究協力者会議」/*youjiki no kyoiku to shogakkou no enkatsuna setsuzokuno arikatani) kansuru tyousakenkyukyoryokushakaigi*) pointed out that transition-related initiatives should start with collaboration, such as exchanges between teaching staff, and should progressively develop into the organisation and implementation of curricula ensuring educational cohesion from early childhood to later childhood (Government of Japan, 2016). Chapter 5 provides an in-depth analysis of how cross-sectoral co-operation can ensure developmental continuity for children.

In more than one-third of countries (11 out of 30), primary school teachers or ECEC staff can participate in exchange days to learn about each other's work and the environment in which children learn and play. This is the case for some or all staff categories in Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Whether this occurs depends on the local, centre, school or provider level in the Flemish Community in Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland and Slovenia (Table 3.A.6, on the web only). In the German Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, for instance, more than half of ECEC centres and schools reported visits by teachers and ECEC staff, while in Bavaria and Hesse visits by school teachers to ECEC centres were reported by two-thirds of centres (Hanke et al., 2016; Faust et al., 2013).

In addition to visits and exchange days, sharing of information on children across institutions can support staff in their practices. This is widespread in some countries and may either be part of a national strategy or decided locally (see Table 3.A.6, on the web only), as in the Flemish Community (Belgium). In Austria, this has recently been rendered mandatory across the entire country (discussed further in Chapter 5).

Transitions may not be a specific focus of training-related collaborations, but instead one element of broader practices and strategies, as the examples of several Nordic countries suggest. In Norway, there are national strategies in place to ensure qualified staff in both kindergarten and school, for instance by fostering further education for teachers at both levels (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2012; 2013). In connection with these strategies, national reference groups have been established to secure the interests of different stakeholders in the kindergarten and education sector, respectively. Their collaboration on staff education and training also includes transition from kindergarten to school as necessary (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). In Sweden, education providers are responsible for ensuring that staff at preschools and schools can

participate in professional development. They also ensure that preschool teachers, primary school teachers and other staff at schools and preschools are aware of the regulations concerning the school system. While this may be related to transitions, it cannot be verified (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). In Finland, collaboration between ECEC and primary school personnel is often seen as a knowledge transfer from ECEC to primary schools, while some schools also conduct specific transition programmes (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Box 3.6 **Case study: Co-operation for human resources development and support in Austria**

In Austria, authorities, schools and ECEC settings co-operate in various areas (see also Chapter 5). In the context of its regional planning the school authority provides expertise for human resources development, the distribution of material resources and personnel according to demand and for the implementation of support structures. Indeed, training of staff is an important contact point between ECEC settings, primary schools and other authorities. The training and further education for teachers who work in a school setting is planned and organised by the University Colleges of Teacher Education. In some of the federal states these University Colleges also offer training for ECEC staff or training across institutions. Given the growing importance of the topic of transition, a rising number of trainings and networking events have been offered on this topic in recent years. They include content such as parent-teacher conferences, kindergarten portfolios, tips and tools for the transition period, and observations and documentation during the school entry period. Austria has observed a growing interest in transition-related trainings and events aiming at exchanges and understanding across institutions. The responsible authorities at the federal level, as well as public and private providers, are primarily in charge of providing specialist training and professional development for kindergarten teachers.

University Colleges of Teacher Education especially support the clusters of the so-called Network Projects, launched in 2013 (Box 2.6, Chapter 2 and Box 5.5, Chapter 5), through targeted measures. Each school supervisory authority has a budget for support measures for training in specific topics within and across schools. Funded by the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, University Colleges of Teacher Education have offered a course on "early language acquisition support" since 2008, which had been taken up by more than 1 000 pedagogues by mid-2015 (Grillitsch et al., 2014). The course includes modules on topics such as scientific foundations observations, analysis and development support related to language acquisition, as well as didactics for early language acquisitions (BMBF, 2014).

Based on an evaluation of the Network Projects, several possible approaches for nationwide implementation are suggested: a framework for co-operation and information transfer between the two education institutions (ECEC and primary school settings) creating structural prerequisites for co-operation, involving all relevant stakeholders equally; ascertaining adequate coaching for this process, in particular for those institutions with little experience in inter-institutional co-operation; offering initial and professional development (also inter-institutional) to support (future) pedagogues. Schools in networks also often employ transition teams.

However, evaluation results also highlight lessons learnt from challenges, such as the need to take into account necessary working time, ensuring sufficient organisational and personnel resources with regard to pupil enrolment; setting up multi-professional teams and involving various relevant groups; and ceasing current "snap-shot" practices of determining school maturity in favour of process-oriented diagnosis and early orientation.

Source: adapted from Charlotte Bühler Institut (2016c), *Austria Country Background Report on Transitions,* www.oecd.org/edu/school/SS5-country-background-report-austria.pdf; *Grillitsch and Stanzel-Tischler* (2016).

In Japan, promoting collaboration among several settings of different providers requires local government support backed by the co-operation of relevant departments, such as the department in charge of early childhood care, the Board of Education and the department in charge of private schools. Typically, a prefectural or municipal board of education formulates basic policies on transitions based on which it provides concrete support, such as organising joint training workshops for teaching staff at ECEC settings and primary schools, establishing a transitions liaison council comprised of individual schools and facilities as well as other officials, implementing staff exchanges, and formulating specific curricula designed for transitions. Supported by local government, each primary school and ECEC setting is required to systematically conduct exchange activities among children and exchanges between teaching staff, as well as draw up a curriculum facilitating transitions and devise teaching methods (Government of Japan, 2016).

What are the common professional continuity challenges and how are they overcome?

While the topic of transitions is gaining attention, and progress has been made towards professional continuity, challenges remain. Learning from the experiences of countries who have tackled issues in designing and implementing transition policies can be instructive and provide inspiration to others. This section explores some common challenges facing countries in their attempts to improve transitions, and outlines the strategies that various countries have used to overcome them (summarised in Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 **Challenges and strategies in strengthening professional continuity**

Challenges	Strategies
1. Discrepancies between status and perspectives of ECEC and primary school teachers	• Equal pay for qualified ECEC staff and primary school teachers • Align the level and bridge the content of pre-service training
2. Lack of relevant training and support on transitions at both levels	• Offer more and relevant transition-specific training • Meet teachers' and staff support needs
3. Structural hurdles to co-operation and co-ordination	• Make legal provisions for the exchange of information • Ensure time and physical conditions to co-operate

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

In their country reports and survey responses, several countries highlight that ECEC and primary school staff do not necessarily see eye to eye, and may not always speak the same language. This is attributed to a discrepancy in their status and educational backgrounds.[14] For instance, as we saw above (Figure 3.4), in 10 OECD countries pre-primary teachers' statutory salaries are below those of primary teachers, on average by almost the equivalent of half of an average monthly salary. Countries gave other examples of discrepancies:

- **Wales (United Kingdom)** reports that the ECEC sector is still poorly paid in the UK, making it challenging to ensure a sufficiently skilled workforce. Even within the sector there are often differing rates of pay, causing disparities in the ability to attract the most skilled practitioners and affecting the quality of provision. The poorest parts of Wales tend to have the least-skilled ECEC staff, so that staff supply becomes an equity issue (Welsh Government, 2017).

