



New Mexico Education Legislative Study Group

**Top Performing International Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
Systems**



Australia

- Population: 24.1 million
- ECEC is overseen by states and territories (departments vary); child care is subsidized for low-income families by the federal government
- Universal health care, with 18 weeks paid parental leave
- Federal guarantee of half day free preschool for 4 year olds across Australia
- National Quality Framework including program standards and curriculum for all programs for 0-5 year olds; states and territories monitor programs



Finland

- Population: 5.5 million
- ECEC is overseen by the national Ministry of Education
- Universal health care, with more than 2 years of paid parental leave
- Child allowances paid to families; parents who do not use public child care receive additional "care allowances"
- All children ages 0-5 have a guaranteed child care/preschool place
- National pre-primary curriculum and program standards; local quality monitoring of programs
- Child care and preschool is highly subsidized for all families



Hong Kong

- Population: 7.1 million
- Preschool is overseen by the Education Bureau and childcare is overseen by the Social Welfare Department
- Universal health care, with 10 weeks paid maternity leave
- Free half day preschool for 3-6 year olds; income-based subsidies for extended day
- National preschool curriculum and program standards, with mostly private provision
- Limited child care provision for 0-2 year olds but sector is expanding rapidly
- Child care fees are subsidized by the government for low-income families
- New national qualifications for kindergarten teachers and early childhood workers



South Korea

- Population: 51.2 million
- Preschool is overseen by the Ministry of Education and child care is overseen by the Ministry of Health and Welfare; there are efforts to integrate the governance
- Universal health care, with one year paid parental leave
- Universal free full day child care (0-5) and free half day preschool (3-5 year olds)
- Families who do not use child care get “care allowance” payments
- All provision is private
- Families with 2-6 year olds receive vouchers for education enrichment programs
- National curriculum for 0-5 year olds; programs must use to receive subsidies
- Creating a “career ladder” for preschool teachers, with newly developed Master Teacher positions and research stipends



Singapore

- Population: 5.1 million
- ECEC is overseen by Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)
- Subsidized health care for low-income families and children, with 4+ months of paid parental leave for parents
- One-time child payments (baby bonus) to all families; education savings accounts for all children with extra funds for disadvantaged children
- Mix of public and private preschools (for 3-5 year olds), with income-based subsidies
- Voluntary quality accreditation framework; providers need accreditation to receive government subsidies
- National curriculum for preschools and early learning standards for care centers
- Limited child care provision for 0-2 year olds but sector is expanding rapidly
- Child care provision is private but government provides income-based subsidies
- New national qualifications and career ladders for childcare teachers and preschool teachers



UK

- Population: 65.6 million
- ECEC is overseen by the Department of Education
- National health care system, with 37 weeks of paid parental leave
- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework — with curriculum, regulations, assessment guidelines, inspection guidelines — for all programs serving children 0-5
- Programs for children 3-4 are free
- All children 0-2 get 15 hours per week of free child care, and low-income families are eligible for 30 hours per week of free care
- National inspection system for all programs
- National health/development screening for 2 year olds; national academic screening for 5 year olds; shared on national database
- Raised requirements for preschool teachers to have same qualification requirements as primary teachers; raised requirements for child care workers as well