



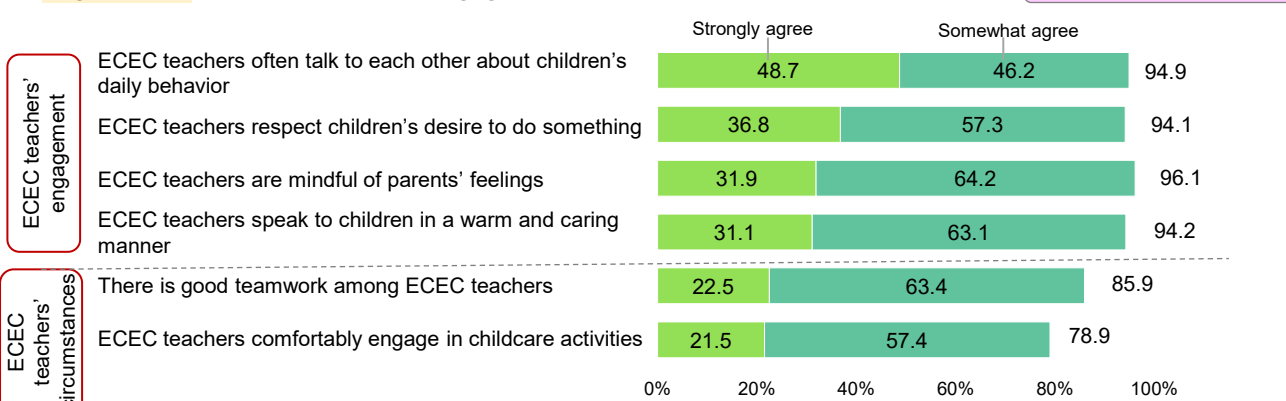
3-1 Circumstances of ECEC teachers and childcare facilities

ECEC teachers often talk to each other about children’s daily behavior and respect children’s “desire to do something.”

When asked about their engagement with children at work, more than 90% of ECEC teachers answered, “Strongly agree” or “Somewhat agree” to all the questions. For “ECEC teachers often talk to each other about children’s daily behavior,” the number of ECEC teachers who answered “Strongly agree” was relatively high, reaching 48.7% (Figure 3-1-1). Meanwhile, when asked about their working conditions, only 22.5% of ECEC teachers answered, “There is good teamwork among ECEC teachers,” and only 21.5% answered, “ECEC teachers comfortably engage in childcare activities” (Figure 3-1-1). Regarding their work environment, 42.1% of ECEC teachers answered, “The facility offers a variety of expressive activities, such as drawing, craft, and music,” and 41.1% answered, “The facility uses teaching materials and picture books suitable to each season and related activities,” with a significant number of teachers choosing “Strongly agree.” However, regarding engagement with the local community, the percentage of ECEC teachers who chose “Strongly agree” was notably lower than the other items, remaining in the 10% range (Figure 3-1-2).

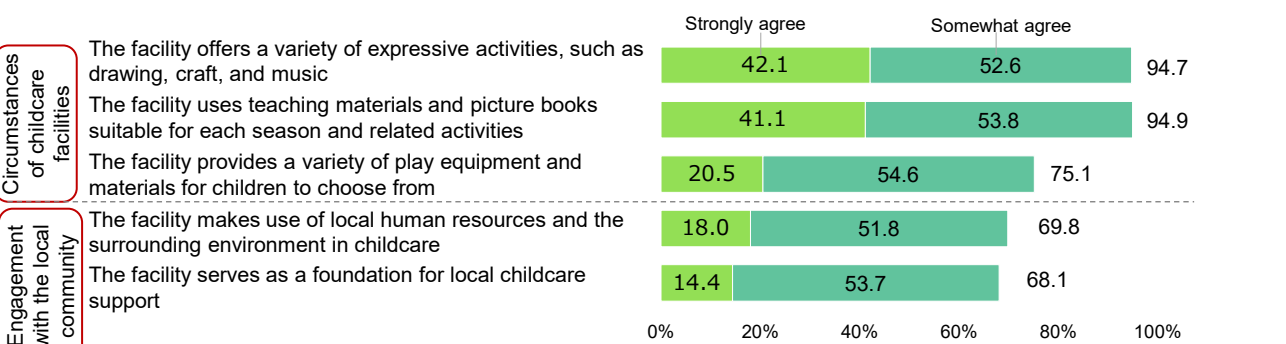
Q Please tell us about your facility's current circumstances. Select one of the options below that applies to your facility.

