KEY POINTS ABOUT STUDY COUNTRIES

Comprehensive Services, Finance and Governance

Comprehensive Services

- *Robust but different services:* All study countries offer comprehensive services that far exceed the US', but they differ in what they offer.
- *Policy interaction*: What these study countries offer is contingent on other services, so that a study country with moderate family leave benefits might have robust child care funding for infants/toddlers (South Korea) while a country with rich family and child support benefits may have families who use formal child care in the early years less frequently (Finland).

Finance

- *Hybridized funding and delivery patterns*: All study countries rely on both public and private (mostly parental) fees, although a few countries provide 100% public funding for certain age groups or subsets of the population. Most study countries also have mixed delivery systems, with services offered by both public and private providers.
- *Infrastructure:* All study countries invest in elements of the infrastructure, although they are investing in different elements.
- *Progressive universalism:* All study countries provide resources for all children, but most provide additional support for needy populations.

Governance

- *Stable governance and strong ECEC support*: All study countries have comparatively stable governments and provide strong support for ECEC, with increasing attention in recent decades (often due to scientific advancements, migration, demographic changes and workforce demands).
- *Governmental centralization reflects and affects the context*: A study country's governmental structure reflects how much happens centrally and locally, and affects the need for coordinative entities.
- *Different but deliberate adaptive policymaking*: All study countries adapt their policies over time, but do so differently.
- *Different approaches to achieve systemic coherence*: Study countries use functional and structural means to make their ECEC systems coherent, and are working to achieve alignment among health, education and social welfare.

Pedagogy and Workforce

Pedagogy

- *Pedagogies are child-centered but vary*: All study countries advance child-centered, play-based philosophies, but vary in their exact pedagogies and in the way they conceive of teachers' roles.
- *Continuity is valued*: All study countries value continuity for children and nurture it through diverse strategies for transition and alignment.
- *National frameworks*: All study countries have national curricular frameworks that span across multiple program types.

Workforce

- *Emphasis on workforce*: All study countries place critical emphasis on the workforce, including strategies for innovative professional development and retention.
- *Professional categories*: Many study countries have common professional categories that transcend programs, with uniform job descriptions and entry requirements.
- *Competency-based qualifications*: Many study countries are moving toward competency-based qualifications.
- *Staff deployment*: Many study countries deploy staff inventively.
- *Family diversity*: All study countries recognize family diversity, and many make special efforts to honor it due in part to rising immigration.
- *Leadership*: All study countries attend to pedagogical and administrative early childhood leadership.

Data to Drive Improvement

Data Infrastructure

- *Data infrastructure*: All study countries have an infrastructure that supports program data collection and use, including the development of technological systems and inspector professional development.

Data Uses

- *Data collection*: Study countries collect data for status checks (often for program monitoring) and for research (empirically designed and implemented studies).
- *Program monitoring*: All study countries have program monitoring approaches and place great emphasis on program improvement rather than program closure.
- *Formative assessment*: All study countries use formative assessments for young children and some support child data collection for policy purposes.

Communicating Information

- *Transparency*: All study countries make some amount of program monitoring data available to the public.

Challenges

- *Data challenges*: All study countries face common data challenges, including confidentiality, consistency and fidelity of instruments and timely and effective data integration and use.

Research

- *Types of research*: All study countries support basic, comparative, evaluative and survey research.
- *Research infrastructure*: All study countries have developed a research infrastructure using dispersed, centralized or decentralized approaches.
- *Research to practice*: All study countries have prioritized the translation of research into policy and practice.