

*Starting Strong II: Public Policy in Early Childhood
Education and Care*

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Introduction

- Introduction
- Questions for ECEC policy
- Fundamental determinants of policy responses
- Some stylized facts
- The Starting Strong II view
- The Italian ECE Profile
- Concluding remarks

Questions for ECEC Policy

What?

Type of services or provision;
Quality

For whom?

Age groups;
Family, other groups

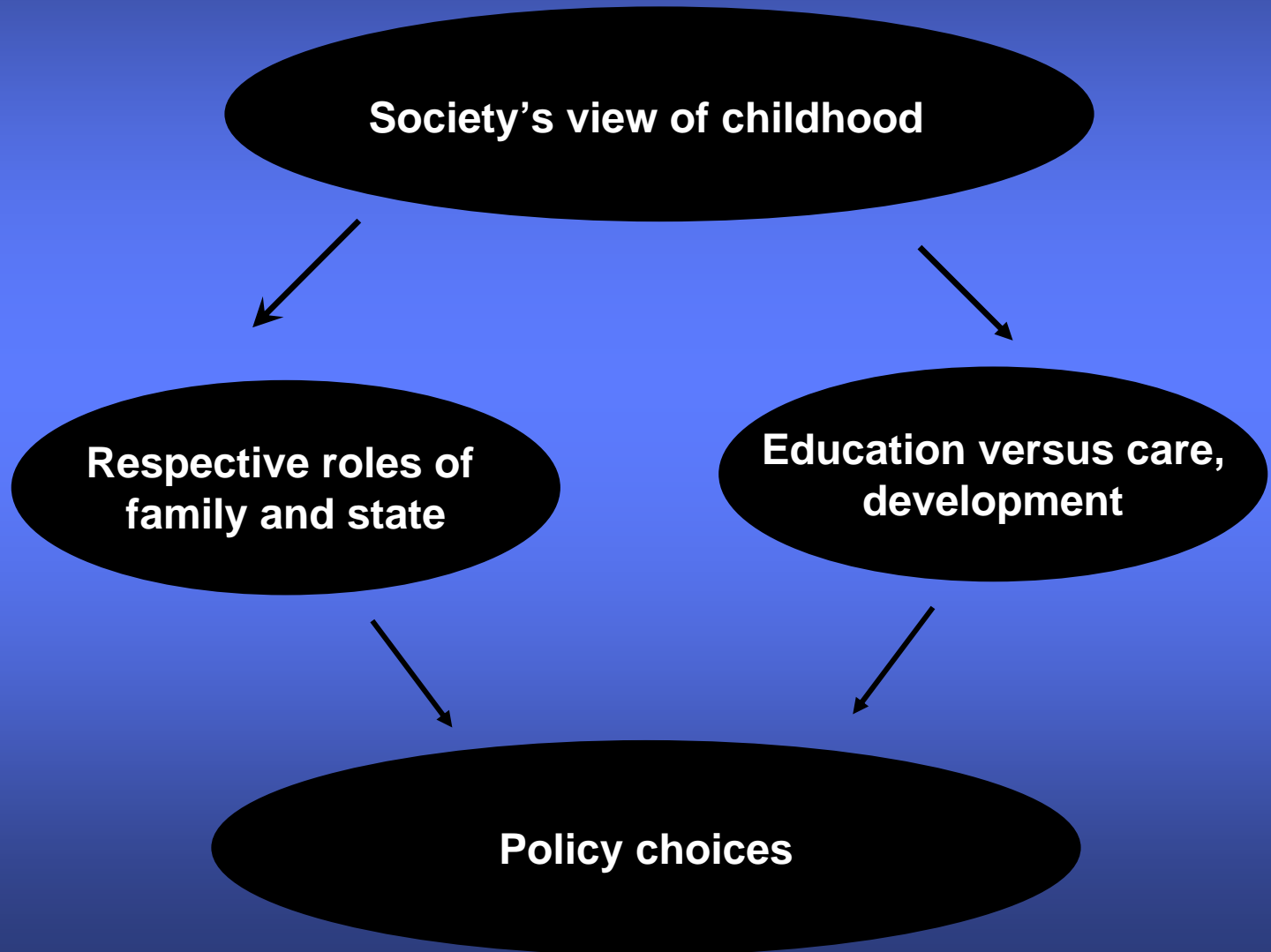
How?