Figure 3-1-1 Circumstances and engagement of ECEC teachers (overall, 2023) Answered by ECEC teachers



* The data is presented in descending order according to the number of “Strongly agree” responses.

Figure 3-1-2 Circumstances of childcare facilities and their engagement with the local community (overall, 2023) Answered by ECEC teachers



* The data is presented in descending order according to the number of “Strongly agree” responses.

3-2

Opportunities for discussions in childcare facilities



In all childcare facility types, 60% of ECEC teachers chose “Often do so” for the item “ECEC teachers keep a record of children’s activities.” However, 10-30% gave this response for the item “Children reflect on their own activities.”

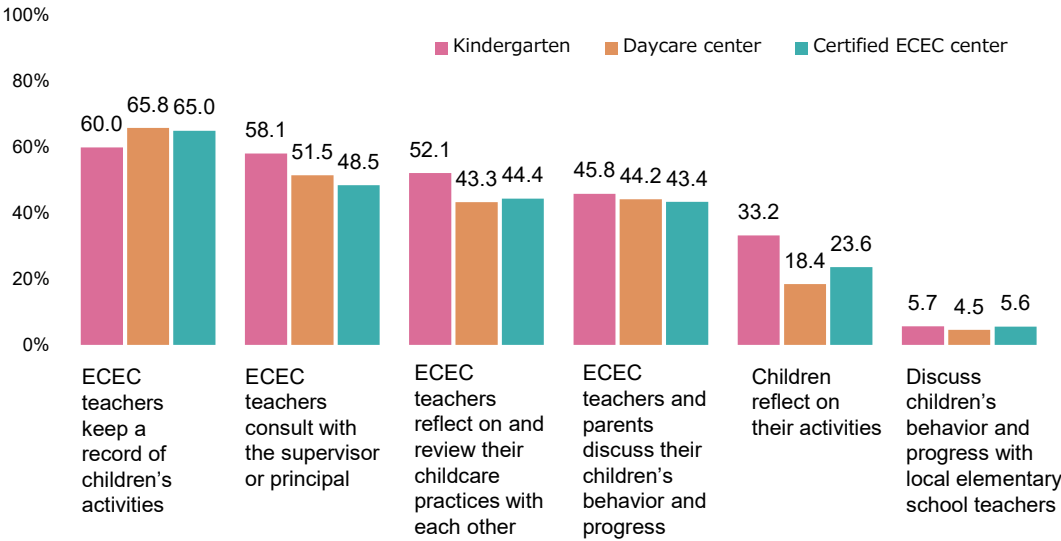
When asked about discussion opportunities in childcare facilities, about 60% of ECEC teachers chose “Often do so” for “ECEC teachers keep a record of children’s activities.” Additionally, 40-50% chose this response for “ECEC teachers consult with the supervisor or principal,” “ECEC teachers reflect on and review their childcare practices with each other,” and “ECEC teachers and parents discuss their children’s behavior and progress.” The results for “Children reflect on their own activities” varied significantly by facility type. Among the ECEC teachers, 30% from kindergartens chose “Often do so,” while only 10-20% from daycare centers and certified ECEC centers chose this option (Figure 3-2-1). When the responses were examined based on the facility type, significant differences emerged between national/public and private kindergartens, whereas public and private daycare centers showed slight variation. Regarding kindergartens and certified ECEC centers, the percentage of ECEC teachers at national/public facilities who chose “Often do so” for the item “Children reflect on their activities” was 10 points higher than that at private facilities (Figure 3-2-2).

Q How often does your facility do the following?

Figure 3-2-1 Opportunities for discussions in childcare facilities

(Kindergartens, daycare centers, and certified ECEC centers; 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers



* Percentage of responses indicating “Often do so.”

† The data is presented in descending order according to the responses for kindergartens.

Figure 3-2-2 Opportunities for discussions at childcare facilities (per facility type; 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers

	(%)						
	Kindergarten			Daycare center		Certified ECEC center	
	National/public	Private		Public	Private	Public	Private
ECEC teachers keep a record of children's activities	64.8	>	56.6	63.1	67.9	64.8	64.9
ECEC teachers consult with the supervisor or principal	62.5	>	55.1	53.7	49.8	50.9	47.9
ECEC teachers reflect on and review their childcare practices with each other	55.1	>	50.1	42.8	43.5	44.8	44.0
ECEC teachers and parents discuss their children's behavior and progress	49.0	>	43.9	43.0	44.9	44.6	43.0
Children reflect on their activities	44.6	>	25.2	17.5	19.0	31.8	> 21.6
Discuss children's behavior and progress with local elementary school teachers	6.5		5.1	4.2	4.8	5.7	5.5

* Percentage of responses indicating “Often do so.”

