

WEBINAR

The Early Childhood Workforce in Times of COVID-19 Are they adequately supported?

May 28th 2020



Co-hosted by the **International Step by Step Association (ISSA)** and
Results for Development (R4D).



Partners:



Panelists:

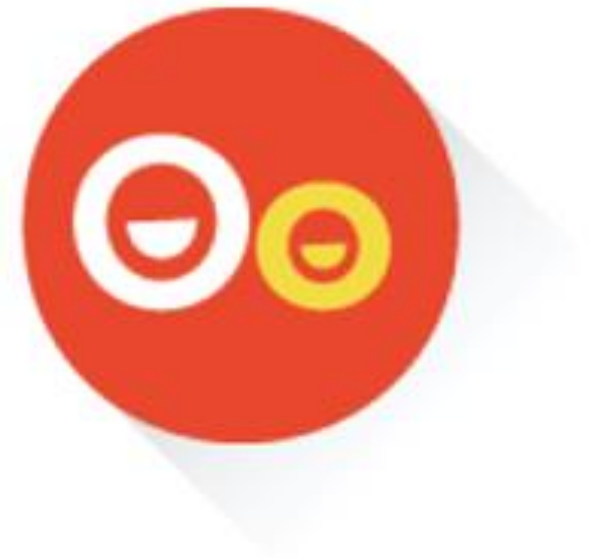
Sissel Havre - Senior Advisor | Education and
Research, Union of Education
Norway

Grace Mathape - Chief Executive Officer,
SmartStart – **South Africa**

Co-Moderators:

Joan Lombardi - Director, Early Opportunities

Mihaela Ionescu – Program Director, ISSA



Let's meet our participants!

Go to your internet browser and type
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Use this code **79 44 22** to insert your answer.



EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE INITIATIVE



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Guiding Questions

What measures have been taken in countries to protect and support the early childhood workforce?



What plans are in place for the re-opening of childcare and education services?

To what extent they provide protection and support to the early childhood workforce?

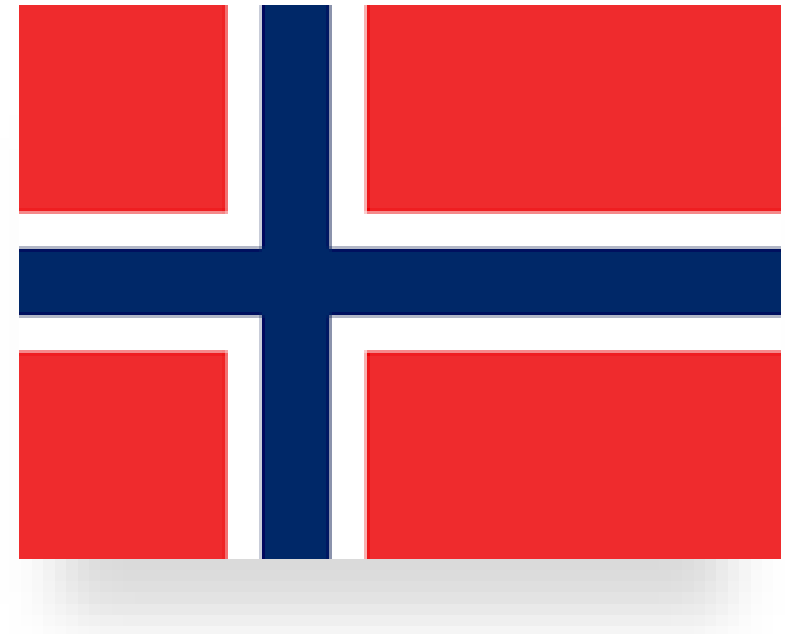


ECEC / Kindergartens in Norway

- Statutory right to kindergarten from 1 year of age – School starts at age of 6.
- 92 % participation rate
- 50/50 of the children in public/private kindergartens
- Funding: 85 % public funding across ownership, 15% parental fee.

