
G International approaches to ECEC

The way early childhood education and care (ECEC) is provided varies markedly from country to country. Countries differ, for example, in how care is delivered, how it is funded, what is taught and who provides care. This appendix explores this diversity in ECEC systems, with a focus on the member countries of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Rather than provide an in-depth analysis of each country's ECEC systems, the purpose of this appendix is to describe some key aspects or approaches of other systems that may provide useful insights or contrasts for policymakers in Australia.

Differences between countries in the use of formal ECEC represent, in part, different cultural values around who should care for children and where this care should be provided. However, they also result from different government objectives, levels of public funding, and models and policies of ECEC delivery.

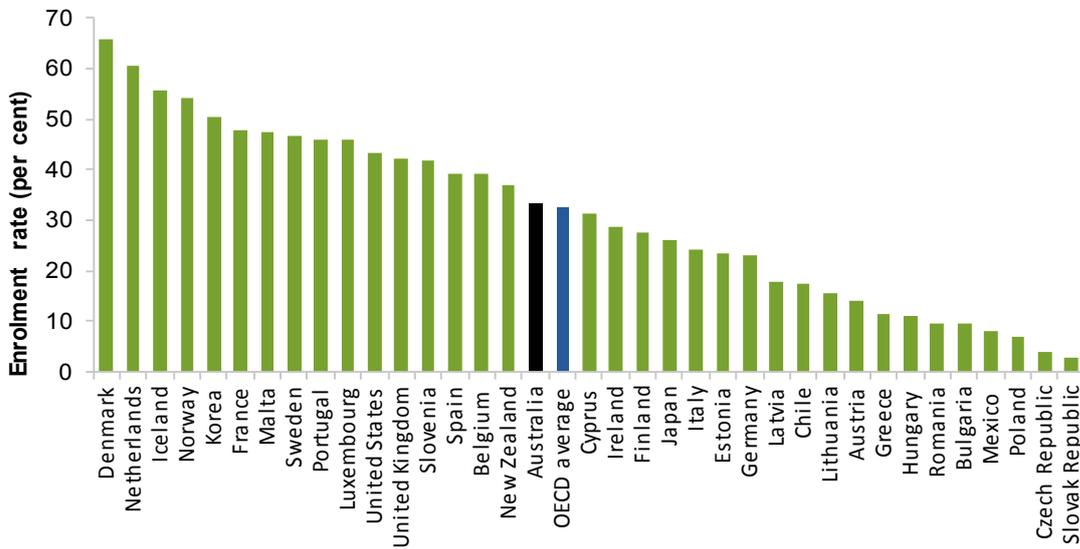
G.1 Overview of international childcare use and delivery

The utilisation of formal ECEC in other countries varies considerably. For children under three, enrolment rates in formal care exceed 65 per cent in Denmark, but are less than 5 per cent in the *Czech Republic* and the *Slovak Republic* (figure G.1). The intensity of this care also varies markedly — for example, in the *United Kingdom (UK)* and the *Czech Republic*, children aged zero to two spend an average of 16 hours in formal care a week, while in *Israel*, average weekly time in care exceeds 50 hours (OECD 2012a). For children of preschool age (those aged three to five), enrolment rates in preschool tend to be higher (figure G.2), exceeding 90 per cent in many countries.

Models of ECEC delivery in different countries can be viewed across a number of dimensions. These include the extent to which:

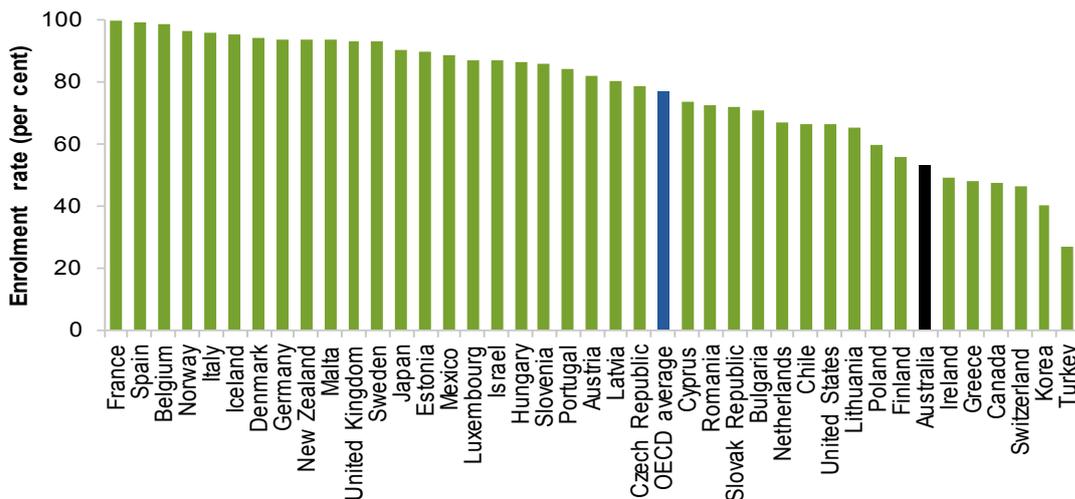
- emphasis is placed on parental and informal care as opposed to care in formal settings
- provision and funding of formal ECEC services is undertaken by the government compared to private enterprises
- formal care is provided in home-based rather than centre-based settings.

Figure G.1 **Average enrolment rate of children under three years of age in formal childcare**
2010



Source: OECD (2012a).

Figure G.2 **Average enrolment rate of children aged three to five years in preschool^a**
2010



^a The inclusion of three year olds in the figure likely brings down Australia's enrolment rate. Australia's enrolment rate for 4-5 year old children is higher than depicted.

Source: OECD (2012a).

