



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – NORWAY

1. ACCESS, PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

Key principles

1.1 Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children.

1.2 Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

Norway defines work with children under the age of 6 as *Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)*, not *Early Childhood Education (ECE)*.

Provision (financial or any other provision) is organised by the municipalities, also called local authorities.

1.1.

It is a political priority to achieve universal access for all children under 6 years of age.

The government sets the maximum monthly parental fees for kindergartens.

As of 1 May 2015, parental fees are set at 6% of the family income, with a fixed ceiling of NOK 2,580. This applies to both private and public kindergartens.

Municipalities can offer children from low-income families admission to kindergarten without charging a parental fee.

To ensure better availability for children from families with a low income, 20 hours free attendance is provided for 4- and 5-year-old children from families with an annual income lower than NOK 405,000, as of 1 August 2015.

In the case of children living in at-risk circumstances, ECE is fully funded by municipalities.

To support the municipalities (local authorities) in meeting the needs of families and children without a statutory right, an additional block grant has been made to increase flexibility in access to kindergarten.

1.2.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens is a regulation of the Kindergarten Act. The Framework Plan states that all kindergartens must work towards the goal of children's development and learning, and stimulate children's linguistic and social competence. Childhood is a phase of life with intrinsic value; kindergartens must be inclusive fellowships with space for each child.



Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national policy and legislation that gives the right to all children, without exception, from at least 3 years onwards, to attend mainstream Early Childhood Education (ECE)?</p> <p>2. Is there support available to enable every child to attend ECE?</p> <p>3. Is there a period of compulsory ECE before school starts?</p> <p>4. Are arrangements in place for transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education for all children?</p> <p>5. Is inclusion stated as a goal of ECE provision? Is there a policy making ECE accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. Is there a policy that obliges mainstream publicly funded ECE to make adaptations so that all children can attend and participate? Please describe</p>	<p>1. The Kindergarten Act states that children who have applied for a kindergarten place and who turn one no later than the end of August are entitled to a place in a kindergarten from August. August is the start of a new year at the kindergarten, following the school calendar.</p> <p>Children are entitled to a place in a kindergarten in the municipality where they live.</p> <p>From 2016/2017, the Act regarding entitlement for children is extended to October and municipalities are given specific grants to facilitate a more flexible admission process for children.</p> <p>2. Financial support:</p> <p>Parents pay a maximum price for their child's place in kindergarten. There are also several regulations regarding reduction of costs, for example, for more than one child (50% reduction for second child, 70% reduction for third and consecutive children) or low-income families.</p> <p>Children who receive help from the Child Welfare Service can be admitted to kindergarten free of charge as part of the efforts to help the child and the family. This includes children who are younger than one year by the end of August, thus allowing these children admission earlier than others to the kindergarten.</p> <p>In the case of children living in at-risk circumstances, ECE is fully funded by municipalities.</p> <p>Municipalities can offer children in low-income families admission to kindergarten without charging a parental fee.</p> <p>Children who, based on expert assessment, are in need of special needs education are entitled to receive this service free of charge. Parents pay only for the hours in kindergarten not defined as special needs education.</p> <p>The national scheme for reduction in kindergarten fees: If the maximum price is higher than 6% of the total household income, the cost is reduced. This applies to</p>



	<p>both public and private kindergartens.</p> <p>Four- and five-year-olds in low-income families (below NOK 417,000) have the right to 20 hours free kindergarten per week (from August 2015). This right was extended to 3-year-olds in August 2016.</p> <p>The municipality will reimburse loss of income to private kindergartens where parents qualify for a reduced payment. Refunds to private kindergartens from the municipality are based on the current maximum price.</p> <p>Other support:</p> <p>§ 16 of the Discrimination and Accessibility Act obliges the municipalities to ensure equal development and activity opportunities for children with disabilities. This support can be in the form of teaching aids or individual (physical) adaptations within the kindergarten.</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. The Framework Plan emphasises the municipality's responsibility in ensuring that kindergartens and primary schools facilitate the children's transition from kindergarten to primary education in co-operation with parents. Plans for the children's transition to school must be specified in the kindergartens' annual plans. There is no mention of the transition from home to kindergarten on a national level, but kindergartens have plans and routines for this.</p> <p>Usually the parents visit the kindergarten with their children in the first week so that children feel secure before staying in the kindergarten without their parents. Depending on their employment contracts, many parents can spend some time at the kindergarten, during the transition, using compassionate leave.</p> <p>5. Inclusion /participation:</p> <p>The Kindergarten Act's purpose clause states:</p> <p><i>They shall have the right to participate in accordance with their age and abilities.</i></p> <p>Section 3 in the Kindergarten Act also states that children</p>
--	---