The Staff:

- 43 % Kindergarten teachers (bachelor degree) – regulated by law.
- 21% Childcare and youth workers (vocational education, upper secondary level)
- 46% Others



Covid 19 and close-down of Kindergartens from March 13

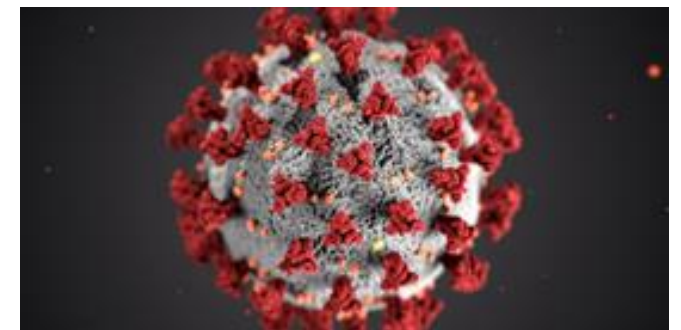
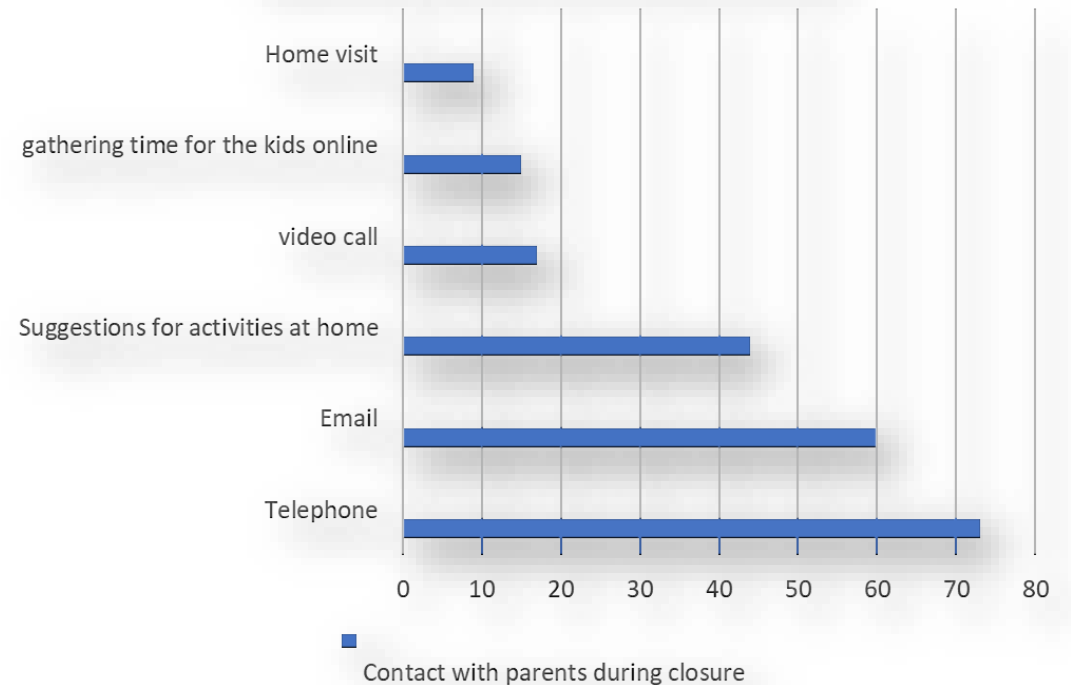
- Open for essential workers, children with special needs and vulnerable children.
- Tasks for Kindergarten leadership and staff during shutdown.

Important measures taken during shutdown:

- Public funding sustained at same level and parental fees where covered by the state during close-down - on condition staff were not let off.
- Staff in risk groups for serious illness related to covid-19 works from home.