- In **Germany,** studies show that ECEC professionals and primary teachers know very little about the work and pedagogical practices of the other profession. This is in line with their initial training, in which the other professions are only marginally covered (Neuss et al., 2014).

- In **Japan** there are differences in "philosophies" across levels since the legal status and jurisdictions of the settings, the licences and qualifications of the teaching staff are all different. Since the educational activities of each school and ECEC setting and the teacher and staff education curricula are also different, there can be a lack of shared understanding and awareness of the other's approach (Government of Japan, 2016).

- Similarly, in **Austria,** training for kindergarten teachers and primary schools is different, with ECEC staff not educated at tertiary level. Upgrading the ECEC qualification could help to put them on a level playing field with primary school teachers, easing co-operation and providing a bridge to early childhood research. In addition, working conditions, forms of employment and salaries differ across providers (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c).

- **Slovenia** reports that even though both preschool and primary education teachers are educated to tertiary level (bachelor's degree for preschool, master's degree for primary school level), they have different professional identities and understandings of their professional missions. The primary school teacher's mission is to teach, within the limits of the curricula and their goals, whereas the preschool teacher's mission is to support the child's learning and development and to help develop values, attitudes and habits. Preschool teachers perceive kindergartens primarily as a place to educate and bring up children, rather than as a service shaped by external demands linked to the labour market or school readiness (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017; Turnšek, 2002) (see also Chapter 4).

To overcome these challenges, measures to align the working conditions, content and level of qualifications can be useful. Several jurisdictions studied for this report have developed strategies to do so. These are described below.

Strategy: Equalise pay for qualified ECEC staff and primary school teachers

As discussed above, 16 OECD jurisdictions already ensure that teachers' statutory salaries are the same across pre-primary and primary levels (OECD, 2016a). Such alignment boosts preschool teachers' status and may help with the recruitment and retention of qualified staff in the profession. Evidence on alumni from a university in Northern Norway, for instance, indicates that a large share of students of preschool education enter training to become primary school teachers before ever working in ECEC because of the higher salaries (Engel et al., 2015). To justify higher or aligned salaries, the mandatory level of staff education and qualification requirements also need to be considered. Accordingly, the International Labour Organisation recommends setting salaries in pre-primary education at the "same level as the equivalent job in primary education with similar qualifications and competency requirements" (ILO, 2013, p. 21).

- As discussed above, **Israel** has increased its pre-primary salaries disproportionally more than salaries at primary levels by offering higher teacher pay in return for extended working hours (OECD, 2016a).

- The pay for teachers at both education levels has also been aligned in **Austria, Belgium, Chile, England (United Kingdom), France, Greece, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovenia and Switzerland** (OECD, 2016a).

Strategy: Align levels and content of initial training

As shown above in Table 3.1, in 21 OECD countries, both ECEC and primary school teachers are required to have the same qualifications – either at bachelor or master level. This indicates that the alignment of qualifications is already widespread, which may ease co-operation between both sectors in the context of transitions. Across countries, it is also evident that various content areas are common in pre-service education at both levels (Figure 3.5). Below, some concrete examples of how alignment can be fostered in practice are provided:

- **Japan** has already taken some steps to address their observed challenges. For instance, in training courses for kindergarten teachers and for primary school teachers, a number of subjects can be offered jointly across levels. In addition, a certain number of credits obtained in one course may also be allocated to the other. The curricula of kindergarten, primary school and day-care centre teachers are designed to foster mutual understanding. Furthermore, a fast-track procedure is in place allowing experienced teachers to obtain a second teaching license for the other level of education with a reduced number of credits. This process seeks to train more teachers to work across different levels (Government of Japan, 2016).

- In **Slovenia,** pre-service training for preschool teachers goes beyond the usual ECEC age group, allowing preschool teachers to work together with the teacher in the first year of basic school (the ensemble of primary and lower secondary level education), and in after-school classes. The content of initial training covers early childhood to eight-year-olds in kindergartens and other institutions, such as special needs schools. The education includes subjects such as school pedagogy and didactics, developmental psychology and theory of education. The integrated practice element is usually carried out in kindergartens, but in certain cases it may also take place in the first year of basic school (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

- In **Luxembourg, France, parts of the United Kingdom** (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Ireland, teachers with primary school training and qualifications can work with older preschool children or primary school children. Except in Ireland, preschool and primary teacher pre-service training is the same in terms of content and duration in those countries (European Commission et al., 2014; Neuman, 2005).

- In **Wales (United Kingdom),** a workforce plan for the early years aims to address these issue of low qualification levels through the support of the EU-funded Progress for Success Programme, which will provide Level 2 to 6 qualifications (i.e. up to bachelor degrees with honours) for anyone aged 25 who is working in the sector. Apprenticeships are also available for younger staff. This plan also seeks to mitigate the shortages of highly skilled practitioners in the most deprived areas, which undermines equity. Specific funding is in place to support schools and early education settings serving children from the poorest backgrounds (Welsh Government, 2017).

- In **Denmark,** the kindergarten class manager will typically be a qualified pedagogue (see Glossary), with the same educational background as the majority of ECEC staff. Since the 2014 reform of the public school system (Folkeskole), pedagogues can also carry out defined teaching tasks with grade one to grade nine or ten students. Likewise, school teachers can perform defined teaching assignments in kindergarten class. From grade one to grade nine or ten, teachers must have a bachelor's degree in teaching (Danish Ministry for Children and Social Affairs, 2016).

- In **Sweden,** all teachers of children from ages 1 to 16 and teachers in after-school programmes follow a common core curriculum and then specialise in an education level or area which interests them (Woodhead and Moss, 2007).

- In **New Zealand,** ECEC services have been transferred into the Department of Education to create an integrated system and to promote the principle of parity between preschool and primary school teachers (Kaga et al., 2010) (see Box 3.7).

- The Step by Step Transition - Primary School Program implemented across the **Central Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States countries** establishes an intentional link and overlap in teaching and learning styles between pre-primary and primary levels. Primary school and preschool teachers are trained in the same pedagogical framework, using the same seven core modules: individualisation, learning environment, family participation, teaching strategies for meaningful learning, planning and assessment, professional development, and social inclusion, and are expected to demonstrate the same competencies. Given the different primary school starting ages across countries, the Step by Step curriculum is organised by age, not grade (Akhter et al., 2012).