Governance structures;
Pedagogy, content, processes

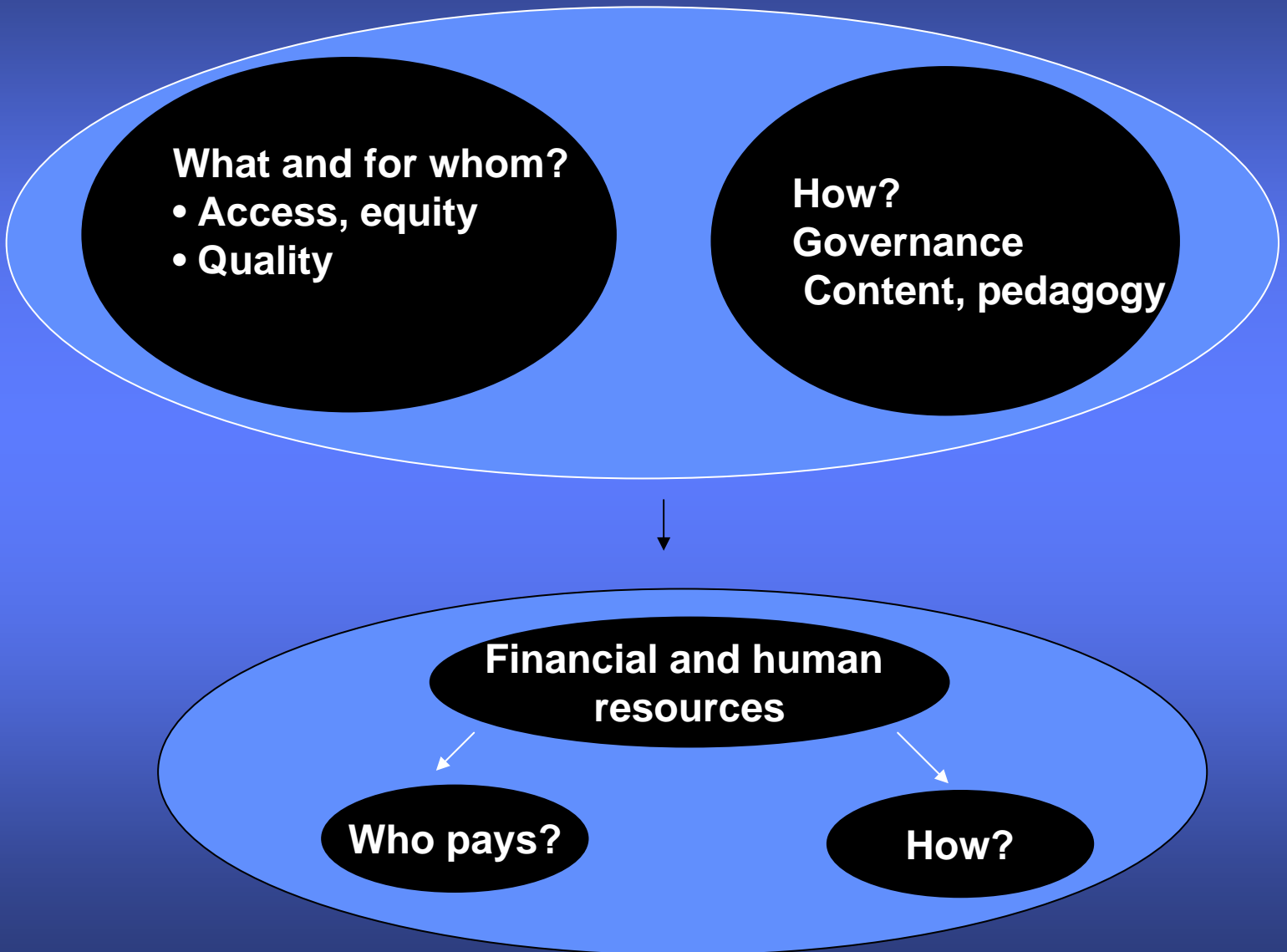
How much resources?

Human, financial;
Public/private;
Demand/supply side

Underlying determinants



Policy Choices



What and for whom?

- Access, equity
- Quality

How?

Governance
Content, pedagogy

**Financial and human
resources**

Who pays?

How?

Features and problems of ECEC Provision

- ❑ Insufficient and/or inequitable participation
- ❑ Wide variability of quality
- ❑ Fragmentation of policy development and programme delivery