	<p>in kindergarten shall have the right to express their views on the day-to-day kindergarten activities. Children should be regularly given the opportunity to take active part in planning and assessing activities. The children's views shall be given due weight according to their age and maturity. The degree of participation and how the right to participate is put into practice will depend on the age and the function of the child. Children's emotional expressions should be taken seriously. Kindergartens must operate on the basis of children's own ways of expressing themselves. Staff must listen to and attempt to interpret the children's body language and must be observant in relation to their actions, aesthetic expressions and eventually their verbal communications. Kindergartens must allow for different perspectives of different children, and must respect their intentions and realms of experience.</p> <p>The Framework acknowledges that all children are different and have different backgrounds. The provision of an equal, high-quality kindergarten therefore requires individual adjustments to the service and local adjustments to the content (section 1.9 'An Inclusive community with space for individual children').</p> <p>Participation or accessibility:</p> <p>The Kindergarten Act stipulates that kindergartens should be pedagogical undertakings offering children opportunities for play, self-expression, imparting values and cultures and helping to ensure that all children experience joy and the ability to cope in a social and cultural community.</p> <p>Policy for inclusion and accessibility: The Policy of Universal Design, the Discrimination and Accessibility Act.</p> <p>Prioritised admission: Disabled children, based on an expert opinion, may be entitled to prioritised admission to a kindergarten in accordance with Section 13 of the Kindergarten Act.</p> <p>Individual adaptations: Municipalities are obliged to ensure equal development and activity opportunities for children with disabilities. This support can take the form</p>
--	---



	<p>of different sorts of teaching aids or individual (physical) adaptations within the kindergarten: Section 16 of the Discrimination and Accessibility Act.</p> <p>Special education: Special education assistance can be given in the form of physical training, stimulation or as support for kindergarten staff.</p> <p>6. Universal design of the physical environment is stated in the Discrimination and Accessibility Act, Kindergarten Act, The Planning and Building Act, Building Regulations, and Public Health regulations.</p> <p>The arrangement of the physical environment must take into account that children of different ages, and with different levels of ability, will use the same spaces. The planning, location and construction of new kindergartens should be based on principles of universal access. This means that products, buildings and outdoor areas shall be designed in such a way that everyone can enjoy them equally without special requirements or tools, as far as this is possible. This regulation applies to all kindergartens regardless of ownership (both public and private kindergartens). Both types of organised kindergartens receive equal grants from the government and municipalities. Municipalities have the duty to provide this funding to their own and to private kindergartens. According to a recent survey the grants cover 84% of actual costs, while the parental fee is 16%.</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What percentage of children attend mainstream ECE provision at ages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years (if not primary)	<p>1. The percentages are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 3 years: 95.5%– 4 years: 97 %– 5 years: 97.5 % <p>Norway also has a high participation rate of children aged 1 and 2 years. Eighty percent of all 1- and 2-year olds attend kindergarten as the right to a place applies to children from 1 year onwards. Paid parental leave is 49 weeks with 100% pay or 59 weeks with 80% pay.</p> <p>Children with disabilities are entitled to priority admission to kindergarten, Section 13 Kindergarten Act. In 2014,</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 years (if not primary)? <p>2. What are the main factors preventing some children from accessing mainstream ECE?</p> <p>3. Are there children who attend special ECE settings? Please provide data if available.</p> <p>4. Describe arrangements for inter-service collaboration to enable children's attendance and participation?</p> <p>5. What proportion of children is formally identified as having additional needs at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years• 4 years• 5 years• 6 years	<p>7,800 children under the age of 6 received special educational support. Of these only 400 children did not attend kindergartens. In 2013, 7,000 children received special educational support.</p> <p>2. Before starting school at 6 years of age, 97.5% of all children have been to kindergarten. A study from 2010 shows that reasons for some children not attending kindergarten may be related to the parents' income and education. The attendance of children between 1 and 5 from minority language groups is 79% (2014). The attendance of children from minority language groups has risen from 54% in 2015.</p> <p>3. There are 56 ECE settings in Norway that have a special needs profile. A few are very specialised and only children with special needs attend them, whereas the majority have special care units integrated into the kindergarten.</p> <p>4. All children in need of long-term co-ordination by health services have the right to an individual education plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that the children receive co-ordinated and individually adjusted services, and to ensure interaction between service providers across disciplines, levels and sectors.</p> <p>5. The percentages are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 90% of 1–5-year-olds attend ECE;– Approximately 0.44% of 3-year olds who attend ECE receive special needs education;– Approximately 0.75% of 4-year olds who attend ECE receive special needs education;– Approximately 1.15% of 5-year olds who attend ECE receive special needs education. <p>(Source: Utd.speilet, 2015)</p>
--	---