Box. **3.7 Case study: Setting quantitative targets to boost qualifications of ECEC staff in New Zealand**

In 2002, New Zealand introduced Pathways to the Future, a 10-year plan to improve early childhood education services. In order to raise the number of qualified registered teachers, the government set targets requiring teacher-led services to have at least 50% or more of their regulated staff as registered teachers by 2007 (today the minimum requirement), and to raise that share to 80% in 2010 and 100% in 2012. The government helped the centres to cover the higher labour costs by increasing the levels of subsidies and by introducing a funding system that rewards those centres with a high share of qualified and registered teachers. Additionally, teacher education places were increased and more scholarships granted to attract more teachers (Meade et al., 2012; ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010; Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2013). When the regulation was introduced in 2002, registered teachers made up only 35% of the early childhood education workforce (ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010). By 2013, 76% of teaching staff in early childhood education services were qualified teachers (Figure 3.9).

In 2010, the 100% target was reduced to 80% by the government, based on the consideration that eight out of ten is a sufficient ratio of qualified teachers, and subsidies were reduced due to budget constraints (Meade et al., 2012). Nonetheless, in 2013, 94% of teacher-led centre-based services had 80% or more qualified and registered teachers (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2013). The Teacher's Work Study by the New Zealand Childcare Association compared the teaching and learning in education and care centres which had 50-79% qualified teachers with those with 100% of qualified staff. It found that children in the latter centres benefitted from the higher qualification of staff as the greater pedagogical experience of teachers helped children's cognitive development, e.g. by fostering more complex play and sustained shared thinking (Meade et al., 2012).

Figure 3.9 **The rapid growth in qualified and registered early childhood teachers in New Zealand, 2004-2013**

Percentage of qualified and registered teaching staff in teacher-led ECE services

Source: Engel, et al., (2015), "Early childhood education and care policy review. Norway", www.oecd.org/norway/Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care-Policy-Review-Norway.pdf.

StatLink ⟱ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933495602

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

While the majority of jurisdictions reported that training in transitions is available as part of pre- or professional development, gaps remain. Staff and teachers may also not always receive the support they need to help all children in the transition process.

In 22 countries that responded to the questionnaire, training on transitions was not commonly included in pre-service training for primary school teachers in 6 countries, and in 3 countries for pre-primary teachers. Training on transitions was not included in professional development training for primary teachers in 9 out of 23 countries and in 8 countries for pre-primary teachers (see Figure 3.8 above).

Even countries that already offer such training express concerns about the training provision. In Austria there is nearly no opportunity for ECEC staff and primary school teachers to share their views with decision makers on policy matters related to professional continuity, which renders it difficult to tailor support and training to their needs (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c). Japan points out that an outstanding issue is the small number of specialised subjects on transitions in teacher education at both levels (Government of Japan, 2016). Germany reports that in the multiple pre-service education programmes on offer for early childhood professionals and primary teachers in the 16 German Länder, only a small number of mandatory courses cover the transition to school (Neuss et al., 2014; see Box 3.8 for an example). According to a survey of preschool (ECEC) teachers in the United States, only 44% had received information on transitions via workshops or printed materials. About 36% and 39% had received specialised training on respectively the transition to preschool and kindergarten (Rous et al., 2006).

Box 3.8 **Case study: Teaching transitions through inter-disciplinary training in Germany**

The Pedagogical College Ludwigsburg in the state of Baden Württemberg offers a good practice example of how transition can be addressed in inter-disciplinary pre-service education modules jointly delivered to students seeking to work as primary school teachers or childhood pedagogues. A co-operation seminar on transitions from pre-primary to primary education is conducted by lecturers in primary and pre-primary pedagogy for both the students on the four-year primary teacher education programme and students on the three-year bachelor programme in early childhood education. The seminar integrates various modules from the two programmes and includes transition theories, essentials of transition design, educational philosophy and learning theories in ECEC and primary schools, coping with transitions, essentials of the co-operation between ECEC centres and primary schools, communications and attitude as fundamental aspects of the co-operation, transition-related historical development and institutional embeddedness. As part of the seminar, primary school teacher students participate in short internships in ECEC centres and early childhood education students participate in short internships in primary schools. This should help each to gain a better understanding of the other's profession. Participants also carry out interviews on transitions with children and adults to gain a biographical approach to the topic e.g. by talking to their own parents and grandparents. Students prepare a portfolio that includes their own reflections, and which often reveals their understanding of the complexity of transitions. The seminar also emphasises dealing with risks during transitions and addresses topics like multilingualism and multiculturalism. In this context students work on approaches to support and accompany parents and children, viewing both as being involved in a transition process. It is important to note that only a minority of pedagogical staff in German ECEC centres hold tertiary education degrees.

Source: Neuss, N., et al., (2014), *Übergang Kita-Grundschule auf dem Prüfstand - Bestandsaufnahme der Qualifikation pädagogischer Fachkräfte in Deutschland* [Bringing transitions from ECEC centres to primary school to the test - an inventory of the qualifications of pedagogical staff in Germany]; OECD Network on ECEC, 2016.

In addition to a lack of relevant learning opportunities in some countries, the case studies suggest that it is relatively rare to have comprehensive support mechanisms and structures in place to guide and support staff. In Austria, for instance, the lack of staff and large group sizes mean that teachers struggle to find sufficient time and favourable conditions to best support transitions. This is despite the fact that additional support staff for special educational needs and language learning are in place (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c; see also Chapter 4). Finland also cited a lack of additional staff, while in Japan although there is no explicit provision for additional staff, support may come from other sources (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016; Government of Japan, 2016). Approaches to support materials also differ greatly. While some countries provide a wealth of national guidelines, others, like Finland, Kazakhstan and Slovenia, have no mandatory materials in place.

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 support needs.

Strategy: Offer more – and more relevant – transition-specific training

- In **Norway,** kindergarten and primary school teacher education covers transitions between kindergarten and schools. A part of kindergarten student teachers' teaching practice in kindergartens is dedicated to transitions and students are encouraged to spend some days of this period in a school. However, primary school teacher students do not have the same opportunity (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

- In **Slovenia,** a school reform in 1996 extended the length of compulsory education by making school compulsory from the age of six instead of seven. As a consequence, school and preschool teachers had to undergo additional training in teaching first-graders. These educational modules were subsequently integrated into the new pre-service programmes. Slovenia stands out for the provisions made for considering practitioners' voices in professional continuity (Box 3.9; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

Box 3.9 **Case study: Listening to staff and teacher views on professional continuity in Slovenia**

Before changing norms and standards, such as teaching responsibilities and qualification requirements for staff, the Minister of Education will seek the opinion of the teaching unions and the Expert Council for General Education, which consists of at least one-quarter of kindergarten or school workers. Thus teachers have a say through two different channels. Their voices are also heard at the ECEC centre and school-level. Professional development of preschool and primary school teachers is determined in each institution's *Annual Work Plan*, which is then adopted by the kindergarten/school council. The council is the institution's governing body and is comprised of representatives of the municipality, staff and parents, allowing them to have a say on training-related matters. Within this framework, kindergartens and schools decide for themselves which training to participate in, including on transition.