† The data is presented in descending order according to the responses for national/public kindergartens.

‡ Values that differ by 5 points or more are marked with “>” or “<.” Differences of 10 points or more are highlighted in blue.

3-3

Evaluation of children’s growth related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes (4-5-year-olds)



According to ECEC teachers, the most developed ability related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes for 4-5-year-olds is the “Ability to cooperate with friends during play and other activities.”

In this section, ECEC teachers in charge of 4-5-year-old’s classes in all childcare facility types were asked to evaluate how well children developed 17 abilities related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes. After categorizing these 17 abilities into three areas—“Self-assertion/Self-expression,” “Cooperativeness/Empathetic Skills,” and “Curiosity/Tenacity”—and conducting an analysis, it was evident that children generally exhibited development in all three areas. Notably, “Cooperativeness/Empathetic Skills” were particularly well-developed, exemplified by “Ability to cooperate with friends in play and other activities.” However, some abilities remain at relatively low levels, such as “Have confidence in oneself” (27.7%), “Ability to express own opinion even if it differs from friends” (27.2%), “Ability to avoid doing things one desires if others dislike those actions” (25.0%), “Ability to persistently pursue and achieve goals” (27.0%), and “Ability to innovate by embracing a process of trial and error” (19.0%).

Q Please evaluate how well children in your class have developed the following abilities related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes.

Figure 3-3-1 Evaluation of children’s growth related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes [Self-assertion/Self-expression] (Overall, 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers

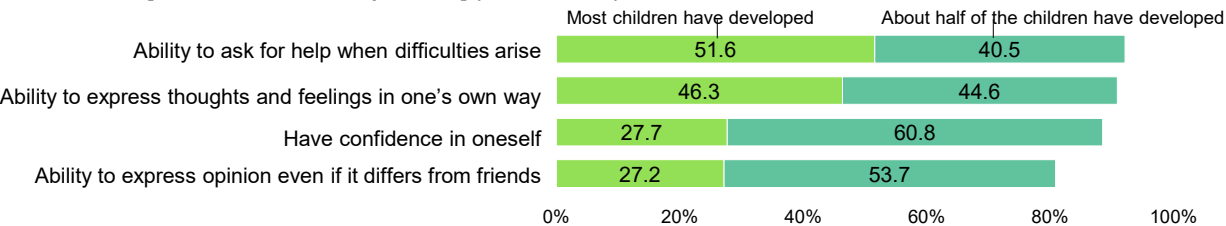


Figure 3-3-2 Evaluation of children’s growth related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes [Cooperative/Empathetic skills] (Overall, 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers

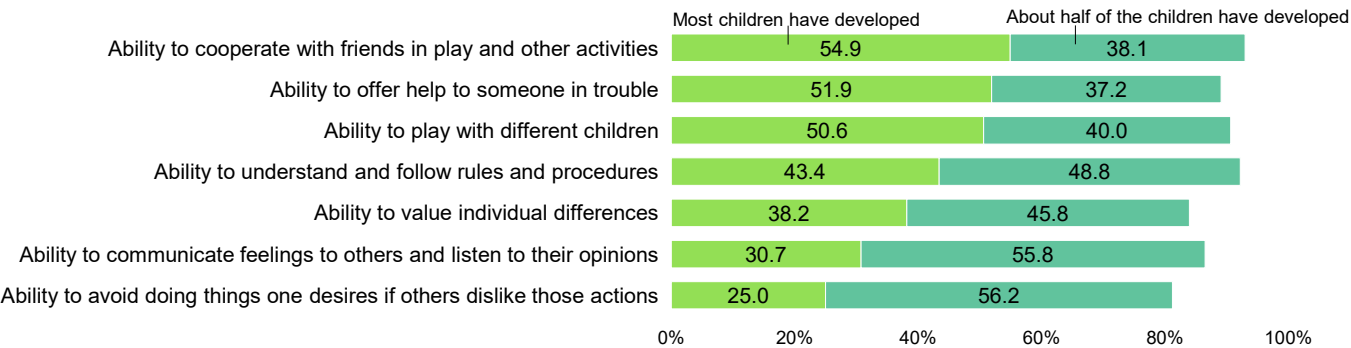
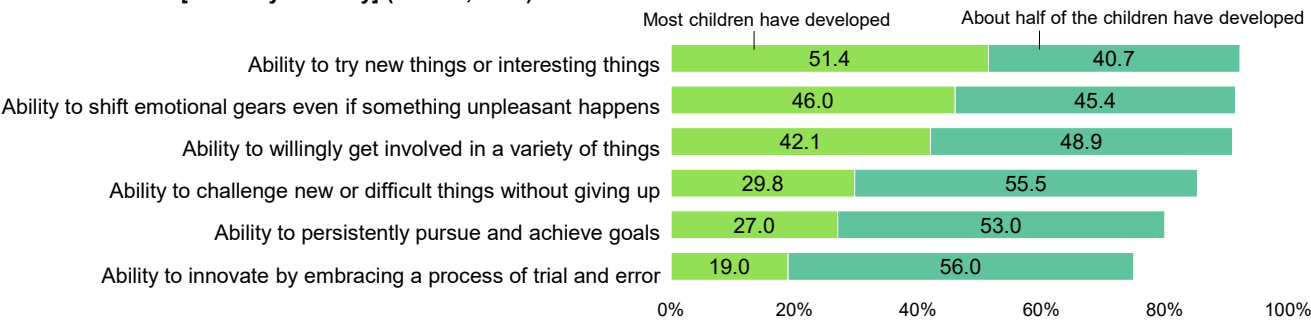