Some stylized facts

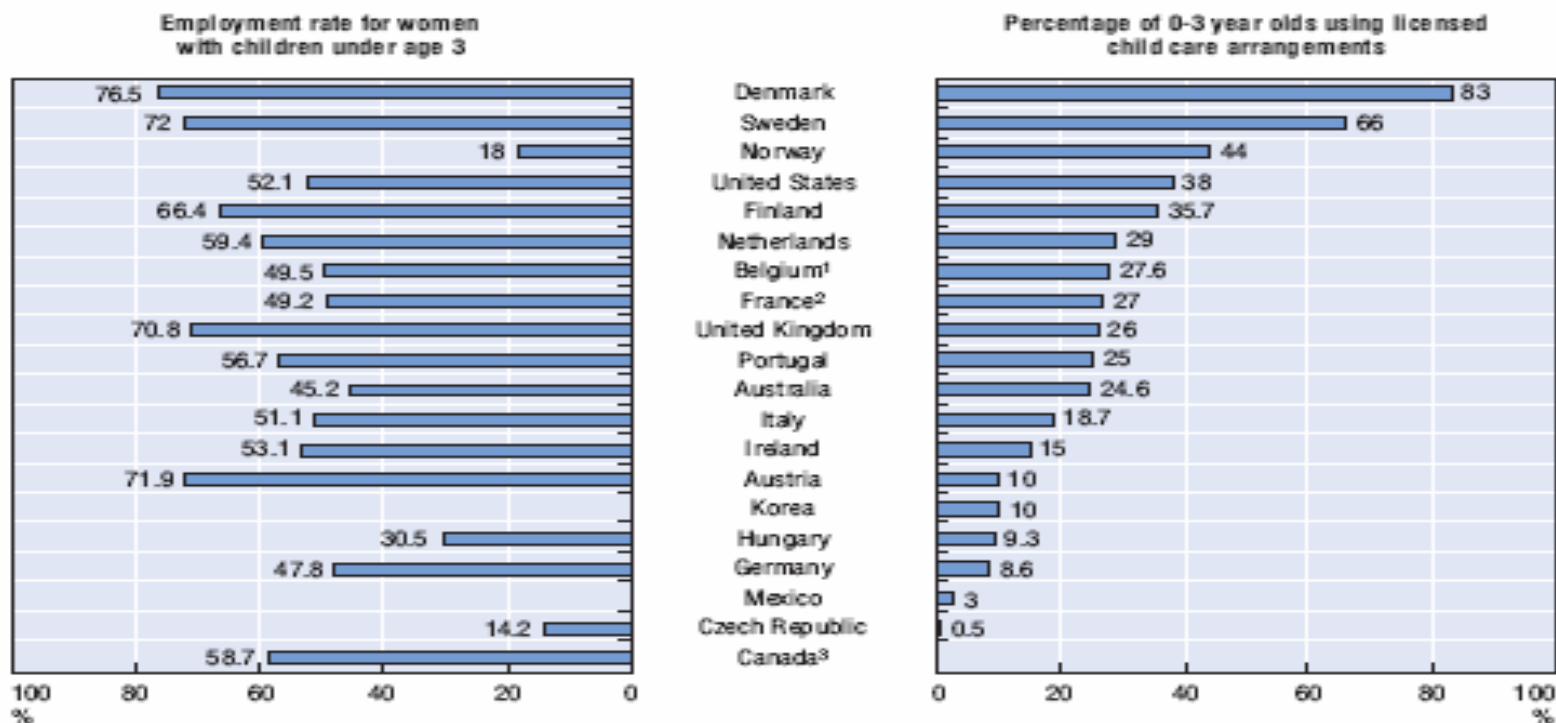
Coverage: As shown in the charts that follows:

Under 3: limited in most countries;

At age 4 coverage variability is less but still large;

Out of school provision is generally limited in most countries.

Figure 4.2. Employment rates for mothers with children under 3 and access rates for children under 3 in licensed ECEC services



1. Enrolment in the infant school in Belgium begins at 2.5 years when about 90% of children are enrolled. The percentage of children in regulated child care in Belgium (Flanders) is 34.2%.
2. Enrolment in the infant school begins at 2 years. 35% of children enter between 2-3 years.
3. For Canada, the coverage rate for children aged 0-5 years is 24%. Data on the coverage rate for children aged 0-3 years are not available.

Notes: In reading this figure, caution is advised.

- The definition of "licensed service" differs widely from country to country, going from mere registration of an activity to programmes that follow a curriculum and are regularly inspected and evaluated. Again, information is not available in most countries concerning the length of use of the child care places available, whether the rate recorded refers to sessional, half-day or full-day usage.
- Likewise employment rates are open to different interpretations. In this figure, no distinction is made between part-time and full-time employment, and in some instances, the figures include women who are taking parental or other leave, e.g. the employment rate given for women in Austria includes women on Child Care Benefit leave, whereas the percentage of women actually working is closer to 30%.
- The low enrolments rates recorded in several countries may hide parental leave policies that play an important role in reducing demand for infant provision. Again, rates do not reveal the numerous informal or unlicensed arrangements that exist.

Source: Employment rates provided by EUROSTAT, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and OECD, *Babies and Bosses* (Volumes 1-4). Information on access rates provided by OECD countries, 2004.