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia (2017), *Slovenia Country Background Report on Transitions from ECEC to Primary School*, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ljubljana, www.oecd.org/edu/school/SS5-country-background-report-slovenia.pdf.

- In **Austria,** transition-related training is usual for kindergarten and primary school teachers. Some University Colleges of Teacher Education already offer ECEC pedagogy as a specialisation which equips graduates with the necessary competences and knowledge for managing transitions. Moreover, these colleges also increasingly provide in-service training in the field of ECEC pedagogy, which may help to improve understanding of kindergarten teachers' work. The current curriculum for kindergarten teacher training colleges also explicitly mentions the concept of transition, the promotion of transition competences, the development of competences for the last year of kindergarten and models for settling-in (BAKIP, 2014). In the school year of 2016/17 a new curriculum is set to come into force, including new topics such as co-operation between ECEC and primary school within the scope of the school entry period, and providing models of inter-institutional co-operation (BMBF, 2016). At the practice level, there are attempts to facilitate communication and collaboration through joint workshops or trainings and project initiatives (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c).

- In **Japan,** training on transitions is provided as part of the training at each school and setting and through local government-provided training to deepen awareness and understanding among teaching staff. For example, from the 2014 fiscal year, about half of all local governments have provided training experience in "connections with primary education (including transitions)" to kindergarten teachers with at least ten years' experience (Government of Japan, 2016).

- The State of Victoria in **Australia** has developed a cross-cutting approach to professional development (Box 3.10).

Box 3.10 **Supporting reciprocal visits and professional learning to facilitate transitions to school in the State of Victoria, Australia**

In 2016, the Department of Education and Training for the State of Victoria commissioned a project to maintain Koorie[1] children's connection to their culture during and after transition to school. It also aimed to strengthen relationships among teachers, educators, children, their families and communities. The project aimed to build the capacity of both the prior-to-school and school sectors. This involved a professional learning programme consisting of reciprocal visits and professional learning sessions at two sites in Victoria with a high numbers of Koorie children and families.

Free professional development workshops, open to anyone in the local community, complemented the professional gatherings and reciprocal visits and strengthened connections and networks across the prior-to-school and school sectors, as well as the broader child and family service sector. Around 160 people participated in these workshops between March and May 2016.

These processes have proven to be effective in raising awareness of the issues faced by Koorie children and their families and in assisting staff to support them in the transition to school. The project's final report highlighted the importance of building trust through communication. It emphasised that the success of transition processes can be secured through local networking, cross-sector meetings, reciprocal visits in various forms and joint sector professional development opportunities which reflect the local context.

1. Koorie refers here to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Morwell and Mildura in Victoria, Australia.
Sources: Case study prepared by the Australian Department of Education and Training based on Macquarie University, Semann and Slattery and Boon Wuttung Foundation (2016), "Transition to school – supporting reciprocal visits (Koorie focus)"; edited by the OECD Secretariat.

Strategy: Meet teacher and staff support needs

- In **Slovenia,** a counselling service operates directly in kindergartens or schools. Its role is to support children, parents and ECEC staff in play and teaching; routine activities; the kindergarten climate; children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development; enrolment of children in kindergarten; the transition to school; and in instances of socio-economic distress. These counsellors *(svetovalni delavec)* are professionally trained psychologists, special educators, pedagogues, social pedagogues, special and rehabilitation pedagogues or social workers. They possess a higher education degree (equivalent to a master's degree) and practical training in a real working environment is a compulsory part of their course. The counselling service works with a variety of stakeholders, including parents. The kindergarten counselling service may co-operate with the counselling service of the primary school, social work centres and medical centres. (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

- In the **Austrian** state of Carinthia, two hours per week of advice and support are provided by a special pedagogue during the transition period to help with co-ordination between kindergartens and primary schools. In special cases additional staff (inclusion or special education teachers, speech therapists or school psychologists) may also be available, for instance to work with children with developmental delays or special needs (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c).

- In **Japan,** support is available through a variety of channels. The standard class size for first grade is smaller (35 children) than second grade and above (40 children) to allow more careful guidance to be provided to children who are just starting primary school. Local government may also make additional support available. For instance, Yokohama City government deploys full-time child support teachers, while in other municipalities, parents/guardians and university students may participate in classes as assistant supporters. From fiscal year 2016, the national government will introduce a model programme for building local government systems for promoting early childhood education. The aim is to establish

community-based "Centres for Early Childhood Education" to conduct research into the training and deployment of "early childhood education advisors" who travel to each school and ECEC setting to provide guidance and advice. This programme also constructs centres which address transitions (Government of Japan, 2016).

- In the **United States,** two national advocacy organisations set guidelines for teacher training. Policy recommendations from the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) state that training is essential to bridge the gap between early learning experiences and early primary grades. In particular, kindergarten is seen as a transition pivot, which can link the pedagogy, curriculum and policies between the two settings. NAECS' goal is to prepare teachers and administrators through pre-service training and professional development, as well as to align standards, improve communication between levels, create transition teams in schools, and learning to engage with parents to support the transitions. NAECS has also developed a list of policies to improve child development outcomes in kindergarten, including transition-related support in line with their individual needs (NAECS-SDE, 2013). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) establishes research-based content standards for professional training, including transition issues, especially around communicating with families and joint planning with other educational settings (NAEYC, 2009).

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

Even where guidelines, training and support on transitions are available, structural impediments may hinder co-operation and co-ordination across levels in practice, potentially undermining other efforts to foster professional continuity.

In the majority of countries (13 out of 19), pre-primary school teachers spend a large share of their time working directly with children, leaving less time for other tasks, such as preparing transitions (Figure 3.2). In **Austria,** for example, the long on-site hours for kindergarten teachers mean they need to have professional conversations and carry out consultations in their leisure time. Alongside a lack of financial resources and space to exchange and have conversations, this is seen as a constraint to practices seeking to facilitate transitions (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c). The location of ECEC and primary school provision can be another physical hurdle to continuity (Chapter 5). For instance, more time is required for co-ordination if ECEC settings and primary schools are not located on the same premises.