2. WORKFORCE

Key principles

2.1. Well-qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role.

2.2. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership that creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and co-operation with parents.

Two important quality indicators for kindergartens are the skills of the staff and the number of staff per child (White Paper 1 S 2013–2014). Although many staff members still lack formal kindergarten teaching qualifications, the proportion of non-qualified staff is decreasing.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What level of qualification is required to work in ECE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. What regulation is there for staff-child ratios in ECE?</p> <p>3. What provision is there for additional staffing to support children with diverse and additional needs?</p> <p>4. Does the initial training of staff include understanding and supporting children with diverse and additional needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? 	<p>1. Teachers:</p> <p>Kindergartens shall have adequate pedagogical and administrative leadership.</p> <p>Kindergartens shall have a head teacher (manager) who is an educated kindergarten teacher (having completed a three-year bachelor’s degree from university or university college) or who has other college qualifications for working with children and with pedagogical expertise.</p> <p>Pedagogical leaders must be educated kindergarten teachers with a bachelor’s degree. Other three-year pedagogical programmes at university or university college level with further education for teaching in kindergartens can be equated with kindergarten teacher education. In cases where there is a lack of applicants that meet these educational requirements, the municipality may grant a dispensation.</p> <p>Staff levels in the kindergarten must be sufficient for the staff to be able to carry out satisfactory pedagogical activity.</p> <p>Other staff:</p> <p>The proportion of staff with childcare and youth work qualifications has risen from 13% to 15% over the last few years. In municipal kindergartens, 18% of employees have</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>5. Does initial training include preparation for working in partnership with families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for teachers?• for other staff? <p>6. Is there a policy for in-service training? Does it cover inclusive education skills?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• for teachers?• for other staff?	<p>childcare and youth work qualifications, while in private kindergartens the figure is 10%.</p> <p>Norway defines any staff with anything from completed lower secondary education to higher education qualifications which are not covered by the other categories as non-qualified.</p> <p>2. The regulations concerning teaching staff – the pedagogue norm – require one kindergarten teacher per 7–9 children under 3 years of age and one kindergarten teacher per 16–18 children over 3 years of age. In addition, there are auxiliary staff or assistants who work in teams with the pedagogical leaders. There is no set figure for the number of assistants that may or should be employed, as long as the staffing is sufficient to carry out satisfactory educational activity. However, traditionally the teacher will have two assistants working as a team in a group of 9 children under 3 or 18 children over 3 years of age.</p> <p>Even though group sizes and organisation may vary, the statistical average indicates that there are 6.1 children (over 3 years of age) per staff member working with the children.</p> <p>3. The Education Act, Section 5.7, contains provisions relating to pre-primary-aged children with specific needs for special educational support:</p> <p><i>Children under compulsory school age with a specific need for special educational assistance have the right to such assistance. The assistance shall include an offer of the provision of advice for parents. The assistance may be attached to kindergartens, schools, social and medical institutions, etc., or be organised as separate measures. The assistance may also be provided by the educational and psychological counselling service or by another expert body.</i></p> <p>There are no regulations related to profession for special educational support in Norway. The special educational</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>support can be given by an assistant, a kindergarten teacher (education level: bachelor's degree) or by a specialist teacher (increasingly with a master's degree).</p> <p>4. Teachers: Yes, since 2012 when the new Kindergarten Teacher Education was regulated. For other staff, including those with childcare and youth work qualifications, no. From autumn 2016 there will be continuing education for childcare and youth workers with a specific focus on children with special needs.</p> <p>5. Yes, for teachers and other staff, including those with childcare and youth work qualifications.</p> <p>6. Yes for teachers; national authorities offer continuing education for teachers and professionals in expert organisations. For teachers in kindergarten there is a programme which focuses on including children with minority languages in mainstream settings. For professionals in expert organisations, inclusive settings are included in all the programmes, but do not focus on specific groups of children. For other staff, including those with childcare and youth work qualifications, no.