Access: By Age, Under 3

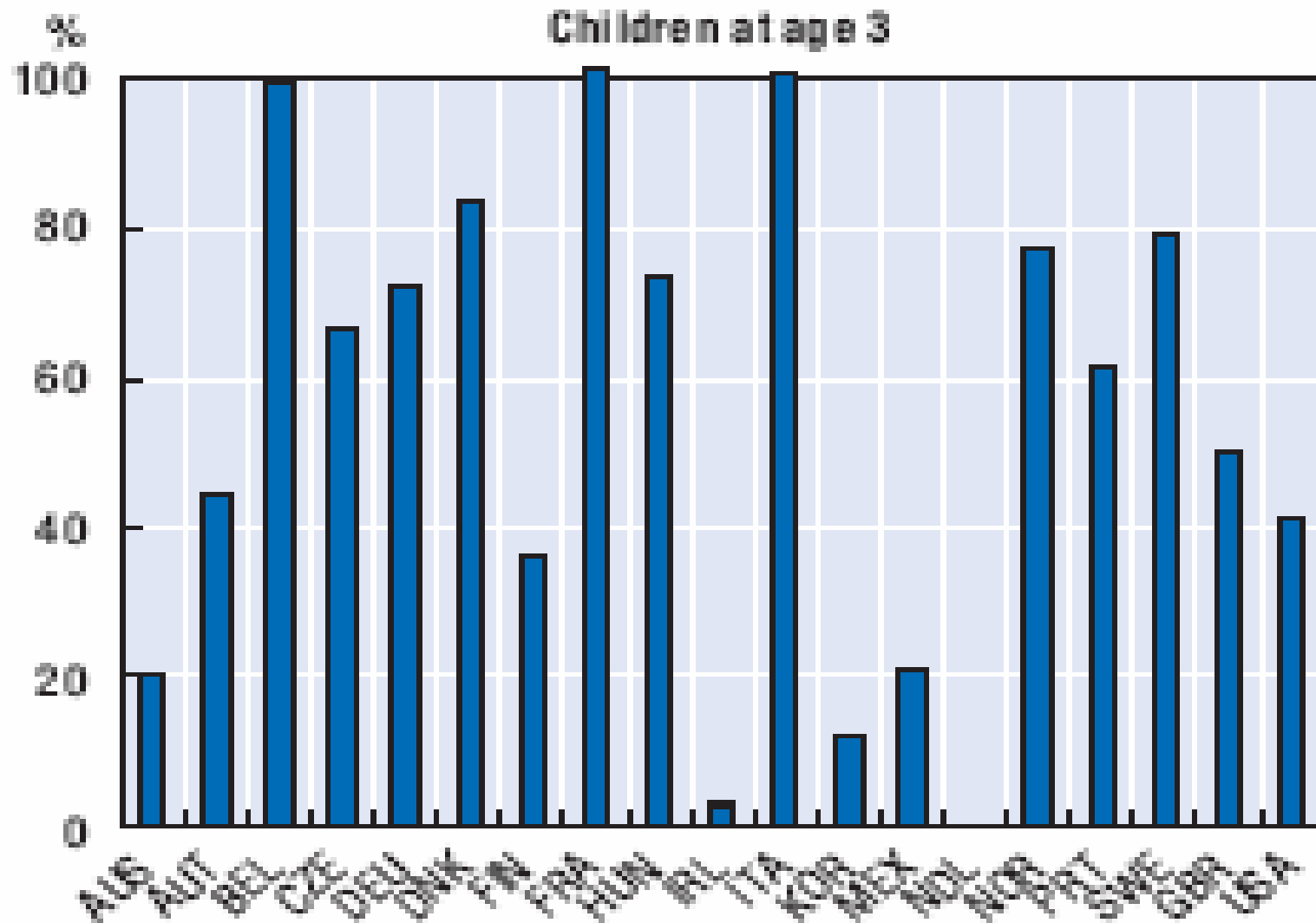
- Very sketchy coverage - variety of providers informal, local arrangements all charge parental fees; highest in Denmark, Sweden.
- In several countries majority of young children remain for at least part of the working day in the care of unregistered childminders or providers.
- Age at which young children have a legal right to attend free school-based ECEC varies considerably across countries: 2 1/2 years in Belgium; 3 in Italy; 4 Netherlands, UK.