Another constraint can be legislation on data protection which restricts the sharing of personal data on a child. This is an issue in **Slovenia,** where it hinders primary teachers from obtaining from kindergartens all the information they need on each child. Schools may only obtain information about the children who are in the process of a school readiness evaluation by kindergartens. To circumvent these obstacles, some kindergartens encourage parents to share as much relevant information as possible about their child with the school directly, including information provided by kindergarten teachers. The protection of personal data poses particular challenges for kindergartens that are independent from schools, rather than integrated within them. Slovenia suggests that this challenge is linked partly to the absence of clear guidelines, as well as a lack of training of ECEC and primary school staff in how to handle sensitive personal data (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017; see also Chapters 4 and 5).

Strategies to solve these issues are outlined below. These include creating accommodating legal environments, allowing staff sufficient time to co-operate, and considering physically integrating ECEC settings and schools. Integrated local structures can also aid in co-operation with other sectors and training providers, as the examples of integrated schools or campus models in Wales (United Kingdom), Austria and many Northern European countries suggest.

Strategy: Make legal provisions for the exchange of information

It is important that staff and teachers are allowed to communicate important details to help them to target their practices to best support individual children. But they also need to be aware of the rules governing this information. Neuss et al. (2014) argue that data protection and the handling of data on individual children should be part of staff and teacher training (see Chapter 5). Staff also need clear guidance on what information they are allowed to and supposed to share as the child moves on, and the role parents need to play. In all of this leaders of settings and schools have a key role to play.

- In **Wales (United Kingdom),** ways of sharing information on children and for joint working between various services are continually being developed in order to improve the quality of transition from childcare to early education. The Early Years Development and Assessment Framework aims to align the various development assessments done on children from ages zero to seven and ensure that these are shared across all relevant services (Welsh Government, 2017).

- In **Austria,** a change to the school law in 2016 obliges children's guardians to share the observations and results of support measures they received from the kindergarten management with the primary school at the time of enrolment. The information gathered on children's development, competencies, interests and gifts facilitates targeted and continuous support (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016d).

Strategy: Ensure adequate time and physical conditions for co-operation

As shown in Figure 3.2 above, six countries – Chile, the Netherlands, France, Spain, England and Scotland (United Kingdom) – have already taken steps to ensure that pre-primary teachers have, beyond teaching and contact with children, as much time as their primary school peers for other tasks such as preparation, collaboration and organisational matters.

If ECEC and primary school facilities are separate or ECEC children move on to a variety of different schools, local structures such as transition co-ordinators or counsellors may be needed to ensure information flows between various institutions. Several countries have found ways to improve the physical conditions for co-operation:

- **Slovenia** highlights that communication issues are less prevalent when ECEC centres and basic schools (the integrated primary and lower secondary school level) are integrated on a single site.

- In many Northern European countries the transitions grades can be physically integrated. In **Latvia, Lithuania** and **Finland,** the last year or two preceding compulsory primary education can take place in either ECEC centres or in primary schools (European Commission et al., 2014). In **Sweden,** the last year of ECEC before compulsory school is a pre-primary class for six-year-olds *(förskoleklass)* which is located in primary schools (European Commission et al., 2014). As discussed in Chapter 5, some **Danish municipalities** organise collaborations between ECEC centres and local primary schools within the same catchment area.

- In **Wales** (United Kingdom), the government is using the school building and refurbishment programme to ensure that local authorities improve collaboration between primary schools and ECEC providers by hosting ECEC and school services on the same site. Currently, there are a number of approaches to collaboration. These range from separate nursery schools to integrated children centres where everything from maternity services to ECEC are co-located within the local primary school (Welsh Government, 2017).

- In **Italy,** the reorganisation of state schools in comprehensive institutes covering children from 3 to 14 helps to apply continuity in the curriculum and common leadership.

What policy development pointers arise from this research?

This final section outlines some policy pointers emerging from countries' experiences and struggles in ensuring professional continuity. They are exploratory and seek to provide a source of inspiration as to what is important to take into account when designing and revising policies and practices to foster professional continuity. They should not be viewed as prescriptive.

Match demands on staff with resources

While guidelines for the transition process are almost commonplace and reflect growing policy attention on transitions, additional resources, staff and time to help practitioners meet expectations for transitions do not seem to be widely available. If transitions practices and cross-institutional co-operation are to be seen as success stories rather than as additional administrative requirements, staff need to be able to take on their transition-related roles during their regular working time and with specialist support where needed. The use of special counsellors, such as in Slovenia, and several countries' success in bringing pre-primary and primary teachers' time allocations into line, may provide sources of inspiration to other countries (OECD, 2016a; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

Embrace and support the role of leaders in ECEC and primary schools

Leadership is an issue cutting across the various challenges and strategies highlighted above. In most countries the responsibility for managing successful transitions is mainly in the hands of individual centre leaders and school principals, who act as role models for staff. Some of them may even be seen "as visionaries and motivators for a joint concept on transition" (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c). In many countries, these individuals have overall responsibility for the professional development of their teachers and staff. It is crucial that they have the means to understand staff needs and enable them to take part in on-site and off-site training programmes when additional development is needed. They can also make the strategic choice to bring in additional support or specialist staff when needed. This can be illustrated with two examples:

- **Norway's** *Framework Plan* stipulates that the head teacher of the kindergarten and the pedagogical leader have a particular responsibility for the planning, implementation, assessment and development of the kindergarten's tasks and content. They are also responsible for advising the rest of the staff, including on transitions. The national guide on transitions underlines that the head teachers in both kindergarten and primary school are responsible for ensuring co-operation between both institutions. It highlights that leaders at both levels are key for launching initiatives and providing support for development and change, identifying challenges and helping to develop coping measures to ensure good transitions for school starters (Gjerustad et al., 2016; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

- **Austria** specifies that management in ECEC and primary schools is responsible for fostering exchange between management and staff in the different institutions, co-ordinating joint projects, making time available to facilitate transitions, arranging training courses across institutions, and providing material resources or professional literature. Yet, there is no uniform definition of this role and functions may be performed in different ways and to a different degree across settings (Charlotte Bühler Institut, 2016c).

For all of these tasks, leaders not only need to be highly skilled, but they also need a clear legal environment for their work – such as for the sharing of information on children, as in Wales (United Kingdom) and Austria. They also need support to exercise their role effectively, for instance with the help of counsellors, as in Slovenia. This is especially true as there is usually no national transition policy on which to draw.

Ensure that early childhood education and care staff and primary school teachers learn together and from each other

Unequal status and differing perspectives between ECEC and primary are seen as key issues in many countries. Ensuring overlapping or joint pre-service and in-service training can help to bridge the gap and foster common understandings and shared approaches (Neuss et al., 2014). Measures to level the playing field can be a key ingredient in improved collaboration. Box 3.11 draws on lessons learnt in Italy that reflect on these challenges.

While aligning qualification levels may require a longer planning period, rolling out joint in-service training and workshops for both levels can be an important and less challenging first step. In doing so, it is pivotal to avoid any hierarchy between the two groups. It is also important to allow both sides sufficient time for preparation and participation. The approaches taken in pre-primary education can be as informative for the beginning of primary school as the other way around, ensuring that children are being picked up where they stand rather than where they are expected to stand.