Figure 3-3-3 Evaluation of children’s growth related to emotions, motivation, and attitudes [Curiosity/Tenacity] (Overall, 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers



* ECEC teachers were asked to evaluate using the following four-item scale: “Most children have developed,” “About half of children have developed,” “Some children have developed,” and “Most children have not developed.”

† The data is presented in descending order according to the number of “Most children have developed” responses (Figure 3-3-1 through Figure 3-3-3).

‡ The figures illustrate only the responses of ECEC teachers in charge of 4-5-year-old classes in all childcare facility types (Figure 3-3-1 through Figure 3-3-3).

** For mixed-age classes, the responses were provided by extracting the data of 4- and 5-year-olds.

The requirements for improving the quality of ECEC teachers were "Improvement in compensation" and "Improvement in staffing standards." Furthermore, the ECEC teachers valued "Providing support for mental health."

Both principals and ECEC teachers were asked to choose up to three out of 17 items needed to improve the quality of ECEC teachers. Among the responses from principals, the items that showed significant changes since 2018 were "Improvement in compensation for ECEC teachers" and "Improvement in staffing standards." "Improvement in staffing standards" increased by more than 10 points across all childcare facility types (Figure 3-4-1). When comparing the responses of principals and ECEC teachers, ECEC teachers provided higher scores to "Improvement in staffing standards," "Improvement in compensation for ECEC teachers," and "Providing support for ECEC teachers' mental health." Additionally, while ECEC teachers scored higher in "Providing support for ECEC teachers' mental health," principals provided higher scores to training-related items (Figure 3-4-2).

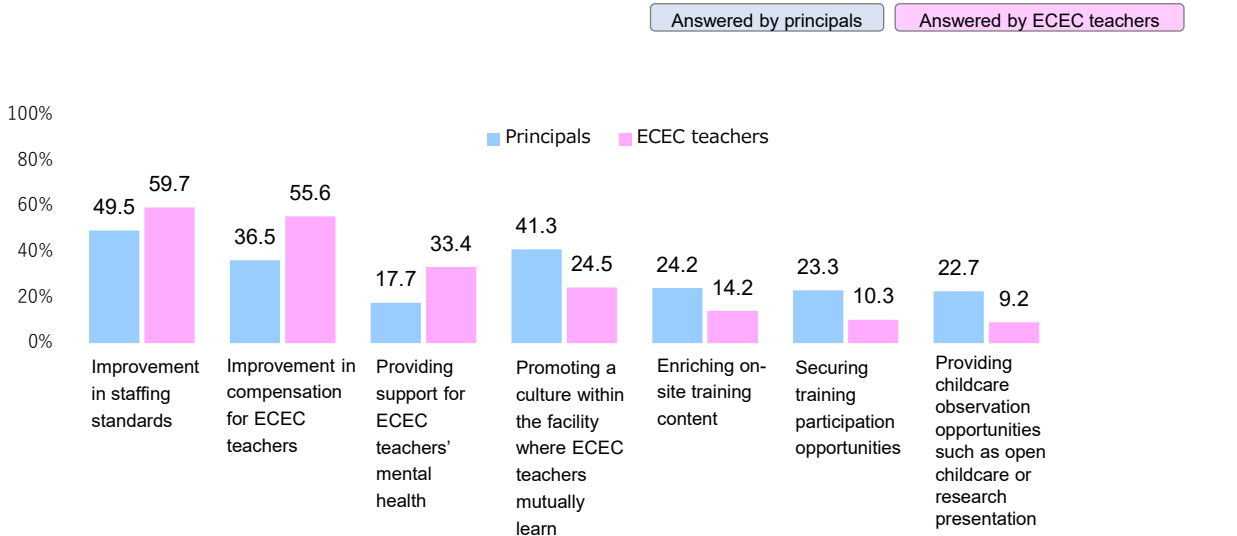
Q Please select up to three items you believe are essential for improving the quality of ECEC teachers at your facility.