Government support for parental and informal childcare

Parental care refers to care provided to children by their parents. Informal care, on the other hand, is care arranged by parents, but not undertaken by parents themselves. The main sources of informal care are relatives, friends, neighbours, babysitters and nannies.

Countries with lower use of formal ECEC services (those at the lower end in figures G.1 and G.2) have a greater reliance on parental and informal care. While parental and informal care is generally unregulated, governments may provide incentives and support for families that use these types of care in lieu of formal childcare. One such supporting policy is parental leave which gives parents the option to take time off from paid employment to care for newborn children, typically with payment from employers, social or health insurance or government. Parental leave may operate in conjunction with specific maternity and paternity leave arrangements, which may give parents additional paid leave entitlements.

A summary of the parental leave systems of selected OECD member countries is outlined in table G.1. Several countries - including *Finland*, *France* and the *Netherlands* - also give parents the right to request part-time work from their employer to care for children.

As well as legislating (and in many countries, funding) parental leave, governments may incentivise parental childcare through their tax and transfer systems. For example, as well as offering up to three years parental leave (with a childcare allowance irrespective of whether this leave is taken), the Government of *France* pays families with at least three children an additional allowance of EUR 801.39 per month for one year provided that one parent ceases to work (*Complément optionnel de libre choix d'activité*) (Fagnani, Boyer and Thévenon 2013).

Another government policy that encourages non-formal childcare is the 'Cash for Care' systems operating in the Nordic countries.¹ Under these schemes, parents receive a cash benefit if they elect not to use government subsidised childcare services. The primary rationale for Cash for Care is that it assists parents to provide care at home, should that be their choice.

A summary of the different Nordic Cash for Care systems is in table G.2. A particular feature of the *Norwegian*, *Finnish*, *Swedish* and *Icelandic* systems is that benefits are paid regardless of who cares for the child, meaning that parents receive the benefits even if they do not provide the care themselves (Eydal and Rostgaard 2011).

¹ In keeping with international conventions, 'Nordic countries' refers to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland.

Table G.1 Parental leave schemes of selected OECD countries

Country	Maximum amount of time mothers are entitled to unpaid leave	Maximum amount of time mothers are entitled to paid leave	Payment rate	Approximate maximum weekly amount mothers receive	Who pays for leave?	Does the employer make the payment?
Australia	52 weeks with an additional 52 weeks if employer agrees	18 weeks	National Weekly Minimum Wage	AU\$ 606	Government	Yes
United States	12 weeks	No legislated entitlement				
United Kingdom	52 weeks	39 weeks	90 per cent of mother's average weekly earnings for at least 6 weeks	Not capped for 6 weeks. Remainder capped at £137 (AU\$ 211)	Government	Yes
Canada	52 weeks	50 weeks	55% of average insured earnings	CA\$ 501 (AU\$ 497)	Employee and employer contributions; shortfalls covered by Government	No
New Zealand	52 weeks	14 weeks	100 per cent of ordinary weekly pay or average weekly earnings	NZ\$ 475 (AU\$ 394)	Government	No
Sweden	Around 77 weeks	Around 60 weeks	80 per cent of earnings for 47 weeks	SEK 6 545 during first 47 weeks (AU\$ 991)	Employer contribution; shortfalls covered by Government	No

Source: FAHCSIA (2013).

The utilisation rates of these Cash for Care systems vary between countries. In 2008, just under 57 per cent of children under the age of three in *Finland* were cared for under this program. In *Norway*, this percentage was as high as 74 per cent in 1999, but has since fallen back to about 35 per cent in 2008. In *Sweden*, in the local municipalities with Cash for Care in place, the take up rate in 2011 was under 5 per cent (Ellingsæter 2012; Eydal and Rostgaard 2011).

Table G.2 Features of cash for care systems
2009

	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Iceland</i>
Year of introduction	1998	1985	2008	2002	2005
Embedded in national legislation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Funded by	State	State and local municipalities	Local municipalities	Local municipalities	Local municipalities
Child's age for eligibility ^a	1-3 years	1-3 years	250 days – 3 years	6 months – 3 years	6/9 months – 2 years
Able to be used to pay others ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Universal for all parents ^a	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Benefit as a per cent of average weekly earnings ^a (2007)	9.4	10.8	10.7	24.8	12.0

^a Because systems vary between municipalities in Denmark and Iceland, the information in this table for these features relate to Copenhagen (for Denmark) and Reykjavik (for Iceland).

Source: Eydal and Rostgaard (2011).