Box 3.11 **Case study: Insights from Italy's challenges and strategies around professional continuity**

Institutional continuity emerges from Italian national curricular guidelines, which state that preschools prepare children for school by facilitating a smooth transition to primary education and by equipping children with the competencies expected at age six (MIUR, 2012a).

Research on continuity and transition informs preschool and schools' practices (Corsaro and Molinari, 2008; Coggi and Ricchiardi, 2014; Commodari, 2013; Pontecorvo, 1989; Pontecorvo, Tassinari and Camaioni, 1990; Zanetti and Cavioni, 2014). Yet initiatives geared towards fostering continuity are largely localised and short term. In practice, continuity is left to the initiative of individual schools and teachers – conceived in a bureaucratic manner more than as a didactic question (MIUR, 2012b). While national research on continuity practices in Italy is scarce, a qualitative exploration carried out in 2014 by INVALSI (*Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione*), the Italian National Institute for the Evaluation of the System of Education and Training, suggests that school leaders and teachers, especially those in ECEC, face several challenges in adopting a more professional way of teaching, observing, assessing and reporting from a continuity perspective (Stringher, 2017). Such challenges have also been experienced by coordinators in Rome municipality.

The first challenge is the general lack of professional development for teachers on transition or continuity. Transition does not seem to be a priority for school leaders. Closer university-school collaboration could be fostered to assess children's needs during this transition; to facilitate an open dialogue and joint in-service training involving preschool and primary school teachers and leaders (Maffeo and Casali, 2013); and also to implement professional development on continuity for head teachers. In addition, if the objective is to avoid the fade-out effect of teachers' training, follow-up actions need to be periodically planned that are attuned to children's and teachers' needs.

The second challenge is preschool and primary school teachers' false beliefs and reciprocal distrust. Transformative teacher training is needed to overcome these. This could help bridge historical pedagogical differences apparently rooted in the different origins of preschool and primary education. For instance, preschool teachers underline the difference with primary school: "in primary education there is no play dimension, while in preschool all is learnt through play, in primary this disappears completely" (Stringher, 2017, p. 21). As a result, preschool teachers often train children to quietly sit still, calling this practice "schoolification".

Source: Case study provided by Cristina Stringher (INVALSI), edited by the OECD Secretariat.

For instance, the ability of primary school teachers to enhance quality and encourage child-friendly environments within the classroom matters, as does their wider understanding of child development, enabling them to cater for the needs of individual children (Akhter et al., 2012). As discussed, above, some examples of joint training exist in countries like Austria, Germany and

Japan. In the local authority of Ceredigion in Wales (United Kingdom), for instance, a day nursery with a focus on transitions for children with additional learning needs welcomes visits from other settings and schools. It also discusses their initiatives with the local advisory teacher, sharing good practices across the county (Welsh Government, 2017). Teachers at both levels also need to receive clear guidance on what information they can and should share as a child moves on, and the role parents need to play.

Strengthen the evidence base for transition-related training and guidance

As indicated in the literature review, the research carried out on the effectiveness of transition-related pre-service training and professional development so far is as encouraging as it is scarce. More research is needed on the most successful types and modes of delivery. While local examples of successful training seem to be on the rise, this diversity of approaches seems to be insufficiently exploited for evaluation purposes, to identify what works best, for whom and under what conditions. Such evaluations could help ensure that successful training programmes can be adapted and scaled up – at least within the context of a national or regional ECEC and primary school system. This is particularly important given the overall scarcity of research on transitions.

The question to what extent transition guidelines and transition-related statements in curricula translate into effective transition practices also remains largely unanswered. There is a lack of accountability in this regard. The provision of effective materials could be a relatively affordable way to improve transitions but is not a substitute for expanding relevant pre-service and in-service training. This discussion is even more salient as many OECD member and non-member economies are experiencing a rise in the population of immigrant children who may require additional support and attention at the onset of their educational career, putting even greater responsibility on ECEC and primary school practitioners (OECD, 2015). This point requires further attention.

Annex 3.A Detailed country-by-country responses

For **WEB** tables, see: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en

	Table 3.A.1	Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)
WEB	Table 3.A.2	Initial teacher education and entry into the profession, pre-primary and primary education in public institutions (2013)
WEB	Table 3.A.3	Percentage of teachers in primary and pre-primary education by age (2014)
WEB	Table 3.A.4	Content of pre-service education of pre-primary and primary education teachers (2013)
WEB	Table 3.A.5	General and specific training and professional development of ECEC and primary education staff (2014)
WEB	Table 3.A.6	Support to staff and collaboration on transitions (2014)

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)**

Legend:
- Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC
- Pre-primary and Primary teachers
- Primary teacher or class-room level lead
- Assistant
- Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
- Advisor or counsellor
- Starting age of primary education

Jurisdiction name	Children's age													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Austria							**6**							
	"Kindergartenpädagoge/in (kindergarten teacher)" (ages 0–5)						Volksschullehrer/in (primary school teacher) (ages 6–9)							
	Helfer/in, Assistent/in (auxiliary/support staff) (ages 0–5)													
	Sonderpädagoge/in (pedagogues for special needs education) (ages 0–5)													
	Sprachlehrer/innen (language teachers) (ages 0–5)													
Belgium – Flemish Community							**6**							
			Kleuteronderwijzer(es) (pre-primary teacher) (ages 2½–5)				Onderwijzer(es) (teacher) (ages 6–11)							
Canada*							*							
	Early Childhood Educators (ages 0–11)													
						Primary/Elementary Teachers (ages 5–12, Up to 17)								
Chile							**6**							
	Educador de Párvulos (Early Childhood Educator) (ages 0–5)						Licenciado en Pedagogia en Educación Básica (Primary school teacher) (ages 6–12, Up to 13)							
	Técnico en Educación Parvularia (Early childhood teacher assistant) (ages 0–5)													
Colombia							**6**							
	Maestros/maestras (teachers) (ages 0–12, Up to 17)													
	Coordinadores/as (coordinators) (ages 0–12, Up to 17)													
	Equipo Psicosocial (Psychosocial staff) (ages 0–4)					Orientador escolar (School orientation staff) (ages 5–12, Up to 17)								
	Nutricionista (Nutritionist) (ages 0–4)													
	Docente de apoyo (Auxiliary staff) (ages 0–4)													
	Agentes educativo (Educational agent) (ages 0–4)													
Croatia*							**6**							
		Odgojitelj (Educator of preschool children) (ages 1–5)												
							Učitelj (Educators and teachers) (ages 6–11)							
		Stručni tim dječjeg vrtića (Proffessional team for preschool) (ages 1–5)				Stručni tim osnovne škole (Proffessional team for primary school) (ages 6–11)								
		Stručni tim dječjeg vrtića (Proffessional team for preschool) (ages 1–5)				Stručni tim osnovne škole (Proffessional team for primary school) (ages 6–11)								
Czech Republic							**6**							
				Učitel matečské školy (pre-primary school teacher) (ages 3–5)			Učitel prvního stupně základní školy (teacher of primary school) (ages 6–10)							