Figure 3-4-1 Requirements for improving the quality of ECEC teachers (chronological comparison per facility type) Answered by principals (%)

	Kindergarten				Daycare center				Certified ECEC center			
	National/ public		Private		Public		Private		Public		Private	
	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023	2018	2023
Improvement in compensation for ECEC teachers	12.5	< 25.4	36.5	< 44.1	17.7	< 26.4	32.3	< 45.5	18.9	22.9	25.5	< 43.1
Improvement in staffing standards	20.1	< 36.7	11.0	< 25.7	33.6	< 60.4	25.3	< 58.5	26.9	< 50.2	18.3	< 46.5
Promoting a culture within the facility where ECEC teachers mutually learn	30.7	< 37.2	39.0	39.4	32.9	< 43.8	42.5	43.1	40.8	40.1	45.8	> 39.7
Enriching on-site training content	38.6	> 33.6	27.8	25.7	27.3	22.8	23.5	19.3	29.9	32.3	28.2	> 22.7
Securing training participation opportunities	24.3	25.8	20.4	20.2	25.6	23.9	25.3	22.6	27.9	28.3	27.6	> 21.5
Providing support for ECEC teachers' mental health	8.9	11.6	16.6	21.4	15.8	16.7	19.9	18.2	10.0	< 16.1	18.0	20.5

* Multiple answers (up to 3).
† Among the 16 items (including "Other"), only six items that showed significant changes are presented above.
‡ Values that differ by 5 points or more are marked with ">" or "<." Differences of 10 points or more are highlighted in blue, while differences of 20 points or more are highlighted in red.

Figure 3-4-2 Requirements for improving the qualities of ECEC teachers (Overall, 2023)



* Multiple answers (up to 3).
† Among the 16 items (including "Other"), only seven items that showed significant differences in the responses of principals and ECEC teachers are presented above.

3-5 Job satisfaction and challenges faced by ECEC teachers



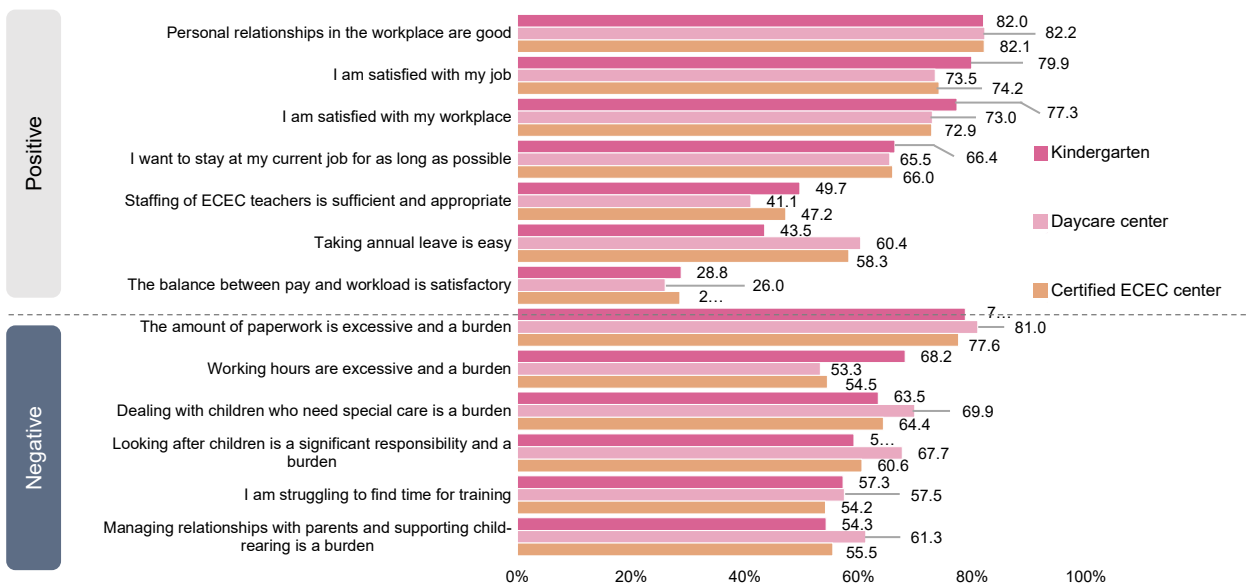
Though ECEC teachers were satisfied with their workplaces and jobs, they believed the balance between salary and workload was inadequate and found the amount of paperwork excessive and burdensome.