Degree of government involvement in formal ECEC provision

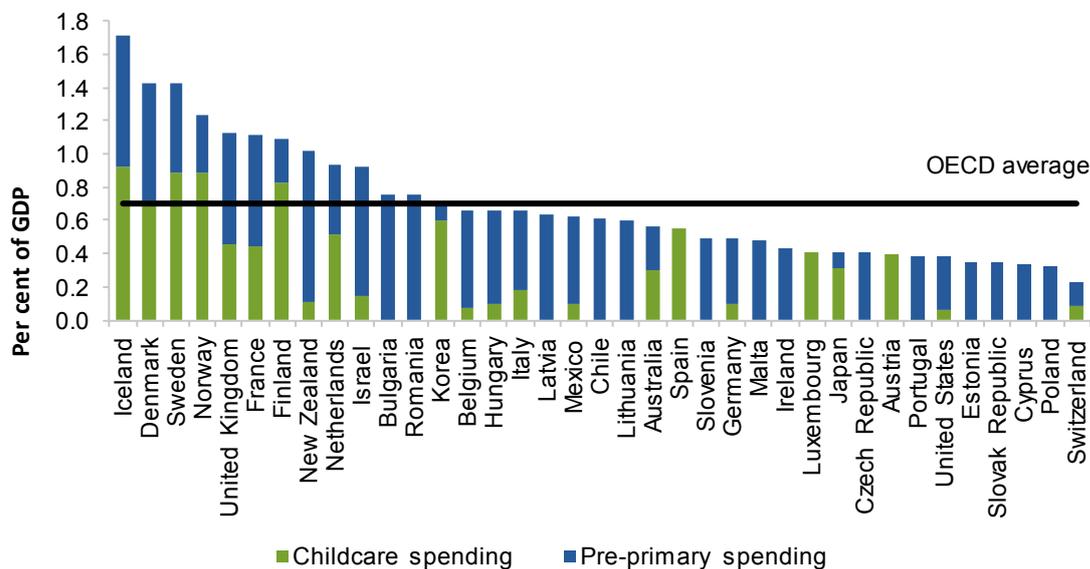
The extent to which governments financially support their childcare and pre-primary early education systems varies across OECD member states. In 2009, public spending on childcare and pre-primary care exceeded 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the Nordic economies, the *UK*, *France* and *New Zealand*. In contrast, several countries, including the *United States (US)*, *Japan*, *Ireland*, *Austria* and *Switzerland* had public expenditures of less than half of a per cent of GDP (figure G.3).

Countries place different emphases on the role of markets in the provision of formal childcare, and subsequently, the degree to which governments should be directly involved in its provision. Drawing on evidence from various studies Lloyd (2012) noted:

Childcare markets predominate in English speaking nations, including the US, Canada and Australia, as well as on the African continent and the Asia Pacific region.

The alternative position is reflected in the policy rationale employed by a European country such as France, where a state-funded and state-provided ECEC system has existed for some sixty years. In such cases the government considers that there are strong economic grounds for treating ECEC services as a 'public good', which justifies substantial public investment in the services themselves and their infrastructure. (pp. 4–5, references to individual studies removed.)

Figure G.3 **Public spending on childcare and early education services**^{a,b}
2009



^a 'Childcare spending' refers to spending for children aged under three. 'Pre-primary spending' refers to spending on preschool institutions (typically for children aged 3-5) ^b For Spain, only aggregate spending data is presented.

Source: OECD (2012a).

Broadly speaking, market driven systems (including in the *United States*, *Canada*, the *Netherlands*, *Australia* and *New Zealand*) are typified by more private provision and user pays charging, whereas less market driven systems (including in *France*, *Sweden* and *Norway*) are typified by more public provision and taxpayer funding. That said, even in countries where markets are prominent, the provision of preschool is generally shouldered more by the public sector. As figure G.4 shows, with the exception of *Japan*, public expenditure per pupil outstrips private expenditure in preschools in OECD economies, although *Australia*, *Korea*, the *US* and *Spain* still had private funding contribute over one-quarter of their total expenditure.

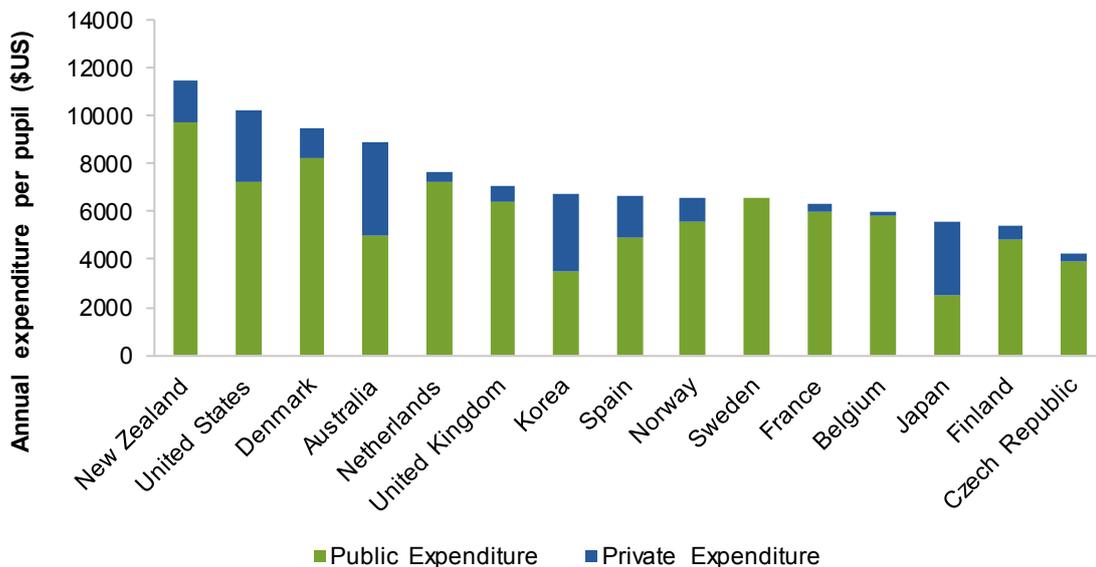
France's universal preschool system is often quoted as an example of substantial government involvement in ECEC provision. It is underpinned by a legal entitlement of all children to attend pre-school and is characterised by universal access, public organisation and free of charge schooling (Dumas and Lefranc 2010; PC 2011). As a consequence, almost every French child aged three to five attends a preschool service. Preschool premises are owned and managed by French municipalities with staff hired and paid through the Ministry of Education of the French central Government (Grun 2008). The use of formal childcare services for children under preschool age in France has grown markedly in recent years — in 2003, less than 30 per cent of children aged under three were enrolled in formal care services, but by 2010, this had increased to about 50 per cent

of children (OECD 2012a). Households are able to claim a tax credit of up to 50 per cent of childcare expenses paid (Givord and Marbot 2013).