</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What proportion of staff has the required qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. Please describe any proposed changes to the required</p>	<p>1. The percentages are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 39% are qualified kindergarten teachers; – 5% have other pedagogical education at bachelor's level or higher; – 16% are trained childcare and youth workers, a four-year vocational training at upper secondary level; – 40% have no formal education in early childhood education and care. <p>2. No plans proposed.</p> <p>3. The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>qualifications.</p> <p>3. Describe the role of leaders of ECE settings in ensuring inclusive practice?</p> <p>4. Provide any data on staff–child ratio.</p> <p>5. Please describe the range of specialist support that is available and how it is organised?</p> <p>6. How do regular and support staff collaborate in IECE settings?</p> <p>7. Describe the role of support assistants in the ECE setting?</p>	<p>Kindergartens states:</p> <p><i>Staff are responsible for ensuring that all children, regardless of their level of functioning, age, gender and family background, feel that they and everyone else in the group are important to the community. Kindergartens shall provide an environment in which different individuals and different cultural expressions meet with respect for their differences. Looking at differences and similarities can help to foster understandings and insights. Encountering something that is different from yourself allows you to develop a positive curiosity about the similarities and differences between people and cultures. The content of kindergartens must be communicated in a way that allows different children to participate in different ways, in line with their own interests, skills and development levels. (p. 20).</i></p> <p>4. The staff/child ratio (statistical average for children when assessed as over 3 years of age, i.e. children under 3 years of age multiplied by factor 2) is 6.04.</p> <p>5. The Norwegian support systems are at both municipal level (Educational and Psychological Counselling Service) and national/state level (www.statped.no).</p> <p>The Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT) is a professional advisory and guidance service that works with children’s development and happiness. PPT’s work is authorised by statute of the Norwegian Education Act. PPT is a professional resource that aims to help kindergartens and schools improve learning environments for children and learners with special needs. PPT will investigate a situation in order to understand what a child, adolescent or adult needs when that person is deemed challenged by learning and will provide advice and guidance in that respect.</p> <p>This procedure is regulated in Section 5–7 of the Education Act.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>For pre-primary age children a written recommendation will be provided by PPT that contains a list of the type of special educational support needed and realistic goals for the child's development and learning.</p> <p>A case may be referred to PPT for an initial investigation and evaluation if the parents or kindergarten are worried that a child is not developing as expected for their age. A parent can demand that the kindergarten conduct an examination to decide whether the child needs special support at the kindergarten, and if so what kind of support, instruction or training would be required. PPT prepares an expert evaluation that includes a report containing specific advice. The evaluation may consist of charting measures that have already been implemented by the kindergarten, statements from other agencies, conversations, observations and tests with the child. For pre-primary age children the evaluation will be based on the child's specific needs. Based on this evaluation, PPT will submit a written report with recommendations in the form of an expert assessment of the particular needs of the child.</p> <p>PPT may submit an application for support from the Norwegian Support System for Special Education (Statped) if this is deemed necessary. Statped will help children with special educational needs to establish the best learning structure for an adequate education according to the Education Act. Statped will aid in the development of skills and competence and provide knowledge about special education, equal rights, adapted learning and inclusive learning. Statped is also a source of expertise and competence for teaching resources for children with special educational needs.</p> <p>The official decision regarding special educational support is made in the form of an individual decision by the municipality.</p> <p>The official decision must contain these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– what support the decision includes;



Guiding questions	Country response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– scope (annual hours of support);– organisation (where and how support should be provided);– competence needed to implement the support;– how parental guidance is organised. <p>The overall importance of the decision is that the special educational support shall be determined by the needs of the child.</p> <p>6. For special educational support an annual report needs to be produced, with an overview of the support the child has received and an assessment of the child's development and progress. It is up to the local authority (municipality) and the kindergarten to decide how mainstream and support staff will collaborate.</p> <p>7. The individual decision about special educational support will specify the role of support assistants in the ECE setting. The local authority (municipality) and the kindergarten determine how this is arranged.</p>



3. CURRICULUM

Key principles

3.1. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values and approaches that enable children to reach their full potential in a holistic way.