“Personal relationships in the workplace are good,” “I am satisfied with my job,” and “I am satisfied with my workplace” scored as high as 70-80% across all childcare facility types. In contrast, “Staffing of ECEC teachers is sufficient and appropriate” tended to score low for daycare centers. “The balance between pay and workload is satisfactory” is also low for all types of childcare facilities, at around 20% (Figure 3-5-1). The perceived burden of work was notably high, as they chose “The amount of paperwork is excessive and burdensome,” “Working hours are excessive and burdensome,” “Dealing with children who require special care is a burden,” and “Looking after children is a significant responsibility and burden.” This sentiment was particularly pronounced in national and public childcare facilities (Figure 3-5-2).

Q Please select the one that best describes your satisfaction and burden at work.

Figure 3-5-1 Job satisfaction and challenges faced by ECEC teachers (all facility types, 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers



* Percentage of “Strongly agree + Somewhat agree” responses.

† The data is presented in descending order by positive/negative item according to the responses for kindergartens.

Figure 3-5-2 Job satisfaction and challenges faced by ECEC teachers (per facility type, 2023)

Answered by ECEC teachers (%)

		Kindergarten		Daycare center		Certified ECEC center	
		National/public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Positive	Personal relationships in the workplace are good	82.3	81.9	81.2	82.9	78.3	82.9
	I am satisfied with my job	79.2	80.6	74.3	72.8	72.5	74.4
	I am satisfied with my workplace	78.4	76.8	73.6	72.6	70.0	73.5
	I want to stay at my current job for as long as possible	67.7	65.6	63.7	66.7	61.5	< 67.0
	Staffing of ECEC teachers is sufficient and appropriate	50.5	49.3	36.9	< 44.2	41.7	< 48.6
	Taking annual leave is easy	46.4	41.6	54.0	< 64.9	50.9	< 60.0
	The balance between pay and workload is satisfactory	31.5	27.0	28.8	24.3	23.6	< 29.6
Negative	The amount of paperwork is excessive and a burden	86.9	> 73.1	86.2	> 77.2	85.1	> 75.9
	Working hours are excessive and a burden	73.5	> 64.3	62.3	> 47.0	68.4	> 51.2
	Dealing with children who need special care is a burden	61.5	64.8	73.9	> 67.1	65.8	64.3
	Looking after children is a significant responsibility and a burden	66.0	> 54.3	76.2	> 61.9	72.9	> 57.7
	I am struggling to find time for training	61.9	> 54.0	62.9	> 53.9	62.4	> 52.3
	Managing relationships with parents and supporting child-rearing is a burden	56.9	52.3	67.5	> 57.0	62.8	> 54.0

* Percentage of “Strongly agree + Somewhat agree” responses.

† Values that differ by 5 points or more are marked with “>” or “<.” Differences of 10 points or more are highlighted in blue.