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)** (continued)

Legend	
▉ Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC	▉ Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
▉ Pre-primary and Primary teachers	▉ Advisor or counsellor
▉ Primary teacher or class-room level lead	▉ Starting age of primary education
▉ Assistant	

Jurisdiction name	Children's age													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Denmark*								7						
								Grundskole lærer (Primary school teacher)						(Up to 17)
	Pædagog (pedagogue)													(Up to 17)
							Børnehaveklasseleder (kindergarten class leader)							
	Pædagogisk assistent (pedagogical assistant) *													(Up to 17)
	"Pædagogisk støttepersonale tildelt individuelle børn, fx støttepædagog, sprogpædagog, inklusionspædagog, tale-hørepædagog (Pedagogical support staff allocated individual children, e.g. special needs pedagogue, language teacher, inclusion teacher, speech and language teacher)"													(Up to 17)
	Pædagogmedhjælper (assistant without traning) *													(Up to 17)
Finland								7						
	lastentarhanopettaja (Kindergarten teacher)							luokanopettaja (Class school teacher)						
	Suomi/Ruotsi Toisena Kielenä -Opettaja (Special Speech Teachers)													
	Erityislastentarhanopettaja (Special Kinderkarten Teachers)													
	Avustaja (Assistants)													
	lastenhoitaja (Vocational nurse)													
Germany								*						
	Erzieher/in (educator)													(Up to 13)
	Kinderpfleger/innen & Sozialassistenten/innen (childcarers)													(Up to 13)
	Sozialpädagogen/innen (social pedagogues)													(Up to 13)
	Fachkräfte zur Förderung von Kindern mit (drohender) Behinderung (Staff working with children with or at risk of disabilities)													(Up to 13)
	Kindheitspädagogen/innen (ECEC pedagogues)													(Up to 13)
	Zweit- und Ergänzungskräfte (Assistants)													(Up to 13)
								Grundschullehrer/in (primary school teacher)						(Up to 13)
Greece							6							
						Νηπιαγωγός/ Nipiagogos (pre-primary school teacher)	Δάσκαλος/ Dáskalos (primary school teacher)							

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)** (continued)

Legend:
- Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC
- Pre-primary and Primary teachers
- Primary teacher or class-room level lead
- Assistant
- Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
- Advisor or counsellor
- Starting age of primary education

Jurisdiction name	Children's age													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Hungary							6 (start)							
				Óvodapedagógus (kindergarten educator, pre-school teacher) (ages 3–6)										
	Dajka (care assistant) (ages 0–6)													
				Pedagógiai asszisztens (Pedagogical assistant); Gyógypedagógiai asszisztens (Special educational needs assistant) (ages 3–6)										
								Tanító (primary school teacher) (ages 6–10)						
								Pedagógiai asszisztens (Pedagogical assistant); Gyógypedagógiai asszisztens (Special educational needs assistant) (ages 6–10)						
Ireland							6 (start)							
	Childcare Practitioner (ages 0–5)													
	Preschool Room Leader (ages 0–5)													
						Primary School Teacher (ages 5–11)								
Italy*							6 (start)							
				Docente di scuola dell'infanzia (preschool teacher), or insegnante (teacher) or maestra (school teacher) (ages 3–6)			Docente di scuola primaria (primary school teacher), or insegnante (teacher) or maestra (school teacher) (ages 6–10)							
Japan							6 (start)							
	保育教諭 (Teacher for early childhood education and care) (ages 0–6)							小学校教諭 (Elementary school teacher) (ages 6–11)						
	保育士 (Day-care staff) (ages 0–6)													
				幼稚園教諭 (Kindergarten teacher) (ages 3–6)										
Kazakhstan							6 (start)							
		Воспитатель (Pre-primary teacher) (ages 1–6)												
		Тәрбиешінің көмекшісі / Помощник воспитателя (Assistant) (ages 1–6)												
				Қазақ тілі оқытушысы / Преподаватель казахского языка (Teacher of Kazakh language); Хореограф (Choreographer); Жүзуден нұсқаушы / Инструктор по плаванию (Swimming instructor) ; Дене тәрбиесі жөніндегі нұсқаушы / Инструктор по физкультуре (Gym instructor); Бейнелеу өнері жөніндегі оқытушы / Преподаватель по изобразительному искусству (Drawing teacher) (ages 3–6)										
			Музыка жетекшісі / Музыкальный руководитель (Music teacher) (ages 2–6)											
							Учитель начального образования (Primary education teachers) (ages 6–10)							

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)** (continued)

Legend:
- Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC
- Pre-primary and Primary teachers
- Primary teacher or class-room level lead
- Assistant
- Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
- Advisor or counsellor
- Starting age of primary education

Jurisdiction name	Children's age													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Luxembourg							6							
				Instituteur de l'enseignement fondamental (Primary school teachers teach pre- and primary school level)									
				Équipe multi-professionnelle (Multi-professional team)									
Mexico							6							
				Maestra de Educación Preescolar (Preschool teacher in general preschool/ indigenous/ migrant education)									
		Instructor comunitario de Preescolar (Community preschool instructor)			–		Maestra de Educación Primaria (Primary education teacher)							
							Instructor comunitario de Primaria (Community primary school instructor)							
Netherlands							6							
	Pedagogische medewerker (pedagogical staff)					Docent primair onderwijs (primary school teacher)								
New Zealand							6							
	ECE teacher					Primary school teacher								
Norway							6							
	Barnehagelærer (Kindergarten teacher, formerly called preschool teacher (førskolelærer))					Grunnskolelærer (Teacher)								
	Barne- og ungdomsarbeider (Child and youth care workers with vocational education and training)										(Up to 18)			
	Assistenter (Assistent – auxiliary staff)										(Up to 18)			
	Støttepedagoger for ett eller flere barn (Support pedagogues for one or several children)										(Up to 18)			
Poland								7						
				Nauczyciel wychowania przedszkolnego (pre-primary teacher)										
				Nauczyciel nauczania wczesnoszkolnego (primary school teacher for integrated education in grades 1-3)										
Portugal							6							
				Educador de infância (preschool teacher)			Professor do 1.º ciclo do ensino básico (early primary school teacher)							
Slovak Republic							6							
				Učiteľ materskej školy (Pre-primary school teacher)			Učiteľ prvého stupňa základnej školy (Primary school teacher)							
				Asistent učiteľa (Teacher assistant)										
				Špeciálny pedagóg (Special pedagogist)										
				Školský logopéd (Speech disorder specialist)										