Coverage: Age 4

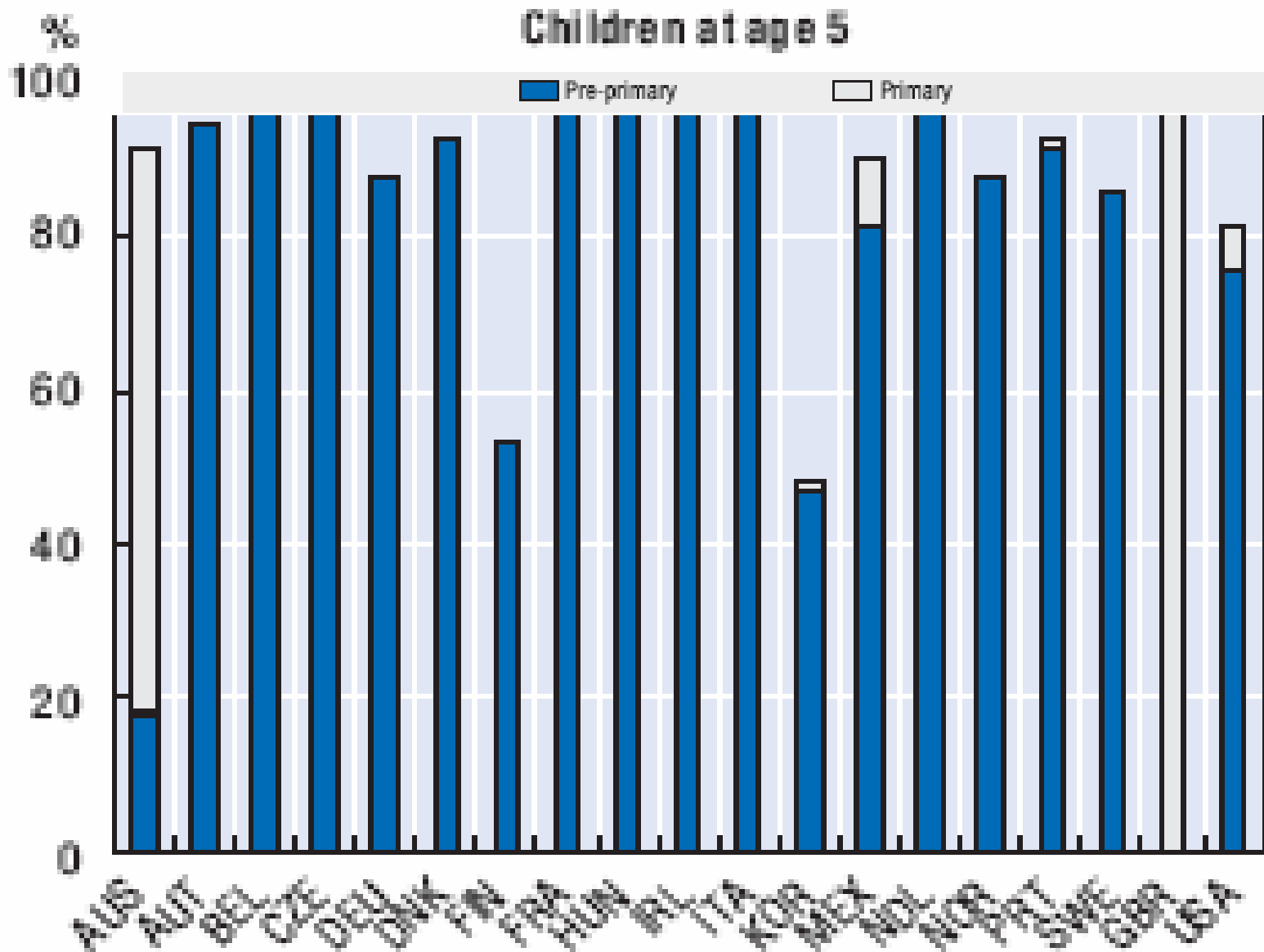
As the next slide shows, the picture changes significantly at age 3: Several countries reach 100% coverage of 3 year olds in regulated ECEC services. Italy is one of them

Enrolment rates in regulated ECEC and pre-primary education of children 3

Pre-primary Primary



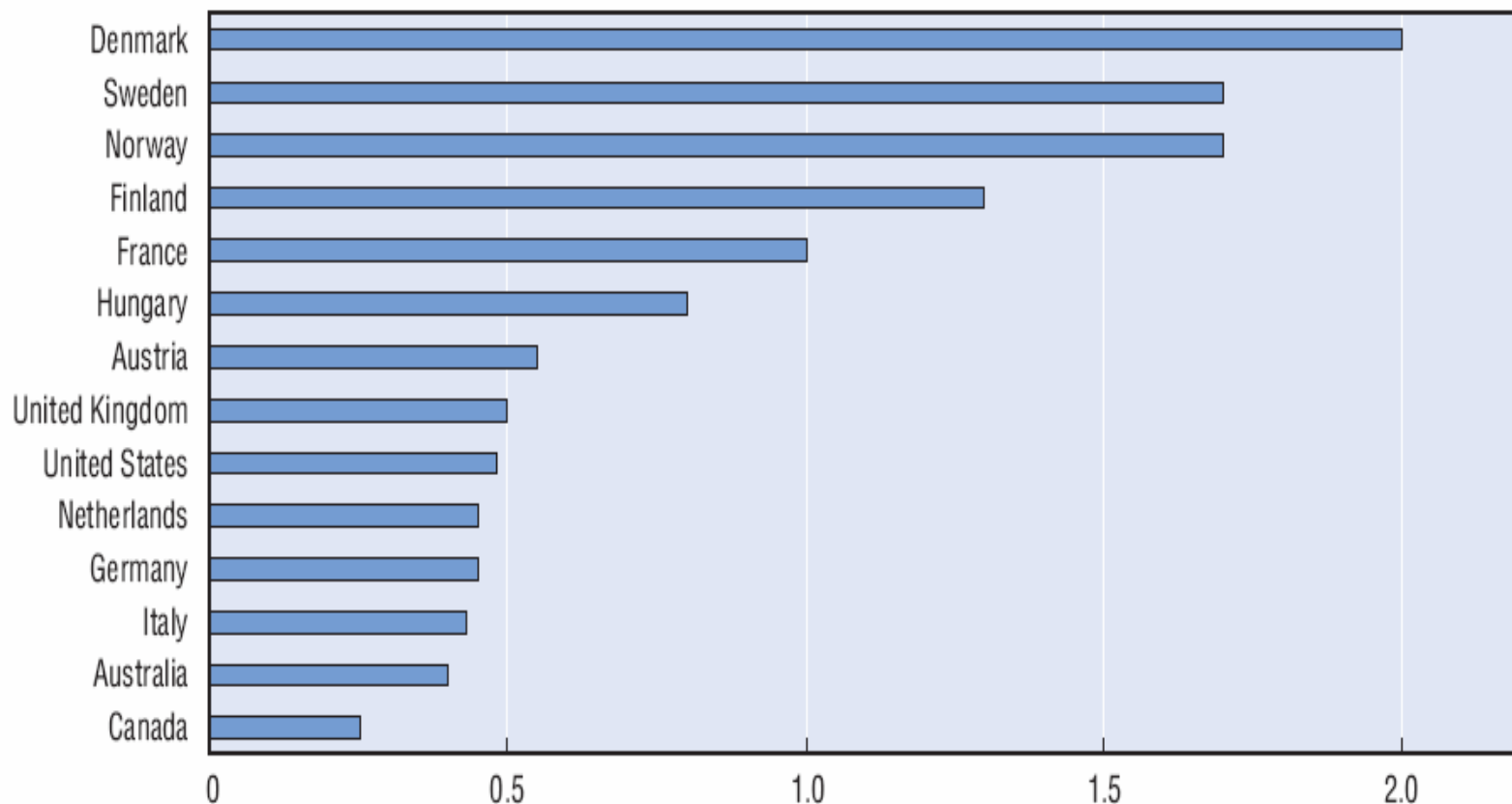
Enrolment rates in regulated ECEC and pre-primary education of children at age 5