Like France, formal preschool in *Sweden* is almost entirely provided by government — around 96 per cent of preschools are owned and managed by the Swedish municipalities.² All children aged four and five have a right to free pre-schooling and, as a result, attendance in this age group is very high (with an enrolment rate of around 97 per cent). The system is funded through central government grants, municipal tax revenues and parental fees for children not entitled to free care. These parental fees are means-tested and capped (Grun 2008).

Children in *Norway* also have a right to childcare and preschool (collectively termed ‘kindergarten’) that applies to children from around the age of one. Consequently, the municipalities of Norway have an obligation to ensure that there are sufficient kindergarten places to meet demand. However, unlike in France and Sweden, a substantial proportion of ECEC services are privately owned — 54 per cent in 2008 — with most of these private owners being individuals (34 per cent of privately owned care services), parents (22 per cent) and enterprises (15 per cent). Another difference is that in Norway, care is not free, although the system remains heavily subsidised and there is a regulated price ceiling for out-of-pocket fees (Jacobsen and Vollset 2012).

Figure G.4 **Expenditure on early childhood education programs (preschool)** ^{a,b}
Per pupil, 2010 or 2011



^a Preschool starts in different ages in different countries and this deducts from the comparability of the data ^b Expenditure of Denmark, New Zealand and the United States includes some childcare.

Source: OECD (2013).

² The term ‘Preschool’ in Sweden encompasses care services for children aged one to five.

ECEC systems of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ origin, including the *US*, *Canada*, the *UK*, *Australia* and *New Zealand* generally feature more limited direct government involvement in childcare provision, but rather provide demand-side tax credits or subsidies as a means of supporting their ECEC systems. In the *US*, 71 per cent of childcare centres are run for-profit, with the remaining 29 per cent run by not-for-profit providers, some of which are funded by governments. Direct subsidies and government provided places are targeted at lower income families. Parents who pay tax may qualify for a tax credit (the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit) of up to US \$3000 per annum for one child and US \$6000 per annum for two or more children, although this is well below average annual cost of full-time centre care (PC 2011; Sosinsky 2012).

Similarly, direct government provision of childcare in the *UK* is low, and heavily targeted towards services for the disadvantaged (mainly in Sure Start centres discussed in section G.4). As such, private provision of formal services is common — in 2011, 61 per cent of full day care providers were privately owned, of which 31 per cent were run on a voluntary basis. Various government demand side subsidies contribute to the funding of the childcare in the UK. The most widely available of these is fifteen hours of free care per week (for 38 weeks a year) for children aged three to four, with this extended to two year olds from disadvantaged households (Government of the United Kingdom 2013a). Additionally, under the ‘Universal Credit’, single parents who work 16 or more hours per week, and couples who both work 16 or more hours a week are able to claim back up to 70 per cent of their childcare costs up to capped limits (Government of the United Kingdom 2013b). A third, recently announced instrument — known as ‘Tax Free Childcare’ — allows households with all working parents to set up online childcare voucher accounts which the Government ‘tops up’ by 20 per cent up to a limit of GBP 1200 a year (HM Treasury 2013). This may be salary sacrificed although it cannot be claimed in conjunction with the Universal Credit.

Childcare in *Canada* is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories with minimal central government oversight. As a result there are differences in how ECEC is provided between provinces. Quebec’s system is markedly different from other Canadian provinces — childcare is universal and heavily subsidised, with out-of-pocket costs capped at CAD \$7 per day (Fortin, Godbout and St-Cerny 2011). Care is provided by a mix of not-for-profit, family based and for profit providers that receive subsidies from the provincial government per child per day (with the subsidy amount dependant on the care setting and the age of children in care). Other provinces are generally characterised by less government involvement with subsidies targeted to low income and single parents, although all provinces offer free and publically provided kindergarten for five year olds (Lefebvre, Merrigan and Roy-Desrosiers 2011). The central government’s primary contribution to childcare financing is a tax deduction for certain employment related childcare up to CA \$7000 (Baker 2011).

New Zealand's childcare model is characterised by almost exclusively private provision substantially funded with government subsidies. The provision of care is split between for profit (51 per cent) and not for profit (43 per cent) operators with the residual (4 per cent) owned by public bodies. Public funding for ECEC services is through two main instruments:

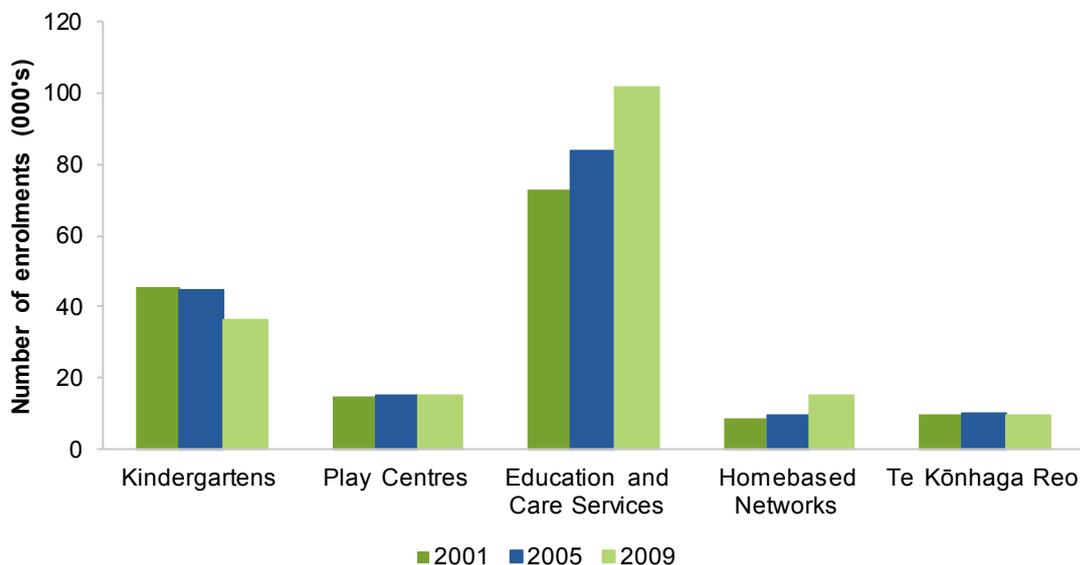
- *The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Funding Subsidy* — under this subsidy, the New Zealand Government pays service providers for part of each hour a child spends in care, up to six hours per child place per day and up to thirty hours per child place per week. A feature of the ECE Funding Subsidy is that the actual rate paid to providers varies markedly based on the proportion of carers who are registered teachers. For children aged under two in teacher led, centre based services, this rate is currently NZ \$7.50 per hour for services with 0-24 per cent registered teachers, then increases incrementally up to NZ \$12.01 per hour for services with 80+ per cent registered teachers. A lower rate is paid for children aged over two.
- *Twenty Hours Early Childhood Education ('20 Hours ECE')* — this is a higher subsidy that is paid to ECE providers for children in their care aged three to five. The subsidy allows these children free care for up to six hours a day and up to twenty hours a week. There is no means testing on the subsidy. (Ministry of Education (NZ) nd)

In contrast to the childcare systems of most other economies, parent led formal ECEC remains a particular feature of the childcare system of New Zealand. Parent led care is provided in two main forms:

- *Language nests (or Te Kōhanga Reo)* which are Māori immersion program where only Māori is spoken, and the operation and supervision of each program is the responsibility of the whānau (family). About 20 per cent of Māori children who use formal care attend a *Kōhanga Reo* service (PC 2011).
- *Playcentres*, which are ECE organisations that are collectively led, supervised and managed by parents. In contrast to 'playgroups' in Australia, Playcentres receive funding from the New Zealand Government and teach to New Zealand's wider Te Whāriki curriculum. Playcentres generally offer half day sessions for children of mixed ages (thereby allowing siblings to attend together). An important aspect of Playcentres is continued adult education and every Playcentre adult is offered free education to assist them to provide quality care to children (New Zealand Playcentre Federation 2013).

In 2009, these forms of parent led care constituted 14 per cent of formal care services in New Zealand. Centre-based, Long day care (LDC) style care (termed Education and Care Services) remains the dominant care setting in New Zealand, comprising 57 per cent of enrolments (figure G.5). Kindergartens — which provide care predominately to three to five year olds — account for 20 per cent of enrolments.

Figure G.5 **Enrolments in licensed Early Childhood Education services in New Zealand**



Source: ECE Taskforce Secretariat (2010).

Support for care in a home setting

Care provided in a home is often espoused as being more flexible than care provided in centres. Home care comes in two main forms: care provided in the home of a qualified educator or minder (similar to family day care in Australia), and care provided in a child’s home by a nanny. An example of the former is home based care in *New Zealand* (box G.1).

In 2011, the New Zealand Early Childhood Education and Care Taskforce — which was commissioned by the New Zealand Government to ‘review the effectiveness of ECE spending [and] propose innovative ideas about learning’ (Tolley 2010) — presented two key concerns about the quality of home based services.

One of these concerns centred on compliance in about one third of home based services, which the review found ‘deeply troubling’. The Review was also uncomfortable with the definition — and subsequent funding implications — of home based ECE being ‘teacher led’:

... structurally, children in home-based services enjoy some of the best regulated adult:child ratios in early childhood education, that is, 1:4. But they have much more limited access to adults with higher-level early childhood education teaching qualifications. In general home based services are structured so that a qualified educator supervises a number of unqualified educators, who in turn directly engage with children in their care. One teacher can be

responsible for educators in charge of 80 children in total. Despite this, home-based services are funded as teacher led services in the funding system. This is unacceptable. (ECE Taskforce Secretariat 2010, p. 57)

Box G.1 Home based care in New Zealand

Under home based care, education and care services are provided by educators in private homes. These educators are required to belong to a formal home based network and are supported by a coordinator who is a registered and qualified ECE teacher. The number of children enrolled in home based care grew by over 60 per cent between 2001 and 2009, albeit from a low base.

Services qualify for the 20 hours ECE Subsidy for children aged three to five. For additional hours outside this subsidy, and for services provided to children under three, a two-tier subsidy instrument is used:

- A *standard rate* which is payable to home based services that meet the minimum requirements for licensing. As of 1 July 2013, this rate was \$NZ7.24 per hour for children aged under two and \$NZ3.92 per hour for children aged two and over.
- A higher *quality rate* which is payable to services that meet additional requirements. These requirements include coordinators being locally based, coordinators being available during care times and educators meeting certain qualification levels. As of 1 July 2013, this rate was \$NZ8.76 per hour for children aged under two and \$NZ4.40 per hour for children aged two and over. Services that meet the requirements for the quality rate subsidy also receive a higher 20 hours ECE subsidy.

Subsidies are paid to the coordinator, who then passes some or all of the subsidy to the educator. Nannies supported by a coordinator are also eligible for subsidisation.

Source: ECE Taskforce Secretariat (2010); Ministry of Education (NZ) (nd).