3-6 Issues in childcare practices and operations at childcare facilities

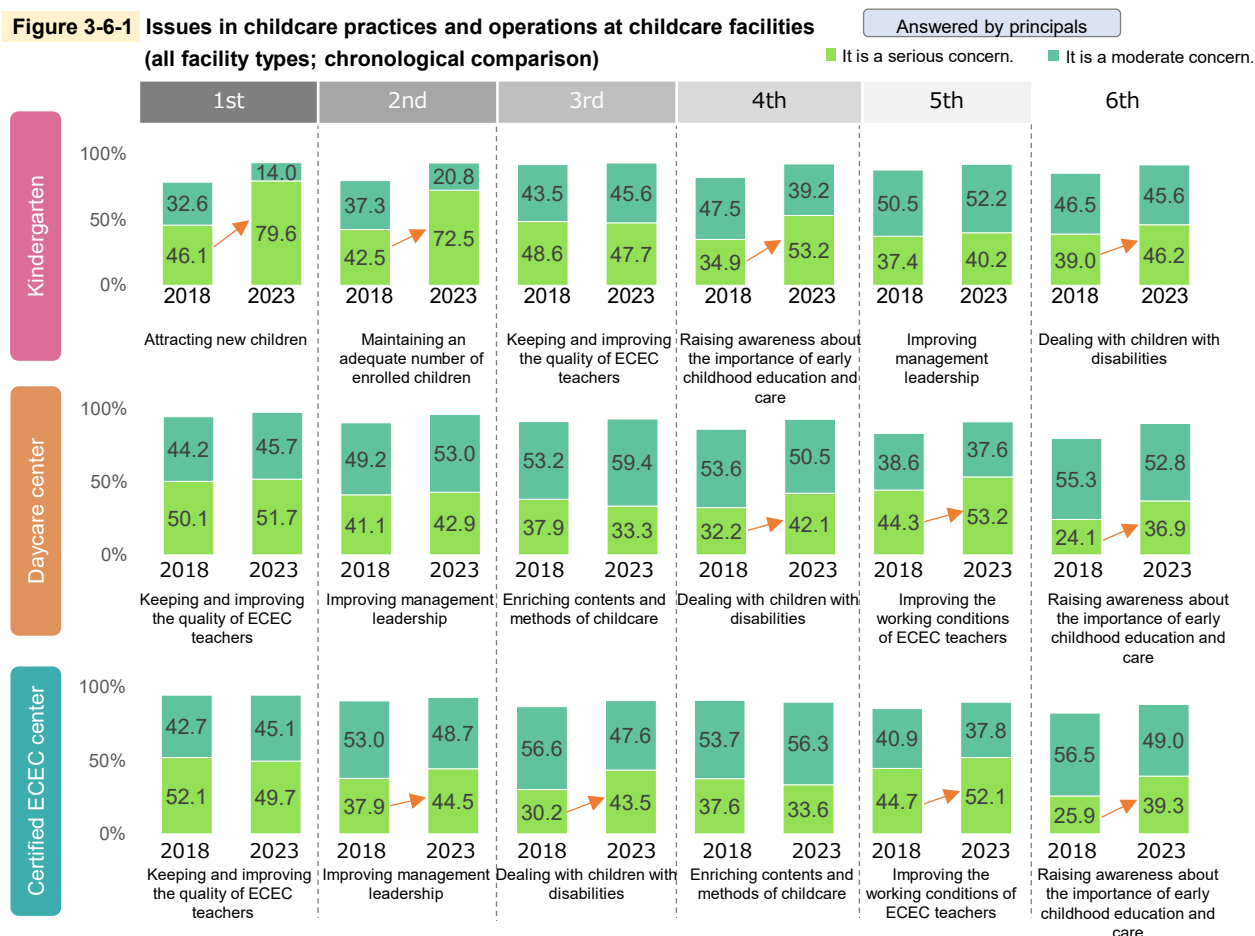


Key issues for kindergartens were “Attracting new children” and “Maintaining an adequate number of enrolled children.”

In kindergartens, the issues of “Attracting new children” and “Maintaining an adequate number of enrolled children” became more prominent, ranking among the top concerns. In daycare centers, the issues of “Dealing with children with disabilities,” “Improving the working conditions of ECEC teachers,” and “Raising awareness about the importance of early childhood education and childcare” were increasing. Additionally, in certified ECEC centers, the issues of “Improving management leadership,” “Dealing with children with disabilities,” “Improving the working conditions of ECEC teachers,” and “Raising awareness about the importance of early childhood education and childcare” were also on the rise (Figure 3-6-1). When analyzing the results by facility type, differences emerge in issues related to the environment and structures of these facilities. These included “Enhancing facilities and equipment,” “Taking measures for safety, crime prevention,” “Securing budgets (grant, childcare fee, etc.),” “Attracting new children,” and “Maintaining an adequate number of enrolled children” (Figure 3-6-2).

Q Please tell us about issues in childcare practices and operations at your facility. Select one that applies to your facility for each item.

Figure 3-6-1 Issues in childcare practices and operations at childcare facilities (all facility types; chronological comparison)



* Percentage of “Serious concern + Moderate concern” responses.

† The top six items are shown from left to right, according to the 2023 survey data.