3.2. A curriculum that requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p>Legislation and policy</p> <p>1. Is there a national ECE curriculum for <i>all</i> children?</p> <p>2. Does it include skills and competences to be achieved by children?</p> <p>3. Describe how the curriculum facilitates inclusion?</p> <p>4. Is the use of new technologies included in the curriculum?</p> <p>5. Is the curriculum adaptable to meet the needs of all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in the adaptation of the curriculum to individual children?</p> <p>7. Is there awareness of the impact of labelling on children's participation</p>	<p>1. The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens is a regulation issued in accordance with the Kindergarten Act. As the name implies, it sets out a framework for the educational activities in kindergartens (<i>barnehager</i>). Every kindergarten (<i>barnehage</i>) has to adapt its educational activity to the Framework Plan and describe its activities in its annual plan.</p> <p>2. There are no goals for children’s individual skills and competences in the Framework Plan.</p> <p>3. This is described in the Kindergarten Act, Section 2, Content of Kindergartens:</p> <p><i>Kindergartens shall provide children with opportunities for play, self-expression and meaningful experiences and activities in safe, yet challenging surroundings.</i></p> <p>Further, the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens states:</p> <p><i>When planning the design of a kindergarten, the societal aim of reducing barriers to people with disabilities must be taken into consideration. The planning, location and construction of new kindergartens should be based on principles of universal access. This means that products, buildings and outdoor areas shall be designed in such a way that everyone can enjoy them equally without special requirements or tools, in so far as this is possible.</i></p> <p>The design of the physical environment must consider the fact that children form groups and that different activities will be taking place at the same time. The toys and materials available in a well-arranged environment form</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>the basis for children’s play and activities and for the organisation of various educational pursuits.</p> <p>4. In kindergarten, children should be allowed to experience how technology can be used in play and in everyday life. Technology related to special needs or inclusion is included in the Discrimination and Accessibility Act.</p> <p>5. An important point in the Framework Plan is that children in kindergarten are not a uniform group and children arrive at kindergartens with different backgrounds. The provision of an equal, high-quality day-care programme therefore requires individual adjustments to the service and local adjustments to the content. The content of kindergartens shall be designed in such a way that it feels relevant to the individual children and to the group. It is also an educational venue in which to observe both specific children and groups of children. The care and learning environment in kindergartens shall promote the wellbeing, joy, sense of achievement and self-esteem of children. Kindergartens are especially responsible for children who are excluded and do not participate in playing with other children.</p> <p>6. Both parents and staff must accept that kindergartens have a social mandate and particular values to which the staff are committed. Staff are responsible for providing parents with necessary information about the kindergarten activities, the reason for and background to the activities and for inviting parents to participate in activities within the kindergarten. The staff’s goal is to make parents confident that their children are being seen and respected and that they are participating in a social environment that benefits them. Kindergartens must be sensitive to the expectations and wishes of parents, both as individuals and as a group. The implementation of the kindergarten’s values should therefore be discussed regularly at the parents’ council meetings and co-ordinating committees. It is particularly important to build</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>a mutual understanding and confidence between kindergartens and homes in this matter.</p> <p>If parents are not satisfied with the quality of the services based on the individual special educational support decision, then they can appeal to the Ministry of Education, represented by the County Governors. If parents are not satisfied with the quality of the services provided to their child with disabilities they can also complain to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman, which has the responsibility of ensuring that Norwegian law corresponds with UN law and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). http://www.ldo.no/en/nyheiter-og-fag/om-ombudet/arbeidet-vart/.</p> <p>If parents are not satisfied with the quality of the services provided to their child, they can complain to the local authorities/municipality. The municipalities are, by law, required to ensure that the kindergartens operate within their approved framework and that the contents comply with legislation, regulations and the framework plan. In addition the municipalities have an active responsibility for providing guidance to the kindergartens within their municipality. A complaint from parents is supplementary information for the local authorities to ensure that kindergartens operate within their framework.</p> <p>7. Kindergartens must support and challenge individual children on their own terms and help them to enjoy a meaningful life together with other children and adults. Kindergartens shall provide an environment in which different individuals and different cultural expressions meet with respect for their differences. Looking at differences and similarities can help to foster understanding and insight. Encountering something that is different allows the development of a positive curiosity about the similarities and differences between people and cultures. The content of kindergartens must be</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	communicated in a way that allows different children to participate in different ways, in line with their own interests, skills and development levels.