Sissel Havre, Union of Education Norway

Contact with parents and children during closure
National parents committee survey



Reopening kindergartens from 20th of April

Guiding principles have been adopted for the ECEC sector to limit infection. Measures must be implemented:

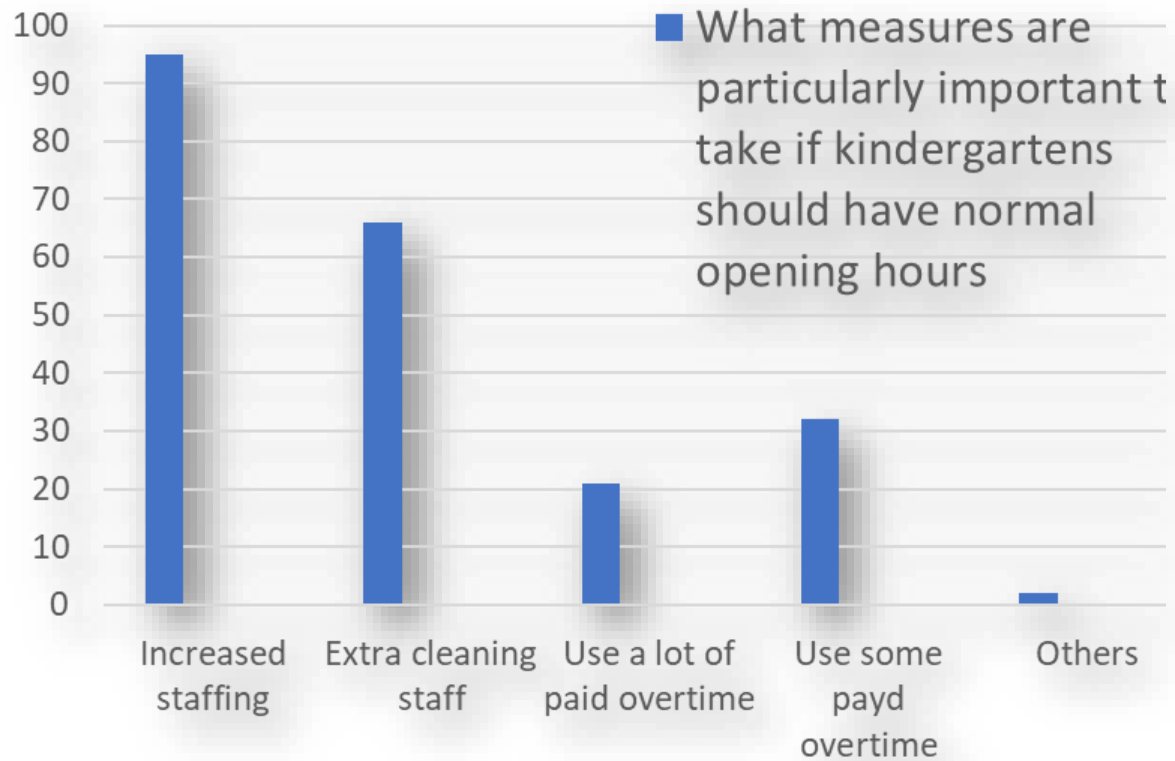
- Sick persons not to attend
- Good hygiene
- Reduced contact

Challenges:

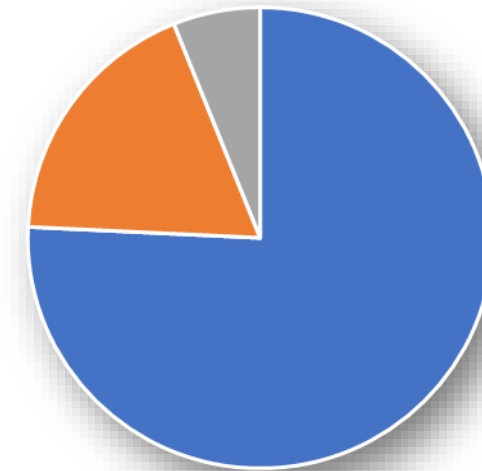
- Trust – feeling it safe to come back
- Staffing/opening hours – difficult to fulfil requirements.
- Time for reflection and planning for the teachers, and for breaks for the staff.