Figure 3-6-2 Issues in childcare practices and operations at childcare facilities (per facility type, 2023)

	Kindergarten		Daycare center		Certified ECEC center	
	National/public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Enhancing facilities and equipment	75.3	77.3	84.7	69.5	74.9	66.4
Taking measures for safety, crime prevention	79.3	76.0	86.5	71.5	80.3	70.0
Securing budgets (grant, childcare fee, etc.)	69.9	92.8	67.5	82.1	66.6	82.9
Attracting new children	90.2	97.3	38.9	68.6	45.2	78.9
Maintaining an adequate number of enrolled children	90.4	96.8	57.6	72.9	59.5	81.1
Acquiring and retaining ECEC teachers	79.3	89.3	84.4	83.9	86.0	83.5
Implementing self-evaluation/self-inspection	64.1	73.8	77.6	73.6	63.0	73.1

* Percentage of “Serious concern + Moderate concern” responses.

† Only items with values differing by 10 points or more between national/public and private facilities are presented.

‡ Values that differ by 5 points or more are marked with “>” or “<.” Differences of 10 points or more are highlighted in blue, while differences of 20 points or more are highlighted in red.

3-7 Issues identified through open-ended descriptions



Open-ended descriptions submitted by the ECEC teachers highlighted issues related to “Managing children with disabilities and parents” and “Shortage of ECEC teachers.”

Based on the open-ended descriptions submitted by ECEC teachers, the most commonly reported issues were difficulties relating to “Managing children with disabilities and parents,” “Shortage of ECEC teachers,” “Securing time for training and discussions with colleagues,” and “Ensuring child-centered childcare and time for play.”

Q Please share your impressions of the children and parents from your daily engagement in early childhood education and care. Please write down any practical challenges and suggestions you may have for enhancing the quality of ECEC practices at your facility, and the joy and difficulties you experience every day.

Answered by ECEC teachers

Managing children with disabilities and parents

The issue is how to care for children who are concerned or have disabilities. Class teachers watch over these children along side other children in the class, but I still feel this isn't sufficient. I often worry about how much support I should provide, and sometimes, it's challenging to determine the boundary between being considerate and being overly supportive. (Private certified ECEC center)

As the number of children and parents in need of support is expected to increase in the future, I feel it is necessary to think about how to develop human resources and improve my skills. Providing opportunities for ECEC teachers to learn effective ways to interact with children and parents would be beneficial. (Private kindergarten)



Shortage of ECEC teachers

I want to tackle various issues to enhance the childcare quality, however, I have so many tasks to handle that I lack the time, physical energy and mental motivation to prepare for them all, which makes it difficult. There is also a shortage of personnel to assist with follow-up. Despite these challenges, I find my job rewarding when I share children's growth with their parents and receive their gratitude. (Private daycare center)

Every day, while interacting with children, I am often surprised by their inspiration and keen and sensitive eyes. I find my job rewarding when I witness their growth, build trusting relationships with them, and joyfully conduct childcare practices and events. However, I face challenges such as staff shortages, a heavy workload, and the need to address issues for each child and family. These factors make it difficult to take time off, and I often struggle to balance my work and personal life. (National/public kindergarten)



Securing time for training and discussions with colleagues

My daycare center has numerous staff members, so training and discussions are essential. However, we rarely have time for such training. As the time spent on childcare for each child is expected to increase, and as we need to support the growth of both children and parents, finding training time will become even more challenging. (Public daycare center)

I think one of the main issues in improving childcare is my busy daily schedule. I'm so busy with my daily childcare that I rarely have the chance to attend training sessions, inside and outside our facility. Furthermore, there are no opportunities for ECEC teachers to observe each other's practices or visit other childcare facilities, so we become complacent with our own methods. To truly enhance the childcare quality, it is essential to increase such opportunities and learn things from one another. (Private kindergarten)

Ensuring child-centered childcare and time for play

I want to allow children to play freely, supporting their pursuit of interests. However, most children's activities require careful attention and observation, so we sometimes end up restricting play based on our convenience. This issue frustrates me. (Private certified ECEC center)

As childcare becomes more child-centered, I consistently reflect on my practices. However, there are areas where traditional collective childcare continues, so I discuss with the staff daily how to interact with children. I also tell parents about child-centered childcare, but this concept has not yet fully taken root. Many parents wish to hold events, even if it requires extra effort. In the future, one of the main issues will be finding effective ways to communicate child-centered childcare practices to parents and elementary schools. (Public certified ECEC center)



* The parenthesis at the end of each open-ended description indicates the childcare facility type of the ECEC teachers.