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of children from age 3 years?</p> <p>2. What arrangements are there for the screening of children's functioning?</p> <p>3. Is children's engagement and participation in ECE activities monitored?</p> <p>4. How do ECE settings reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children?</p> <p>5. How do staff adapt (prepare and present) the curriculum and the learning activities to make them accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>7. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p> <p>8. How is ICT used to</p>	<p>1. It is not compulsory to assess children's learning and development at any age in kindergarten, but if parents wish to have their children assessed, the kindergarten or provisional support should do this (e.g. language screening).</p> <p>2. There are no arrangements at a national level.</p> <p>3. As described in 1.1, all children are entitled to a place in kindergarten when they have turned 1. The number of children participating in kindergarten is measured on a national level once a year.</p> <p>4. According to the Kindergarten Act, kindergartens shall impart values and culture, provide room for children's own cultural creativity and help to ensure that all children experience joy and the ability to cope in a social and cultural community.</p> <p>Kindergartens play an important role as arenas for the development of cultural identity. Alternation between teaching and children's own activities is a feature of kindergartens. Kindergartens must be open to influences from their local, regional, national and global surroundings.</p> <p>5. Staff are responsible for ensuring that all children, regardless of their level of functioning, age, gender and family background, feel that they and everyone else in the group are important to the community.</p> <p>6. Parents and staff in kindergartens have a joint responsibility for children's wellbeing and development. The daily collaboration between home and kindergarten must be built on mutual openness and trust. Parents must feel confident that they can raise issues that concern them in relation to their children and their kindergarten, even if they involve criticism. Parents must be informed of the general duty of confidentiality of the staff and their</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
<p>overcome barriers to participation and learning?</p> <p>9. What provisions are there for meeting children’s additional needs?</p> <p>10. How is the environment adapted to the needs of all children?</p>	<p>special duty of disclosure in relation to child welfare services. Parents may require help with and give advice on how to bring up their children. If wanted, external help and advice can be sought. Parents should always be informed and agree prior to getting external help and they should be informed about the processes.</p> <p>If parents are not satisfied with the quality of the services provided to their child, they can complain to the local authorities/municipality. The municipalities are responsible for providing and running municipal kindergartens, as well as for approving and inspecting both public and private kindergartens in the municipality. The municipalities are, by law, required to ensure that the kindergartens operate within their approved framework and that the contents comply with legislation, regulations and the framework plan. In addition the municipalities have an active responsibility to provide guidance to the kindergartens within their municipality. A complaint from parents is supplementary information for the local authorities to ensure that kindergartens operate within their framework. Also see 3.6, legislation and policy.</p> <p>7. Children have the right to an opinion in kindergarten, as per Section 3 of the Kindergarten Act:</p> <p><i>Children in kindergartens shall have the right to express their views on the day-to-day activities of the kindergarten. Children shall regularly be given the opportunity to take active part in planning and assessing the activities of the kindergarten. The children’s views shall be given due weight according to their age and maturity.</i></p> <p>In the Framework, the children’s involvement is extended further. Children express their feelings through both body language and words. The youngest children express their views through body positions, mimicry and other forms of emotional expression. Children’s emotional expressions should be taken seriously. Children must be helped to wonder about things and to ask questions. They must be</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>actively encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions and must receive acknowledgement for doing so.</p> <p>8. We have no knowledge of this at a national level.</p> <p>9. A part of the kindergarten funding in each municipality is used for special support. Most municipalities have an application-based scheme for kindergartens where they can apply for extra resources. Resources could be in the form of extra personnel, equipment, etc. A child with special needs also has the right to other technical equipment. When needed, other support groups should be involved, such as educational psychological services and other health services.</p> <p>10. See also 1.6.</p> <p>Kindergartens' physical environments shall be designed in such a way that all children have many opportunities to participate actively in play and other activities. The arrangement of the physical environment must take into account the fact that children of different ages and with different levels of ability will use the same spaces. Young children have a strong need for outdoor and indoor play areas, as well as for tranquillity. When planning the design of a kindergarten, the societal aim of reducing barriers to people with disabilities must be taken into consideration. The planning, location and construction of new kindergartens should be based on principles of universal access. This means that products, buildings and outdoor areas shall be designed in such a way that everyone can enjoy them equally without special requirements or tools, in so far as this is possible.</p>



4. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Key principles

4.1. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

4.2. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What standards are in place for ensuring the quality of ECE at national level?</p> <p>2. Describe the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of ECE provision?</p> <p>3. How is the participation of all children reflected in the national quality standards for ECE?</p> <p>4. How does national policy identify and address inequalities in participation in ECE?</p> <p>5. How does research inform policy and practice in ECE?</p>	<p>1. Every year the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training collects statistics from all kindergartens through the BASIL system. This contains information such as the number of educated staff, child/adult ratio, children with special needs, minority language children. The municipalities should monitor their kindergartens. There are local variations in how often each kindergarten is subject to monitoring and what the theme of the monitoring should be. The Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education and Training fund and initiate several research projects each year that give information about quality in kindergartens.</p> <p>2. As mentioned above, the municipality supervises the kindergartens. The municipality may order the rectification of inadequate or unlawful conditions at settings that have been approved or are subject to approval. If the deadline for complying with the order is not observed, or if the condition cannot be rectified, the municipality may order the temporary or permanent closure of the setting. The municipality's administrative decision regarding closure shall be sent to the county governor for his/her information. Administrative decisions regarding rectification and closure may be appealed to the county governor.</p> <p>3. It is a national goal that all children should have a place in kindergarten. The place should be of high quality and at low cost. See section 1 for further details. See also section 3 for information about an inclusive environment for all children.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>4. Kindergartens should be able to give a high quality offer to all children, regardless of the child’s level of function. If a child has special needs the kindergarten must adjust both physically and pedagogically to the child. See section 3 for further details.</p> <p>5. It is a political goal that all policy making should be evidence based. The Directorate for Education and Training distributes knowledge aimed at kindergartens, among others, through magazines such as Vetuva, which is based on research.</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. How do staff monitor and evaluate the participation and learning of all children?</p> <p>2. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>3. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p>	<p>1. It is normal procedure to conduct meetings with parents and the child’s pedagogical leader once or twice a year to discuss the child’s wellbeing and development. If needed, the staff apply for extra resources for the child or collaborations with other services begin. If a child is to be monitored, parents must approve of this in advance.</p> <p>2. According to section 4 of the Kindergarten Act, in order to ensure collaboration with the children’s homes, each kindergarten shall have a parents’ council and a co-ordinating committee. The parents’ council shall comprise the parents/guardians of all the children and shall promote their common interests and help to ensure that the collaboration between the kindergarten and the parents as a group fosters a good environment in the kindergarten.</p> <p>3. There are no national standards for this. Nevertheless, all children have the right to have their say in cases that concern them, in accordance with the Children’s Act. This is an important statement in Norwegian kindergartens. It is also explicit in the Framework Plan for Kindergartens that children are entitled to express their views on, and to influence, all aspects of their lives at kindergarten.</p>



5. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Key principles

5.1. Stakeholders in the ECE system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

5.2. Legislation, regulation and/or funding supports progress towards a universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised or funded ECE, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.