In September 2012, in part in response to the concerns of the taskforce, the New Zealand Government announced a review ‘to ensure that home-based early childhood education (ECE) aligns with the Government’s broader goals and priorities for ECE’ (Parata 2012). However, in July 2013, it was announced that this review was no longer going ahead. Instead, the need for such a review would be reconsidered after 2015 (Ministry of Education (NZ) 2013b).³

France also has a significant home based care sector. In home ECEC operates across two main forms. *Assistantes maternelles* services involve trained and registered ‘childminders’ providing care services in their private home for up to four children. Childminders may belong to formal networks, directed by educators (*relais assistances maternelles*) which provide opportunities for socialisation between groups (Rayna 2010). Around one quarter of children below the age of three were cared for by a registered childminder in 2007 (Fagnini 2012). Private nannies (often called *nourrice*) are also popular in France, and are eligible for public subsidies.

³ By 2015, two additional reviews are expected to be completed into ECE in New Zealand. One of these centres on the Early Learning Information System and the other on the ECE funding system.

G.2 ECEC curricula

Almost every country in the OECD has a curriculum in place for children from the age of three until they enter primary school (OECD 2012c). However, there are considerable differences in the objectives, structure and composition of curricula across different countries.

Approaches to ECEC curricula differ to the extent that they are outcome-based or input-based. Outcome-based models — which are typical in ‘Anglo Saxon’ economies — tend to centre on preparing children for formal schooling. In contrast, input-based curricula — common in the Nordic countries — focus on what is expected from staff and the experiences they provide to children in their care (OECD 2010, 2012c). According to the OECD:

... the Nordic approach favours frameworks that set out broad orientations for input rather than prescribed outcomes; goals are to be aimed at, rather than achieved; formal assessment for input is not required but multiple assessment procedures are favoured; and quality control of input is more participatory, focusing on staff pedagogical approaches — not child progress. (OECD 2010, p. 10)

Content of curricula also vary — most OECD countries place emphasis on literacy, numeracy, physical education, science and art in their ECEC curricula. The incorporation of more emerging areas of learning in curriculums is more varied. Some countries have curriculum content related to religion (for example, *Italy* and *Finland*), citizenship (*Norway* and *Sweden*), information and communication technologies (*Spain*) and foreign languages (*Slovak Republic*) however, this is not widespread across OECD economies (OECD 2010, 2011).

One ECEC curriculum that has received general praise within the existing literature is *New Zealand’s Te Whāriki* (the Mat). In a review of New Zealand’s ECEC system the OECD found that *Te Whāriki*:

... is a progressive and cogent document regarding the orientation and aims of ECE. The document clearly lays out what is expected from staff and child development with useful examples. The curriculum provides continuous child development through the use of one national framework for ECE; putting the community at the centre of the curriculum; strongly focusing on well-being and learning; ensuring age-appropriate content; emphasising the importance of tolerance and respect for cultural values and diversity; and aligning the ECE curriculum with primary schooling. (OECD 2012b, p. 7)

The Economist Intelligence Unit also commented on the ‘pioneering’ nature of *Te Whāriki*:

Numerous experts cite [*Te Whāriki*] as an exemplar of an inclusive curriculum that honours the unique cultures of its indigenous people as well as the many migrant settlers who now live in New Zealand (Economist Intelligence Unit 2012, p. 28).

Within New Zealand, *Te Whāriki* was also viewed positively by the ECE Taskforce who described the curriculum as successful, unifying the sector and embracing diversity (ECE Taskforce Secretariat 2010).

A key feature of *Te Whāriki* is its non-prescriptive nature. It does not generally mandate methods or outcomes. Instead, it focusses more on experiences. As such, it relies on ‘teacher reflexivity’ to ‘weave curriculum patterns’ that reflect the community and culture of the service and the children who use its care (Ritchie and Buzzelli 2012).

Te Whāriki operates from birth until a child enters school, with overlapping age categorisations.⁴ The curriculum identifies that the learning needs of children evolve as they age. Questions for reflections that centre on each of the strands are embedded throughout the *Te Whāriki* to encourage adults to debate how the curriculum should be applied in their ECE services.

G.3 ECEC Workforce

With respect to the ECEC workforce, governments have two basic policy levers: minimum staff-to-child ratios and minimum qualification requirements.

Staff-to-child ratios

Many countries in the OECD have regulated staff to child ratios. A subset of these ratios is outlined in table G.3.

In January 2013, the *UK*’s Department of Education announced plans to move to higher ratios in England to allow services to care for more children per carer. These higher ratios were only to be made available for centres with staff qualifications that were deemed to be of ‘high quality’, although what this constitutes was not determined. Rationales put forward in favour of changing ratios included that the existing ratios in England were already lower than many other countries in Europe, and that low ratios were resulting in higher costs for parents and lower pay for staff (Department for Education (UK) 2013b). However, widespread criticism from stakeholders meant that these proposed changes were not progressed (Harrison 2013; Jozwiak 2013).

⁴ These age categorisations are infants (from birth to 18 months), toddlers (from one year to three years) and young children (from two and a half years to school entry).

Table G.3 National mandatory minimum staff-to-child ratios^a

Provider Type	Centres/Nurseries				Child minders/Family Day Care
	Under 1	1	2	3+	Under 5
Australia ^b	1:4	1:4	1:5	1:11	1:4
New Zealand	1:5	1:5	1:10	1:10	1:4
England	1:3	1:3	1:4	1:8 or 1:13	1:3
Netherlands	1:4	1:5	1:6	1:8	1:5
Ontario (Canada) ^c	3:10	3:10	1:5	1:8	na

^a Shows the number of children for each staff member. For example a 1:4 ratio means there is one staff member for every 4 children. ^b Family Day Care educators are permitted under the NQF to have up to 7 children in total but a maximum of 4 children under school age. ^c Ratio is 3:10 until 18 months and is 1:5 until 30 months.

Source: Department of Education (UK) (2013b); Government of New Zealand (2008); Ministry of Education (Ontario) (2013).