Union of Education Norway Member Survey of center leaders April 2020



The extent to which it is possible to accomplish the measures in the guiding principles with full opening hours (10 hours)



■ to a small or no extent ■ to a fairly small extent ■ Possible

Most important measures from the authorities to support staff:

- Cooperation with representatives for the unions at both local and national level. Some examples:
 - regular meetings between union leaders and the minister of education
 - input and comments on the guidance created
 - regulations to make it possible to reduce opening hours
- Financial support to the sector to avoid layoffs
- Guidance especially for the ECEC sector
- Possibility for testing if symptoms

How the Union supports its members:

- Bring their suggestions and concerns to the authorities and ensure that their voice is heard
- Give them advice and guidance on rights and opportunities
- Cooperate with employer organizations and other stakeholders
- Special attention to the center leaders' situation



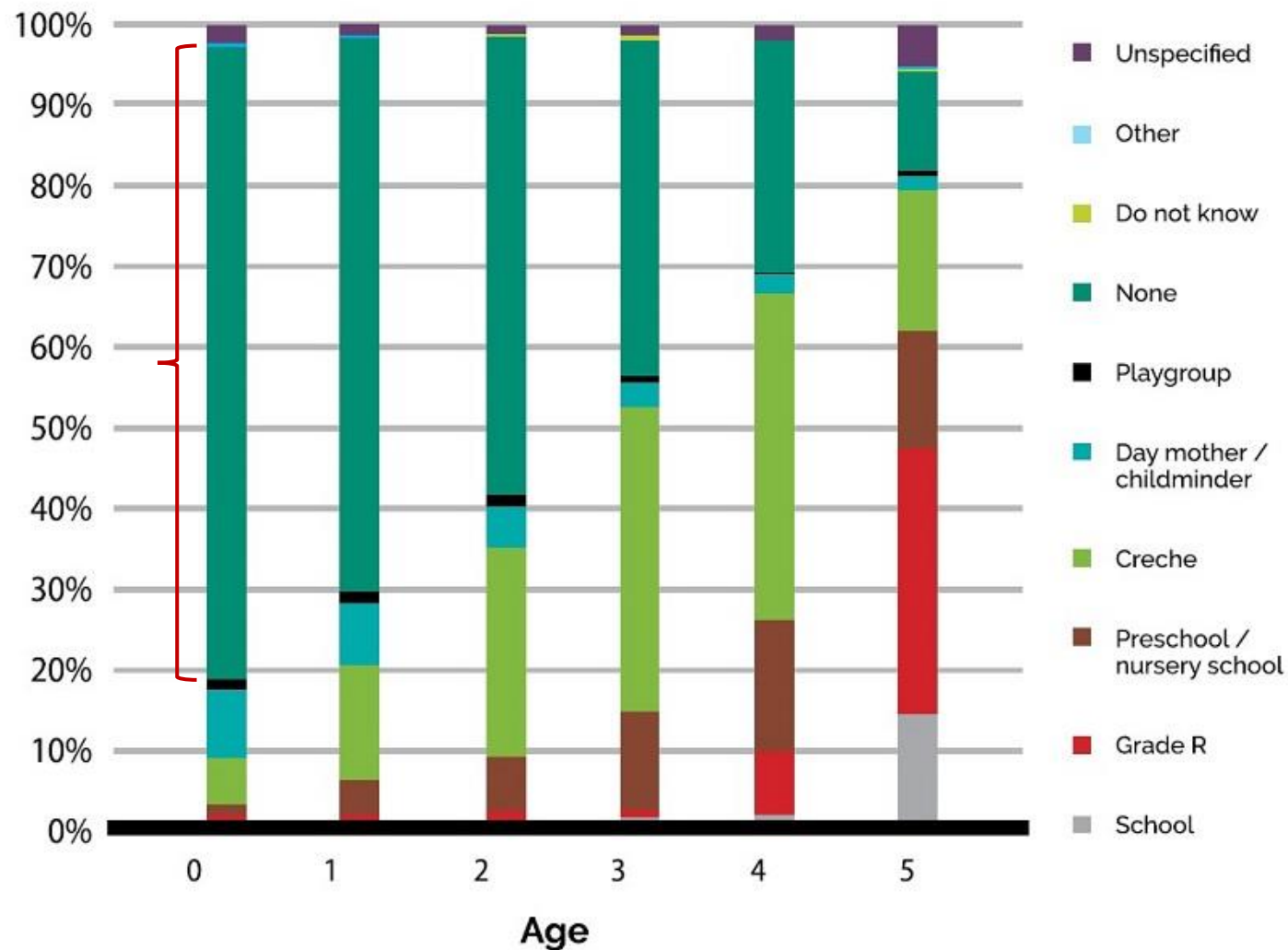


Impact of the COVID-19 on the ECD workforce in South Africa

COUNTRY CONTEXT

- More than 3.3 million of South Africa's 0-5 year olds still do not have access to any form of early learning programme.
- **Almost 90% of these children come from the poorest communities**
- Approx. 700K out of 2.4m children who access an early learning programme are government subsidized
- This means there are 1.5 million children who are accessing early learning without any benefit from government subsidy.

THESE ARE THE POOREST CHILDREN EXCLUDED BECAUSE OF A COMPLIANCE REGIME THAT DISADVANTAGES THE POOR



★ ABOUT SMARTSTART

1

SmartStart was established as a delivery platform to enable rapid quality scale-up of access to Early Childhood Education for all children, to give the poorest children a fighting chance to succeed

2

Designed as an **early learning social franchise**, SmartStart recruits women and some men in low resource communities, screen them, train them, license and support them through our network of coaches to implement the same evidence-based programme (the SmartStart daily routine).

3

The SmartStart programme is supported by resources and play materials, quality assurance processes, and a network of 'Clubs' that provide a community of practice and support for practitioners.



COUNTRY CONTEXT

- There were **46,571** ECD practitioners nationally in 2016 in South Africa
- 60% of them in **registered** ECD centres (serving 10% of children)
- Our modelling shows **107,000 new practitioners** and assistants needed to meet the provisioning gap at the right ratio