Guiding questions	Country response
<p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. Under which ministry(ies) / department(s) are ECE provisions regulated and funded?</p> <p>2. How is intersectorial (health, social and education) collaboration promoted among all stakeholders in ECE?</p> <p>3. How is free or affordable provision guaranteed to all children age 3 years and over?</p> <p>4. What additional economic measures are available for children with additional needs and their families to access mainstream ECE?</p> <p>5. How is additional funding allocated?</p>	<p>1. ECE is regulated under the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training implements the policy.</p> <p>2. The collaboration is stated in the Framework Plan for Kindergartens, but this collaboration commits only the kindergartens, not other sectors. In order to ensure that children and parents receive as comprehensive a service as possible, helping children as they grow and develop, kindergartens must collaborate with other services and institutions in the municipality. Cross-disciplinary and holistic thinking is therefore of central importance. Both parents and kindergartens may need to co-operate with various welfare services. During such collaboration, the stipulations on the duty of confidentiality and information contained in the Kindergarten Act and other regulations must be adhered to.</p> <p>There are also new measures regarding intersectorial collaboration with different Ministries and their agencies (Directorates), health, education, social services and migration. The measures are addressed through a variety topics, but the collaboration regarding regulations and language difficulties is particularly important here.</p> <p>The Directorate of Health and Directorate of Education have recently developed a guide which aims for better collaboration on a local level regarding the rehabilitation of children.</p> <p>3. See 1.1.</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>4. See 1.1.</p> <p>5. The municipalities are obliged to provide subsidies to all private kindergartens approved before 2011. Municipalities may choose to provide subsidies to kindergartens who applied for approval after 2011. Subsidies are calculated based on the regulations concerning equal treatment.</p>
<p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. How far does the standard of ECE provision vary across regions and localities?</p> <p>2. How effective is collaboration between the ECE and health, social and other relevant agencies for children and families?</p> <p>3. What proportion of children (3 years to primary education) make use of additional funding?</p> <p>4. How well does additional funding support inclusive education?</p>	<p>1. There are local variations regarding the standard of ECE. The Norwegian system relies primarily on parental satisfaction surveys. These are sometimes carried out for a representative national sample and often conducted locally by municipalities or kindergartens themselves. Furthermore, all kindergartens are required to monitor staff and service quality in their self-evaluation practice and may adapt their tools to local needs. Head teachers and pedagogical leaders act as internal evaluators and are trained to carry out internal assessments as part of their kindergarten teacher education. The results from internal assessments of service and staff quality, curriculum implementation and child development and wellbeing are used for the development of the following year's annual plan and are usually shared with parents and employees as part of the internal quality improvement process. To support the systematic observation of children, done by teachers and staff, diverse tools are available and in use based on local decisions and needs.</p> <p>2. The collaboration is not monitored, nor is there any research on this matter.</p> <p>3. Since the municipalities are responsible for any additional funding to kindergartens, there is not much data on this matter. See bullet point 4, below.</p> <p>4. As of 1 January 2011, most government funding earmarked for kindergartens has been incorporated into the block grants paid to municipalities. Municipalities finance around 80% of the cost of running kindergartens (Lunder and Eik 2013). The remainder is primarily paid by</p>



Guiding questions	Country response
	<p>parents. The government provides additional smaller grants to Sami kindergartens and to schemes designed to improve language comprehension among minority language children.</p> <p>There is no overview of additional funding on a national level, but there is a report which specifically looks at funding. The statistical analysis in the report shows that the transition to block funding in 2011 has scarcely had any consequences for the economy of kindergartens. The differences in the use of resources after the transition suggest that municipalities have adapted to the same spending level as before the change to block funding.</p>



FURTHER COMMENTS

Sources

Ministry of Education and Research on Kindergartens:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarden/id1029/>

The Kindergarten Act:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kilde/kd/reg/2006/0037/ddd/pdfv/285752-barnehageloven-engelsk-pdf.pdf>

Framework Plan for Kindergartens:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/barnehager/engelsk/frameworkplanforthecontentandtasksofkindergartens.pdf>

Education in Norway:

http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/brosjyrer/5/education_in_norway.pdf

Physical Learning Environment:

<http://www.skoleanlegg.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/in-english>

The Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (PPT):

http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/pp_tjenesten/ppt_engelsk_informasjon.pdf

The Education Mirror 2014 (Facts and Figures of Kindergartens in Norway, from 2014):

http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/rapporter/educationmirror/the-educationmirror_english.pdf

The Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act:

<http://app.uio.no/ub/ujur/oversatte-lover/data/lov-20130621-061-eng.pdf>