The use of statutory ratios as a means of promoting quality is not universal. Some European countries — including *Denmark*, *Germany* and *Sweden* — do not have mandated minimum ratios for centre based care. Quality is maintained through other mechanisms, such as qualification requirements.

Qualifications and roles

ECEC workers in most OECD countries are required to obtain minimum qualifications. Inter-country comparisons of qualification requirements are difficult because each country's specific ECEC and education systems differ. Nevertheless, through member surveys, the OECD drew some broad conclusions about qualification requirements across different member countries. Some of these findings are contained in box G.2.

A feature of many European countries — including *Denmark*, *Austria*, *Finland*, *Germany* and *Norway* — is that so called 'pedagogues', rather than traditional teachers, are the dominant profession in ECEC settings. Pedagogues adopt a holistic view to childcare development:

Originating in the 19th century Germany, Sozialpädagogik (social pedagogy) is a theory, practice and profession for working with children (but also young people and adults) ... The social approach is inherently holistic. The pedagogue sets out to address the whole child, the child with body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social identity. This is not the child only of emotions — the psycho-therapeutical approach; nor only of the body — the medical or health approach; nor only of the mind — the traditional teaching approach. For the pedagogue, working with the whole child, learning, care and, more generally, upbringing ... are closely related — indeed inseparable activities at the level of daily work. These are not separate fields needing to be joined up, but inter-connected parts of the child's life. (OECD 2004, p. 19)

In *Denmark*, *Finland*, *Hungary* and *Sweden*, pedagogues complete a university degree of at least three years (OECD 2006). Often these degrees have a wider ambit than just early

education — other areas of study can include psychology, philosophy, health studies and music (Matheson and Evans 2012).

Box G.2 OECD findings on ECEC qualifications

On childcare workers:

The qualifications of child care workers differ greatly from country to country and from service to service. In most countries, child care workers have a vocational-level diploma, generally at a children's nurse level (upper secondary, vocational level) although many countries will also have specialist staff trained to secondary-level graduation, plus a one-to-two year tertiary-level vocational diploma.

On pre-primary teachers:

Pre-primary teachers are generally trained at the same level and in the same training institutions as primary school teachers. This profile is found in Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. In some countries, e.g the Netherlands, the pre-primary teacher is trained both for the preschool and primary sectors.

On pedagogues:

In Nordic and central European countries, many pedagogues have been trained (upper-secondary or tertiary education) with a focus on early childhood services rather than primary teaching. Pedagogues may also have received training in other settings, youth work or elderly care. In some countries, pedagogues are the main staff members responsible for the care and education of children.

On auxiliary staff:

There are many types of auxiliary staff working in centres that have been trained at different levels. On one end of the scale is auxiliary staff who do not need a formal qualification in the area, while auxiliaries in the preschool sector in Nordic countries have often gone through a couple of years of upper secondary vocational training.

Source: OECD (2012c, p. 165).

In *New Zealand*, a minimum of 50 per cent of staff working in centre based, teacher led services are required to hold a relevant degree or diploma (Ministry of Education (NZ) 2010). In 2002, the New Zealand Government adopted the goal that by 2012, all staff working in teacher led ECE services would be registered teachers, however, indefinitely deferred this target in late 2009 when it became apparent that meeting this goal would be difficult (PC 2011). Nevertheless, qualifications are encouraged in the New Zealand system through funding incentives. Kindergarten teachers in New Zealand have pay parity with primary school teachers.

In contrast to most other countries, much of the *US* does not have mandatory qualification requirements for ECEC staff. In thirty one states, a high school diploma or less is sufficient to be a child care centre lead teacher, and in forty one states, a high school diploma is sufficient for family day care providers (NACCRRRA 2013).

G.4 Addressing disadvantage and meeting additional needs

Systems vary greatly in how they address disadvantage and meet additional needs. Some countries — namely those of Continental Europe — predominately rely on universal access to childcare and/or preschool as a means of addressing disadvantage. Other countries provide more targeted support to disadvantaged children and families.

In the *UK*, Sure Start Children’s Centres are government funded centres that adopt a holistic and integrated approach to child welfare. They are targeted to disadvantaged postcodes, and in most cases, are managed by a local authority.⁵ In July 2012, there were 3350 Sure Start Children’s Centres operating — about 40 per cent of centres offer childcare services, while those who do not generally provide advice about childcare options in the area (4Children 2012; PC 2011). However, the remit of Children’s Centres is much wider than providing childcare services and advice — other services that may be provided include ante and post natal support and advice, parenting courses, employment training for parents, immunisations and health screenings. Furthermore, two year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds in the England qualify for 15 hours of free care for 38 weeks of the year, allowing disadvantaged children one additional year of ECEC on top of the universal entitlement for three and four year olds (Government of the United Kingdom 2013a). Eligibility depends on one parent receiving a specified pension or form of income support from the UK Government.

Universal access to preschool through ‘20 Hours’ ECE represents an important pillar of *New Zealand’s* approach to addressing disadvantage. Further, it is underpinned by ‘social obligations’ on parents if they are receiving welfare payments from the New Zealand Government (box G.3). A second pillar to address disadvantage and meet additional needs in New Zealand is through ‘equity funding’. Equity funding is an additional supply side subsidy on top of other subsidies paid to licenced ECE providers. Equity funding has four strands:

- low socio-economic communities (Component A)
- special needs and non-English speaking backgrounds (Component B)
- language and culture other than English (Component C)
- isolation (Component D).