Some stylized facts: Expenditure

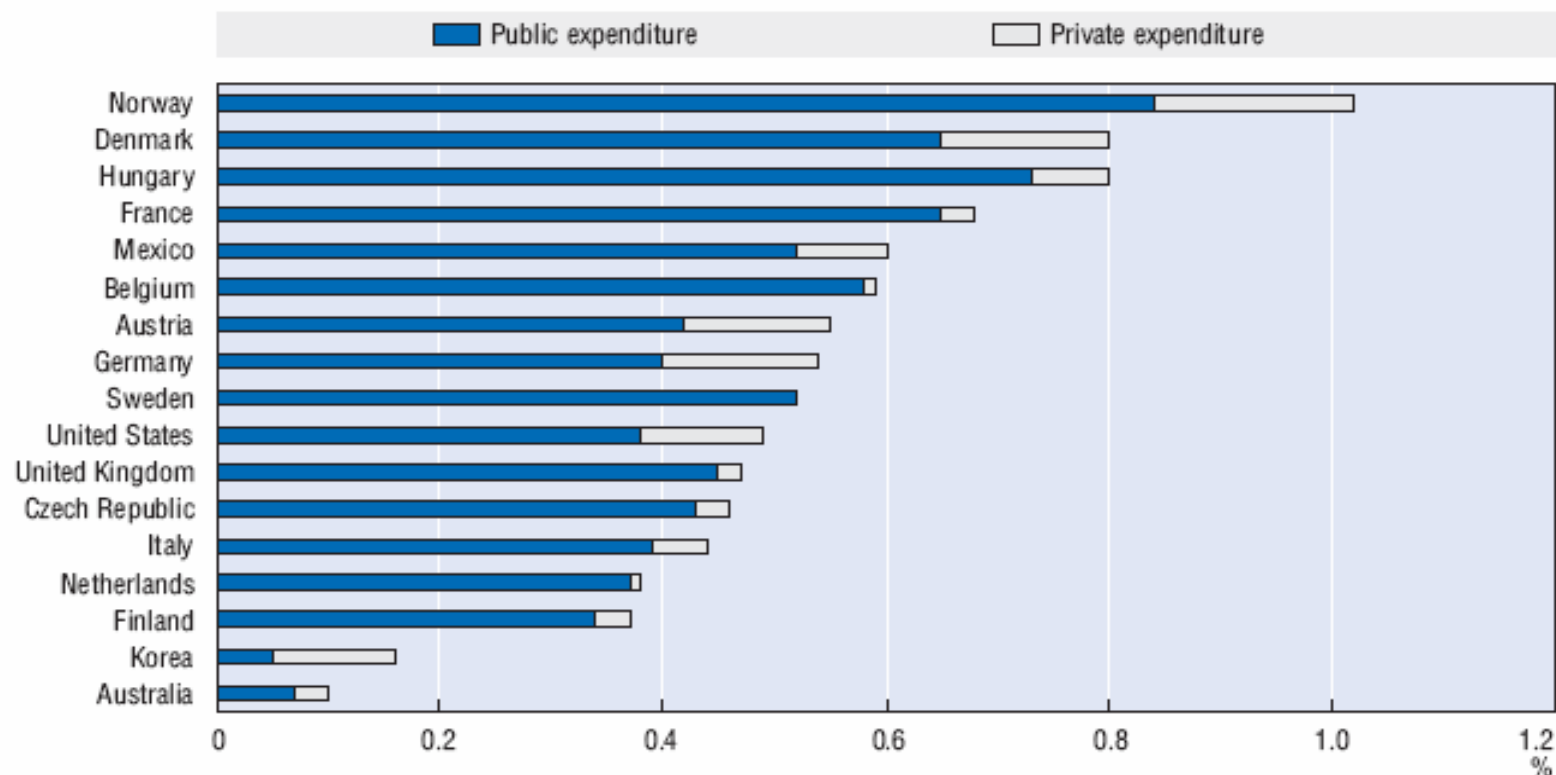
- For 0-6 years, ranges between 0.2 to 2.0% of GDP;
- Denmark at the highest level;
- The percentage for Italy is close to 0.4% of GDP.

