

PF4.1: Typology of childcare and early-education services

Definitions and methodology

Childcare and early education services for children not yet of schooling age can be categorised into three broad groups:

Centre-based day care: encompasses all childcare that is provided outside the home in licensed centres. The services provided can be full- or part-time, and are most commonly referred to as nurseries, day care centres, crèches, playgroups or playschools, and parent-run groups. In general, these services are provided to children under 3 or 4 years of age before commencing pre-primary education.

Family day care (FDC) is traditionally provided in a home setting, usually by a childminder. This can be at the childminder's home or at the child's own home. In some countries childminders are required to hold qualifications and to register with an official authority. The maximum number of very young children who can be cared for in this way is usually 3 or 4. This type of care is most common for children prior to pre-primary education (i.e. those aged up to 3 or 4), and is sought either because the availability of places in crèche/nurseries is limited or parents prefer a homely environment (particularly for very young children).

Pre-primary or pre-school early education programmes: this category includes centre-based (or sometimes school-based) programmes designed to meet the needs of children preparing to enter primary (compulsory) education. In most countries, these programmes include at least a 50% educational content and are supervised by qualified staff. In some countries, these programmes are run on a full-time basis and offer out-of-school-hours provision on the same premises, although others traditionally provide kindergarten programmes on a part-time basis. Others still have effectively extended their primary school programmes by bringing in one or two years of pre-primary education into primary schools, such as, for example, the 'Prep' year in Queensland, Australia.

Key findings

The broad design of childcare and early-education services is generally fairly similar across most of the covered Asia/Pacific countries, albeit with some clear exceptions (Table PF4.1.A). In most of the covered countries, children are most often cared for in 'care-oriented' day-care centres or family day care services when very young, before entering 'education-oriented' pre-primary education services like kindergarten at around age 3, and then primary (compulsory) school at age 6. The most obvious exceptions to this broad picture are in Australia, where children tend not to enter pre-primary education until age 4, and in New Zealand, where they enter compulsory schooling a year earlier than elsewhere at age 5. In some of the covered countries, integrated services that provide both 'care-' and 'education-oriented' services are available to children all the way through early childhood. One example is Japan's licensed day-care centres, which provide full-time care for children from a young age right through until they enter compulsory school. However, in most of the covered countries, services remain separated into 'care-oriented' day care and family day care services for children under age 3 or around, and 'education-oriented' services for those aged 3 or above.

Other relevant indicators: PF1.3: Family cash benefits; PF2.1: Key characteristics of parental leave systems

	Centre-based care, family day care, kindergarten or pre-primary education					Compulsory school education	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Australia	Day care centres. Part-time (20hrs) or full-time (up to 50hrs). Private.			Pre-primary education, integrated within primary schools. Full-time (out-of-school-hours care also provided). Public.		Compulsory schooling	
	Family day care. Part-time (20hrs) or full-time (up to 50hrs). Private.						
China	Family day care		Kindergarten			Compulsory schooling	
	Day care centres						
	Integrated kindergarten-cum-child care centres						
Japan	Nursery school. Full-time. Approx. 2/5ths of services are public, and 3/5ths private.					Compulsory schooling	
	Family day care. Public.		Kindergarten. Part-time (20 hrs) with additional out-of-hours care also provided. Approx. 1/3rd of services are public, and 2/3rds private.				
Korea	Day care centres. Public.					Compulsory schooling	
			Kindergartens. Public. Hakwon. Private.				
New Zealand	Day care centres and family day care. Part-time or full-time. Private.					Compulsory schooling	
	Kōhanga Reo. Full-time. Private.						
	Playcentres. Part-time. Private						
			Community-based kindergarten and playcentres. Private.				
	Te Kura (distance provision) and hospital-based centres (for children in hospital). Part-time. Public.						
Singapore	Infant care centres	Childcare centres and kindergarten			Compulsory schooling		
Thailand	Family day care		Kindergarten			Compulsory schooling	
	Day care centres						
Viet Nam	Family day care		Kindergartens, day care and pre-school			Compulsory schooling	
	Day care centres						

Note: Data for Thailand refer to 2009, for China, Singapore, and Viet Nam to 2013, and for Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand to 2016.
 Sources: [For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand: OECD Family Database Indicator PF4.1](#); For all other countries: national correspondents

Sources and further reading: OECD (2017), *Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276116-en>; OECD (2017), *Starting Strong V: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264276253-en>