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)** (continued)

Legend:
- Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC
- Pre-primary and Primary teachers
- Primary teacher or class-room level lead
- Assistant
- Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
- Advisor or counsellor
- Starting age of primary education

Jurisdiction name	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Slovenia*							6							
		Vzgojitelj predšolskih otrok (preschool teacher)												
		Pomočnik vzgojitelja (preschool teacher assistant)					Učitelj razrednega pouka (primary education teacher)							
		Vzgojitelj za dodatno strokovno pomoč (Preschool teacher for additional professional assistance)												(Up to 17)
		Učitelj za dodatno strokovno pomoč (Teacher for additional professional assistance)												(Up tp 17)
		Svetovalni delavec (kindergarten/school counsellor)												(Up to 17)
Spain							6							
	Maestro de Educación Infantil (Pre-primary school teacher)													
	Docentes de apoyo (Auxiliary staff)													
				Maestro de Educación Primaria (Primary school teacher)										
				Maestros para alumnos de necesidades educativas especiales (staff for individual children -special needs children)										
				"Profesor Técnico de Servicios a la Comunidad" (teacher offering Social services to the community)										
				"Orientador escolar" (School orientation staff)										
Sweden*								7						
		Förskollärare (preschool teacher)												
								Grundskollärare (primary school teacher)						(Up to 15)
		Barnskötare (child minder)						Fritidspedagog (leisure-time pedagogue)						
		Pedagogisk resurspersonal för individuella barn t.ex. resurspedagog, specialpedagog, tal- och språkpedagog, psykolog (Pedagogical support staff allocated individual children, e.g. special needs pedagogue, speech and language teacher, psychologist); could also be specialists working with a group of children or as advisors with guidance for the staff.												
								Pedagogisk resurspersonal för individuella elever t.ex. resurspedagog, specialpedagog, speciallärare, kurator, tal- och språkpedagog, psykolog (Pedagogical support staff allocated individual children, e.g. special needs pedagogue, special needs teacher, social councellor (psycosocial), speech and language teacher, psychologist)						(Up to 15)
		Stödpersonal/elevassistent (assistant with or without training)												(Up to 15)

Table 3.A.1 **Types of staff in ECEC and primary schooling during the time of transitions by children's ages (2015)** (continued)

Legend:
- Pre-primary teacher or play-room level lead in ECEC
- Pre-primary and Primary teachers
- Primary teacher or class-room level lead
- Assistant
- Staff for individual children (e.g. special needs)
- Advisor or counsellor
- Starting age of primary education

Jurisdiction name	Children's age													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Switzerland							6							
	Kindererzieher / éducateur de l'enfance / educatore dell'infanzia (ECEC pedagogue); = qualified staff with overall responsibilty				Diplomierte/r Lehrer/in für die Vorschulstufe / enseignant/e diplômé/e du degré préscolaire / docente diplomato/a per il livello prescolastico (Teacher for preschool level)		Diplomierte/r Lehrer/in für die Primarstufe / enseignant/e diplômé/e du degré primaire / docente diplomato/a per il livello elementare (Teacher for primary school level)							
	Fachperson Betreuung / assistant socio-éducatif / operatore socioassistenziale (ECEC specialist) (qualified staff with pedagogical responsibility)				Diplomierte/r Lehrer/in für die Vorschul- und Primarstufe / Enseignant/e diplômé/e des degrés préscolaire et primaire / docente diplomato/a per il livello prescolastico ed elementare (Teacher for preschool and primary school level)									
	Pädagogische Assistenz / assistant pédagogique / assistente all'infanzia (ECEC assistant); (Assistants)													
	Sonderpädagoge Früherziehung / pédagogue éducation précoce / docente educazione precoce (ECEC special needs pedagogue); (support staff for individual children)													
	Staff for individual children, e.g. Sonderpädagoge, Logopäde, Psychomotoriktherapeut / pédagogue spécialisé, logopédiste, thérapeute en psychomotricité / docente pedagogia specializzata, logopedista, psicomotricista (special needs pedagogue, speech therapist, psychomotor therapist) (support staff for individual children)													(Up to 14)
Turkey							6							
				Okul Öncesi Öğretmeni (Pre-primary school teacher, preschool teacher, nursery class teacher)			Primary school teacher							
United Kingdom - Wales						5								
	Early years/ childcare practitioners						Primary school teacher							
	Learning gupport staff for children with special education needs													(Up to 17)
	Learning Support staff within schools													(Up to 17)

Notes:
This table provides an indicative, but not exhaustive overview of practitioners who are working with children in the year before or after a transition from one level to the other. Please refer to the web version for additional notes.
* In Canada and Germany, the starting age of compulsory education varies greatly across jurisdictions.
Source: OECD Network on ECEC, "Survey on transitions between ECEC and primary education", June 2016.

Notes

1. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and Wales (United Kingdom).

2. Canada and Germany and sometimes Austria provided information disaggregated by provinces or Länders. Hence, there can be close to 60 jurisdictions for some indicators.

3. Teachers' effectiveness in developing children's socio-emotional competences (Slot et al., 2015).

4. Among the measures of process quality used by Burchinal et al. (2002) were the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS; Harms and Clifford, 1980), the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS; Harms, Cryer and Clifford, 1990), and the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS; Arnett, 1989).

5. Quality in the provision of care was measured by Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2003) using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-E and ECERS-R), an observational assessment of pedagogy, facilities and programmes, and centre managers' education.

6. Meaning their loss from the profession.

7. Centre quality was measured by Sylva et al (2006) using the revised version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, 1998) and the English curriculum extension to it (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2003).

8. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and Wales (United Kingdom).

9. As assistants and other staff categories are also involved, especially in pre-primary education (Table 3.A1), the salary statistics presented on teachers underestimate the differences between the workforces as they only concern the typically more qualified members of the pre-primary workforce.

10. Scotland (United Kingdom), Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United States.

11. Australia is an anomaly: it has a low child-teacher ratio in pre-primary (5:1), but the highest relative salary costs at pre-primary level – more than 25%.

12. This refers to teachers only, not all staff. Please refer to Chapter 4 for a discussion on staff-child ratios.

13. Please refer to the source tables from OECD (2014b) for details on individual country responses: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120252.

14. This is also documented in the literature (see e.g. Neuss et al., 2014; OECD, 2016a).

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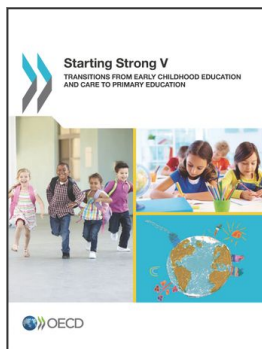
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