Figure 5.3. **Public expenditure on ECEC services (0-6 years) in selected OECD countries (%)**



Note: This figure is comprised of expenditure estimates, based on replies provided by country authorities to an OECD survey in 2004. The figures provided suggest that Denmark spends 2% of GDP on early childhood services for 0- to 6-year-olds, and Sweden 1.7%. These countries – and Finland – also allocate an additional 0.3% (approximately) to the pre-school class for children 6 to 7 years.

Figure 5.4. Public and private expenditure on pre-primary education (3- to 6-year-olds only) as a percentage of GDP



Note: Early education expenditure for Belgium and France is higher than this figure indicates, and significantly higher for Denmark, Finland and Sweden. In Belgium and France, early education begins before 3 years. For Denmark, Finland and Sweden, it is probable that this figure identifies expenditure only for what is considered free educational provision, e.g. the Finnish figure includes pre-primary education programmes for 6-year-old children (pre-school year preceding compulsory education) and centre-based day care for 3- to 5-year-old children, based on an expenditure estimation of 50%. Canada is absent from this figure as data are not provided in OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2005. The last data received from Canada are for the year 2000, when Canada spent 0.2% of GDP on pre-primary education, for 3- to 6-year-olds. Data for Korea cover only kindergarten education and do not include public expenditure in the parallel child care system.

Source: OECD (2005), *Education at a Glance*.

Access: By Age Group

- ❑ In Europe, most countries provide all children with at least two years of free, publicly-funded provision before they begin primary school.
- ❑ At age 3, coverage is far from universal in many countries:
 - Belgium, France and Italy have full coverage;
 - Over 50 per cent but not full: CR, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.
 - Negligible in several other countries: Canada, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Switzerland and Turkey.
- ❑ Variability of coverage less but still large at age 4.

Access: Disadvantage and Equity

In Europe, 25-30% of costs borne by parents; higher in systems relying more on the private sector;

- publicly provided services are usually in centres and family day care homes and nearly all charge parental fees; these are generally not means tested (excepting Sweden)
- Disadvantaged group:
 - Children in poverty: significant percentage in different countries;
 - US: Only 45% of 3-5 years olds from low income groups have access compared to 75 % from high income groups; In Canada, only 20% of lone parents and 5% of disadvantaged groups are covered.
- Special needs children: generally poorly provided.