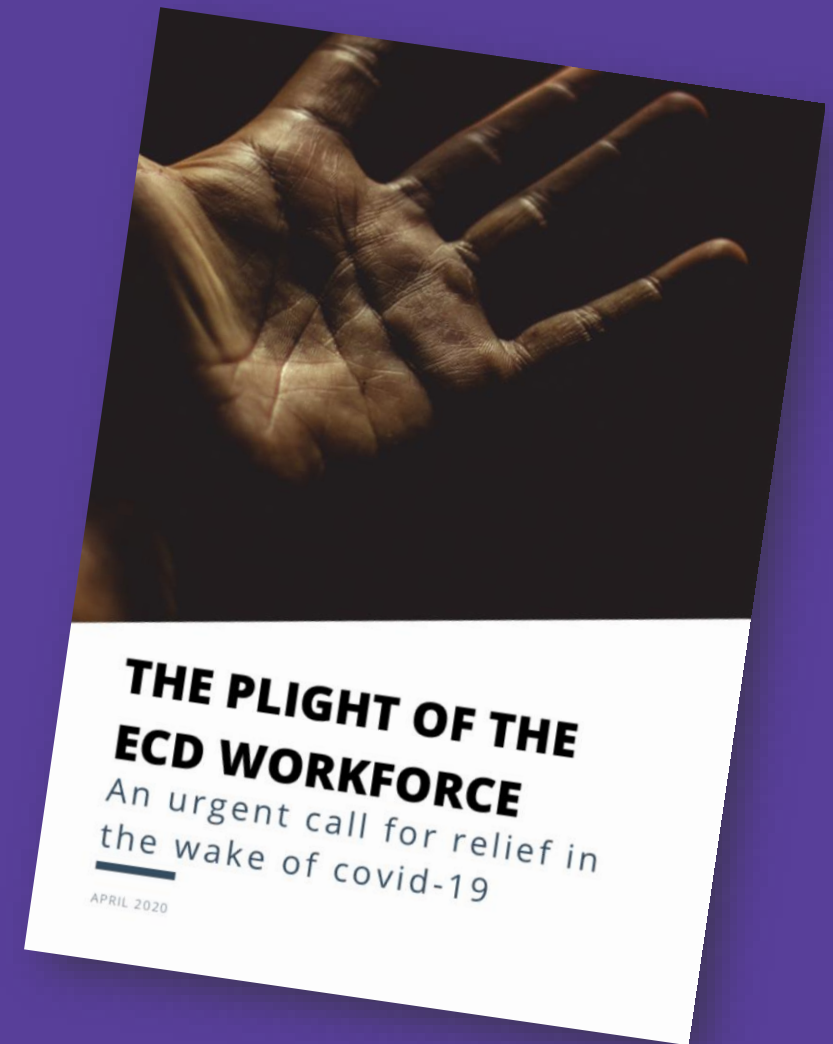


The COVID-19 rapidly entered the ECD space as a significant disruptor

- 83% of operators have not been able to pay the full salaries of staff over the lockdown period
- 68% were worried that they would not be able to reopen
- 35% of the ECD workforce in the survey was UIF registered
- 13% of operators were CIPC registered

-
- Concerns about food insecurity for the poorest children and informal economy practitioners
 - Concerns about stimulation at home
 - Concerns about child safety both during lockdown as economic activity has begun, and after lockdown where safety protocol must be in place

* Strongly suggesting that a large proportion of the ECD programmes operate in the informal economy





Reopening is both about child safety and workforce stability

- **CONTEXTUAL REALITIES**

- **Very diverse context**

- Calls for a very inclusive process including both registered and unregistered centres

- **High unemployment post lockdown is going to impact the ECD sector beyond the lockdown period**

- Parents struggling to pay fees
- Impact on materials and on ability to access PPE

- **High workforce attrition with resulting implications for big recruitment and retraining**

- Increase costs for an already constrained ECD sector
- Impact quality

- **SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES**

- **Support toward sustainable ECD enterprises is essential for continuity of child care and education service**

- **Training of the workforce on protective measures in ECD while ensuring strong socio-emotional development for children**

- **Support for the workforce themselves- some working in very resource poor context**



Reopening is both about child safety and workforce stability

PROTOCOLS

- Clear guidance relating to physical distancing and hygiene measures
- Some sites might not be suitable- define what physical distancing might be in constrained contexts
- Guidelines on self checking mechanism for readiness to reopen
- Distribution of appropriate PPE for the centres
- Communication with parents should be clear

SOME PRINCIPLES

- **The best interests of the child**
- **A unique sector**
- **Take the scare out of protecting children**
- **Rules that reflect evidence**
- **Respect for South Africa's diverse ECD contexts**
- **Partnership with parents and caregivers**

Questions and Answers



Consider the voice of
the early childhood workforce

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Go to www.menti.com and use this code **54 62 68**



Biggest concern regarding the early childhood workforce

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Closing thoughts



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Visit our website: www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org

COVID-19 Position Statement:

FIVE PRIORITY ACTIONS

TO PROTECT, SUPPORT AND
STRENGTHEN

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
WORKFORCE

Check our:

- Landscape Analyses
- Country Briefs
- Knowledge Hub
- Previous webinars
- Blogs
- News

Upcoming:

- Featuring **real-life stories** of frontline early childhood workers across sectors during COVID-19 period
- **Blogs** bringing forward country perspectives regarding early childhood programs and working with frontline personnel in this time of crisis
- Synthesizing **practical resources for supporting the early childhood workforce** across sectors on the Knowledge Hub

Thank you for joining our webinar!

If you want to send any
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please contact:

Mihaela Ionescu
Program Director, ISSA

mionescu@issa.nl

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