Subsidies associated with Components A and B are not allocated on a per child basis, but rather, eligibility is based on the addresses of children a centre has enrolled. A service is eligible for Component C if more than half of their formal education and care program is taught in a language and culture other than English. Eligibility for Component D is determined the distance of the service from major population centres. Additional support

⁵ Local authorities in England are broadly similar to local governments in Australia.

for children with high to moderate special needs — which might include specialist teaching support — is also available (Ministry of Education (NZ) nd).

While the administration and funding of ECEC in *Canada* is undertaken on a provincial level, there are some similarities between provinces. All provinces directly subsidise providers who provide services to children with disabilities. Funding may be used to hire additional staff, upskilling existing staff with specialised training to meet additional needs, or for buying necessary equipment and materials. Depending on the province, funding may either be fixed, or varied in accordance with the level of specialised need identified. Whether or not the quantum of funding made available to centres by provincial governments is adequate to meet policy goals remains a matter of debate (Halfon and Friendly 2013). In addition to supplier subsidies, some provinces specify places must be set aside for children with special needs (Friendly et al. 2013). Disadvantage is addressed by a universal legal (or de facto legal) entitlement to half day kindergarten for five year olds in most Canadian school districts, generally with high take-up rates (80-100 per cent) (OECD 2006).

Box G.3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) social obligations in New Zealand

In July 2013, four obligations were placed on welfare beneficiaries in New Zealand. One of these obligations centred on the utilisation of ECE services.

The obligation is that:

People on benefit with dependent children must take all reasonable steps to have their child enrolled and in attending ECE, or another approved parenting and early childhood home education programme, from the age of three until they start school.

The rationale behind the policy notes that participation in ECE delivers heightened benefits for children with disadvantaged backgrounds around social skills and school readiness.

Parents who do not meet their obligation are given support and encouragement to meet it. However, continued failure to meet the obligations results in a reduction in benefits of up to half until the obligation is met.

Source: Ministry of Education (NZ) (2013a).

G.5 Employer sponsored care

Employer contributions towards the provision or funding of childcare are relatively uncommon. For example, in *Germany* and *New Zealand*, incentives for firms to offer employer sponsored ECEC are minimal, and consequently, the prevalence of employer provided care is low (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).

In contrast, the existing literature often points to the ECEC system of *the Netherlands* as an example where there is substantial employer involvement in the funding of childcare. In 2004, over two thirds of childcare places in the Netherlands were purchased by firms for

use by their employees (Warner and Raymond 2011). Changes to government policy in 2005 requested that Dutch employers contribute one-third of the childcare fees of their employees. Initially this requirement was not legally binding, however, in January 2007, legislation was introduced to make employer contributions mandatory through a supplementary tax (Hein and Cassirer 2010). Consequently, while the proportion of childcare places that are purchased by Dutch firms has fallen sharply, employers still fund a substantial proportion of the ECEC system in the Netherlands (estimated at around 21 per cent of total childcare costs) (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).

Other OECD countries use concessional tax treatment to encourage employer sponsored childcare. In the *UK*, childcare fully provided by an employer is exempt from tax and (capped) taxation exemptions exist for firms that offer childcare vouchers to their employees, or make direct payments to childcare providers on behalf of their employees. Estimates in 2004 suggested that around 7 per cent of UK firms provided workplace care and about 8 per cent provided financial assistance to parents to source care, however, in light of recent policy changes, this number has likely to have increased (Hein 2010).

In the *US*, employers are eligible for a tax credit of up to 25 per cent of their capital and operating costs of either providing onsite childcare facilities or for purchasing childcare services for their employees up to a maximum credit of \$US150 000. Some states offer additional offsets against state taxation liabilities (Land-Kazlauskas 2010). Likewise, *France* offers employers a tax credit of 50 per cent if they operate a company crèche (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).

G.6 Outside school hours care

The prevalence of outside school hours care (OSHC) varies between OECD countries. In some countries OSHC represents the norm — in *Denmark* for example, 88 per cent of children aged 6 to 8, and 55 per cent of children aged 9 – 11 participate in OSHC. In other countries, including *Australia*, *Germany*, *Spain*, *Japan* and *Canada*, enrolment rates in OSHC is below 20 per cent (table G.4).

In *the Netherlands*, schools have a statutory duty for the provision of outside school hours care. In *Sweden*, responsibility for OSHC falls to the municipalities, who offer out of school centres — if independent schools elect not to provide an OSHC, the municipality must offer a place in one of their services. *Denmark* and *Norway* also have requirements on municipal councils to offer OSHC places for parents who demand the service (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).

The focus of OSHC varies. Some countries — such as *Norway* and *Finland* — view OSHC as part of an educational program, and focus on activities such as homework help. Other countries — including *Australia*, *Germany* and *New Zealand*, emphasise OSHC as a recreation opportunity, and consequently activities are geared towards supervised play or extracurricular interests (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).

Table G.4 **Outside school hours care use in selected OECD countries**

Various years between 2006 and 2009

<i>Country</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Enrolment rate (%)</i>
Australia	5-8 years	16
	9-12 years	19
Canada	6-7 years	19
	8-9 years	15
Denmark	6-8 years	88
	9-11 years	55
Finland	7-9 years	26
Germany	9-11 years	5
Greece	6-11 years	23
Japan	6-11 years	11
Netherlands	4-12 years	44
Spain	6-11 years	4
Sweden	6-8 years	84
	9-11 years	35
UK (England)	0-14 years	22

Source: OECD (2012a).

Funding arrangements for OSHC are also diverse. As with childcare, OSHC is split between systems that deliver assistance directly to providers and systems that deliver payment to families to meet ECEC fees. The former is common in continental Europe, while the latter is a feature of OSHC systems in *Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands* and *Belgium*, amongst others. Some countries — including *Finland* and *Denmark* — cap the out-of-pocket costs families may face for accessing OSHC services (Department for Education (UK) 2013a).