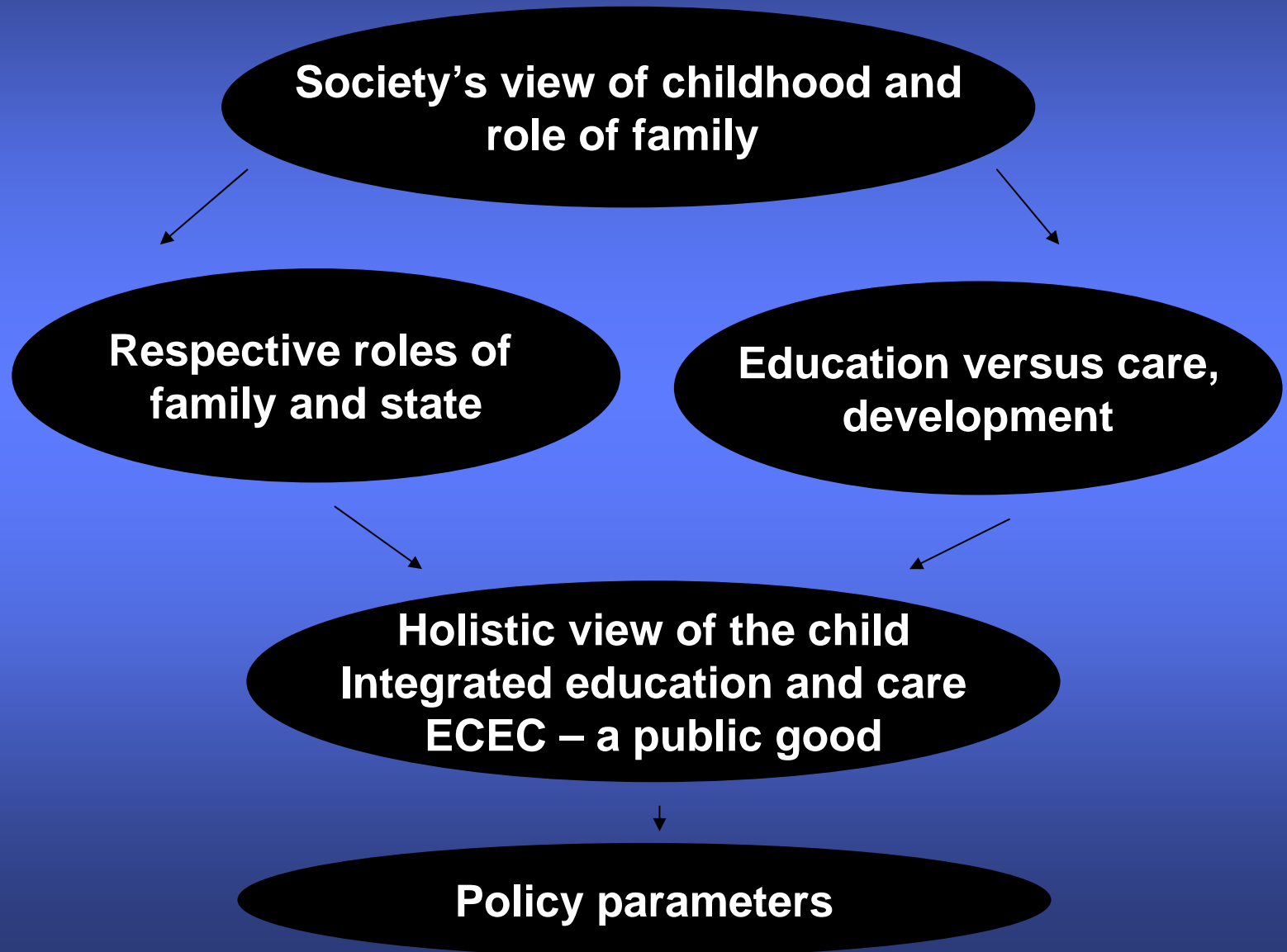
Wide variability of quality

- ❑ Varies greatly by type of service;
- ❑ poor pedagogical setting especially for younger children;
- ❑ low status and training of staff in SW sector, especially in family day care;
- ❑ low standards of provision for children under 3, and for children from poor families;
- ❑ majority of children under 3 are looked after by unregistered child minders and providers.

Patterns of Governance

- ❑ Problems arise because: -- different types of services and conception of ed/care/health;
- ❑ horizontally different ministries;
- ❑ vertically, different levels of responsibilities, funding and local delivery mechanisms.

Starting Strong II



Starting Strong II Recommendations

The OECD work on ECEC presented in Starting Strong II makes a 10 point recommendation to guide ECEC policy. These are based on placing the child's rights and well-being at the very centre focusing especially on:

- ❑ Universal coverage of quality to all who want;
- ❑ Integrated approach to provision of education, care and other services;
- ❑ Close co-ordination of policy development and programme delivery among all responsible ministries, at different levels of government and supported by partnership with other stakeholders;
- ❑ A participatory approach to quality and development of pedagogy
- ❑ Substantial public investment

The Italian ECEC Profile

- ❑ Expenditure on 0-6 is below OECD average;
- ❑ Coverage 3-6 is almost universal; but
- ❑ Coverage 0-3 is very limited, less than 20 per cent;
- ❑ The distribution of 0-3 places is uneven across the country with some 59% in the northern region; and only 15% in the southern region.

The Italian ECEC Profile

- Policy responsibility split according to the level of government, the type of service and age of the child.
 - Ministry of Education cater to 3-6 years;
 - Regions and municipalities for 3-months to three years.

The Italian ECEC Profile

Quality features:

Strong regional tradition in ECEC provision means that compliance with national standards and regulations differ across regions;

- ❑ Monitoring responsibility of state primary-school head teachers;
- ❑ 4-year university education for teachers (expected to happen) in scuola and in asili nido minimum secondary vocational education (3-year degree in the future);
- ❑ Child staff ratios are 7:1 in the nido, with maximum group size 10; scuola two teachers per 20 students; maximum group size 25.

Major Issues

- ❑ A relative neglect of children under 3;
- ❑ Co-ordination of administration and services;
- ❑ The effectiveness of policy formulation and its implementation in municipalities and regions.

Data for Figure 5.2. Public investment in services for families and young children in percentages of GDP

	Total cash benefits	Total family services	Public expenditure on ISCED 0	Total public spending as % of GDP
AUS	2.4	0.5	0.07	2.97
AUT	2.4	0.6	0.42	3.42
BEL	1.9	0.4	0.58	2.88
CAN	0.9	0	0.2	1.1
CZE	1.5	0.1	0.43	2.03
DEU	1.1	0.8	0.40	2.55
DNK	1.5	2.3	0.65	4.14
FIN	1.7	1.4	0.34	3.75
FRA	1.5	1.3	0.65	3.2
HUN	1.9	0.6	0.73	3.23
IRL	1.4	0.2	0.39	1.85
ITA	0.6	0.3	0.39	1.29
KOR	0	0.1	0.05	0.15
MEX	0.1	0.2	0.52	0.82
NLD	0.7	0.4	0.37	1.47
NOR	1.9	1.3	0.84	4.04
PRT	0.7	0.5	0.30	1.55
SWE	1.8	1.1	0.52	3.42
GBR	1.9	0.3	0.45	2.65
USA	0.1	0.3	0.38	0.78

Note: For Denmark and Sweden, expenditure levels on ISCED Level 0 – as represented on the figure (white portion of the bar) – cover only a small proportion of their actual ECCEC expenditure on children 1 to 6 years old. Similarly for Korea, where only Ministry of Education expenditure is included.

Source: OECD (2005), *Education at a Glance*; OECD/DELSA/ELSA (2004)8.